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Survey of the Hutterite groups in Montana and Canada

Kenneth Charles Thomas

The University of Montana

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A SURVEY OF THE HUTTERITE GROUPS
IN MONTANA AND CANADA

by

Kenneth Charles Thomas
B.A., Montana State University, 1948

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of Mas­
ter of Arts.

Montana State University
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Thine holy city they destroyed,
Thine altar overthrew they,
Thy servants have they put to death,
Where they could apprehend them.
Of us alone, thy little flock,
But few are still remaining,
Throughout the land in shameful flight
Disgraced, they have expelled us.
Scattered are we like flocks of sheep
Without a shepherd near us;
Abandoned stand our home and hearth
And like the owl or birds of night
Seek shelter we in caverns,
In clifts, on orags, in rocky wilds
We make our home—still they pursue;
Like birds or fowl we're hunted.

—Schiemer's "Martyr's Hymn"
This thesis originally was begun as a survey of the Mennonites and their influence upon the Northwest. In the course of my investigation into these people, I came across a group in Montana called the Hutterites. Surprisingly enough I found that the history of these people was practically unknown at the University of Montana, and in general, to the world at large. Few of the books in the English language on present day communistic societies mentions the Hutterites. The Encyclopedia Britannica, though it mentions other communistic groups, makes no mention of the Hutterite Colonies. In the Montana State University library I found only two books having titles directly relating to this subject.

Later, I had the opportunity to visit and talk with these people. They were simple and industrious folk, who realized that much of the opposition to them in Montana was caused by the fact that most people were ignorant of their way of life. Urged on by the feeling that ignorance causes fear and fear causes persecution of minority groups, I began to write this thesis on the Hutterian Brethren. Incomplete as this material may be, I hope it will in some way help bring about a better understanding between the Hutterite Church and
those people who pause to read it. I have endeavored to be non-partisan; presenting the material as it was presented to me.

I am deeply indebted to Reverend Joseph Stahl and his daughter, Miss Anne Stahl of the King Colony Ranch, Lewistown, Montana for their interest in my work. I am honored by the trust which they placed in me; allowing me to keep in my possession and use many valuable books from their collection. I am also indebted to all those who so kindly answered my letters and sent me helpful information. To the library staff of Montana State University for their kind aid and to Dr. Earl Bennett and Dr. Paul C. Phillips for their guidance and helpful criticism, I extend my thanks.

Kenneth Charles Thomas
It is clearly recognized that the history of the Anabaptists, especially that of the Hutterites, has not been given the attention it merits. The Anabaptist movement has been either ignored or misjudged. Various books on Reformation History give it only a scant notice.

The real roots of the Anabaptist movement lie in the social and economic life of the middle ages. The petty nobles in the country lived in straitened circumstances, but the greater nobles often were princes and were well content with their positions. Life among the lower classes and the peasants was extremely hard. Hunger, cold and malnutrition were the lot of these classes. The landless workmen fared little better, and it was often impossible for them to find work. These classes found it almost impossible to rise in the economic scale, and they possessed no security for the future.

This was the setting for the rise of the Anabaptist movement, and the simple people, who could neither read nor write, listened to religious propaganda and criticism of the established church. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone, as taught in the scriptures, was disappointing, as the Anabaptists expected immediate and striking social and religious results from his teachings. As death and im-
prisonment removed most of the leaders, many of whom were men of learning and refinement, the groups of Anabaptists fell more and more under the spell of men of little knowledge, and extreme and fanatical doctrines and practices became common.

Even while Luther was in hiding in the Wartburg, the new freedom in religion produced some interesting groups. From Saxon Zwickau three prophets came to Wittenburg—Nicholas Storch and an unnamed friend, weavers and a former student of Melanchthon named Stubner. Storch prophesied God's speedy judgment upon the world—the end would come in five or seven years; all the unrighteous would be slain, and only those professing the true faith and who had been rebaptized would be left. Stubner argued against the baptism of infants.

Munzer, another of the Zwickau prophets, was to exert much influence. He admired Storch, whom he thought inspired by the Holy Spirit, wherefore he knew more about things divine than any priest; for Munzer believed that a special inner voice taught man how to interpret the Bible and that whatever was taught had binding value over every dictum of the church and her theologians. Munzer thought that visions and dreams were important, but he inveighed against priests, altars, pictures, images and the use of Latin in the service. He claimed to hold a special commission from God to found a new kingdom in which, following the example of apostolic days,
equality of social status and community of goods were to be established. He settled as a pastor in Alstedt in Thuringia and married a fugitive nun. He was killed at Frankenhausen on May 15, 1525, during the Peasant's War when trying to command his disorderly followers. For centuries following, the leading theologians of Protestantism asserted that the Swiss Brethren, Hutterites and Mennonites were, in the final analysis, the same sect as the "Munsterites". The nickname "Anabaptists" was forced upon them against their continued protests, though this name had, through the excesses of the Munsterites, become a stench in the nostrils of Western Christendom.

The founders of the Swiss Brethren Church, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz and others, had been zealous followers of Ulrich Zwingli until he, contrary to his earlier reformation program, decided in favor of a course which led to a union of church and state, involving compulsory church membership. At the same time Zwingli began to attack infant baptism, a practice which he had previously favored. After civil authorities had decided in favor of Zwingli and made infant baptism compulsory, Grebel and his friends, in the third week of January, 1525, began a practice of believers baptism and organized themselves as a church. Thus they forsook and renounced the Roman Catholic Church—not the Reformed Church, which did
not yet exist. The Mass was abolished in Zurich on Easter of 1525, and this date marks the birth of the Reformed Church in Zurich. The Hutterian Brethren differed from the Swiss Brethren (today called Mennonites) mainly by their practice of "having all things in common."
CHAPTER X

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The history of the Hutterite Brethren is a history of a group of Christians who are determined to give religion a rightful place in their lives, and who have earnestly striven to attempt the restoration of the faith and life of the Church. This group of earnest, but misunderstood people, descend from the Swiss Brethren who constitute the oldest of the "Anabaptist" bodies. All who disowned or did not practice infant baptism and practiced the baptism of believers were called Anabaptists. Among those who were given this name were various sects, including those led by Augustin Bader, John of Leiden, Jan Van Battenburg and David Joris. These groups, in doctrine and practice, differed radically from the Swiss Brethren, which included the Hutterites and the Mennonites. These two latter groups showed a striking agreement in doctrine and practice, and maintained themselves in spite of the severest persecutions.

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2 Ibid., p. 2.

3 Miss Anne Stahl of The Hutterische Church Society of Lewistown, Montana, to Kenneth Thomas, January 23, 1949. "The Hutterite Church and other Mennonite groups are similar in very many respects. They differ only in that the Hutterites practice the community of goods, while Mennonites own their property individually."
The founders of the Hutterian Brotherhood were Swiss Brethren refugees who had come from various parts of South Germany and the Tyrol to Moravia. In 1529, Jacob Hutter of Moos in the Tyrol was sent to visit and counsel the Brethren in Moravia. He came to Austerlitz in Moravia and united with the Church. Through the efforts of Hutter and his assistants strict discipline and order were established in the organization. The following years were a period of persecution and terror for the Church. Its members were driven from Moravia into Transylvania. Following the Thirty Years War the Brethren were driven from Transylvania to Hungary. Here they lived for a while under the protection of the Great Lords who used them to manage and work their estates. In 1759, Maria Theresa was Empress and an arch Catholic. Under her the Jesuits carried out a severe attack on the Brotherhoods.

John Horsch, The Hutterian Brethren, (1528-1939), Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Ind., 1931, p. 9, says this of Hutter. "Of Jacob Hutter's early life nothing is known. Evidently he had attended a good common school, for he was able to express himself well in writing. The name Hutter (Huter) means hatter, and hat making was his early occupation. He was a man of firm convictions and deep consecration, of eminent organizing talent and great will power. During his imprisonment in Innsbruck the most cruel torture was employed to force him to recant. "He remained steadfast and true to the faith" says an early chronicler, 'as a Christian hero. Finally he was, by the evil sons of Caiaphas and Pilate, tied to a stake and burned alive. With great joy he gave his life as a testimony to the truth."
In 1786, Catherine II, Empress of Russia, in need of experienced farmers to work the lands newly acquired from the Turks, north of the Black Sea, invited the German Mennonites to move to Russia. Their traveling expenses were paid and bread was furnished them until they could grow a crop, and other assistance was given them along with the promise of religious freedom and exemption from military duty. There was also a large grant of land made in the beautiful Dnieper and Molotschna valley.\(^5\)

The first transports of two hundred and twenty-eight families arrived in Taurien, July 20, 1786. In 1803 and 1804, about three hundred families went to Russia, and during the next fifteen years some three hundred more settled there.\(^6\) These latter left Germany during the Napoleonic War because they were being forced into military service. In Russia the groups were allowed local self-government. Each district had its auditor, church treasurer, road overseer, commissioners and board of education. Each village had its officers and the minister supervised the religious education, while the village school gave instructions in elementary branches and


\(^6\) Ibid., p. 830.
sacred history. Russian was also taught.

Tsar Alexander, who had followed Catherine to the throne, proclaimed by royal ukase that every citizen was obliged to serve in the army. This, being contrary to the doctrines of the Hutterites, caused them to send a petition to the Tsar asking a new grant of privileges. The Tsar recognized the beliefs of these people and consented to the following in lieu of military service: labor in forestry, labor in shipbuilding for the Navy or sanitary work on the battlefields and in the hospitals.7 Those who would not accept these conditions were given ten years to quit the country. Many of the Brethren sought a new land and new premises.

The Mennonites of Russia in seeking this new land naturally turned to America. There were many reasons for the Brothers to suppose that in America there would be the refuge they sought. Many congregations of Mennonites were long established in the United States and had been permitted, both in the Revolution and the Civil War, exemption from military service by money payment. Also the Canadian Government had

7 Attempts to find substitute duties for the Peace Churches were made by the American Government during World War II. These conscientious objectors were used as smoke jumpers in the Forest Service and the valor of the large number who served as guinea pigs in the experiments for the control of disease is well known. Smoke Jumper, United States Forest Service, Missoula, Montana, December, 1944.
definitely promised freedom from military service. President Grant's inaugural address of 1873 also carried reassuring promises, "Rather do I believe that our Great Maker is preparing the world, in his own good time, to become one nation, speaking one language, and when Armies and Navies will be no longer required."8

In the Spring of 1873, fourteen delegates were sent to America from the Choritz, Molotschna and Crimean Mennonites and Hutterites. With the aid of the various Canadian Government officials and United States land agents these delegates were made acquainted with the open areas of Canada, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota and Dakota. The Middle West with its cheap or homestead lands offered the logical choices.

With great simplicity and directness the delegates went directly to Washington to discuss the question of the military requirements of the United States with President Grant himself.9

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8 James D. Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents, New York, 1897, p. 4176; Gertrude Young, "A Record Concerning Mennonite Immigration", American Historical Review, New York, April, 1924, Vol. XXIX, No. 3, p. 519.


This material is from a diary which Paul Tschetter, one of the fourteen delegates, kept concerning the entire American trip. The diary is still in existence and is in posses-
It is upon these conferences that the Hutterites and the Mennonites based their claim for exemption from military service. In these conferences Grant did not speak positively nor make any promises but he only expressed his opinion and

ation of Mr. Tschetter's son of Chicago, Ill.

"Thursday, July 19th, This morning I wrote a petition to the President of the United States:

PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

We, the delegates, appeal in this petition that in case there should be a war, that we should be free for at least 50 years from everything that concerns war; after 50 years we are willing to pay as all others. The other governmental expenses we are willing to pay as all other citizens. We wish to be as obedient children to the Government in all matters that are not against our conscience. But we cannot partake in anything that pertains to the military, and pray that we may enjoy here in peace, what in Russia we are exiled for. We also desire to know whether we may be permitted to form our colony in one community; and have our own German schools; whether we may control our own schools; whether we may establish our own form of local government in our colonies as it fits us, and whether we may be freed from the holding of office and also jury-service and such like; and also whether we shall be free to vote or not.

We also desire to know under what conditions we may secure government land, and how many acres each person can have, and how old a person must be to obtain land; whether we may be freed from taking the oath, and whether our yea and nay will be regarded as sufficient, for swearing is just as much a matter of conscience with us as the matter of war, according to the word of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and whether in case our consciences should be violated we might have the privilege of emigrating from America.

If we, the delegates, can secure the above mentioned privileges, our brethren in Russia will be encouraged to emigrate to America. But if they cannot secure this, the emigration will be small; for most of them do not wish to risk the dangers
left the matter to Congress. The Brethren must have been reasonably assured for in the Spring of 1874 two hundred and fifty members of the Hutterite Church left Russia and jour-

connected with emigration with something uncertain.

Such is our humble prayer to his Excellency, the President of the United States, that he may give us a clear answer to this petition so that we poor and oppressed people may know what to do.

Delegates
Paul Tschetter
Lorenz Tschetter

July 26, 1873

When we arrived at the President's home we were introduced to President Grant by Hiller, an American, who conducted the Mennonite delegation on their tour of the United States. The President received us in the most friendly manner and we presented our petition to him personally. After reading it very carefully the President replied that we must have patience to wait for an answer to our petition. But since we are to leave New York for home on the Cimbría, August 2, Hiller assured us that he would send us the President's reply.


Several weeks after the Tschetters had reached their homes in Russia, they received the following reply to their petition to the President.

Washington, Sept. 5, 1873

"The President sent to me the petition of the Mennonite delegates, and the reason for the delay in the answer is this: at the time of the meeting of the Mennonites with the President he was told that they wished to depart in a few days. The only answer that could be given was that the President could not guarantee them the assurances they desired.

They wished guarantees of exemption from military service and also jury service. They desired also to be free from the payment of substitute money in case of draft; and the right to govern their
nalyzed to the North Dakota Territory, United States of America, a wilderness still held by the Indians of the plains. In the next five years a few more followed and three Bruderhofs were established near what is now Mitchell, South Dakota.¹¹ Most of the early settlers decided on the community life of the old order. Two Bruderhofs, known as the Bon Homme and Wolf creek Colonies, were established not far from the Nebraska

own schools.

Since personal military service, citizenship obligations, jury service, and control over schools are all matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the various states in which they wish to settle, the President says that he cannot exempt them from the laws of the states and the laws to which other citizens are subject. As to the paying of substitute money for fifty years, that too, is beyond his power of promising. It is true, however, that for the next fifty years we will not be entangled in another war in which military service will be necessary. But should it be necessary there is little likelihood that Congress would find justification in freeing them from duties which are asked of other citizens.

It is impossible therefore to grant the answer which you (Hiller) and the delegates wished before their departure. I had to withhold the answer until I had the opportunity to see the President.

With greatest obedience
Your humble servant
Hamilton Fish

In 1877, seventeen additional families established themselves at Elm Springs, South Dakota, while another group came in 1879. All the groups which practised community of goods in Russia continued the practice in the new land and were joined by others. About half of the Hutterian immigrants settled in the Bruderhofs. The unending labor of these settlers won from the dry prairie an adequate living though thousands of other homesteaders starved. As a result, their numbers increased and more land was secured until by 1914, the total number of Bruderhofs reached seventeen.

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12It is interesting to note that the Colony now known as the King Ranch Colony at Lewistown, Montana, came to Lewistown from the Wolf Creek Colony of South Dakota, and not from Canada as many people seem to believe. (Interview with Miss Anne Stahl of the King Colony Ranch, Lewistown, Montana, April, 1949.)


14Ibid., p. 157.

The three original Hutterian Bruderhofs established in the State of South Dakota (then Dakota Territory) U.S.A. in 1874 and 1877 have grown until in 1933 the total number of Bruderhofs is thirty-three in addition to the groups that do not practice communism. Of this number but three Bruderhofs are still to be found in South Dakota, while ten are located in Manitoba, Canada, and nineteen in Alberta, Canada. Before World War I all the Bruderhofs were in South Dakota. The movement to the prairie provinces of Canada which began in 1918, was caused by maltreatment at the hands of militant South Dakota neighbors during the war.

The present Bruderhofs comprise three general groups of Hutterian Brethren which vary but slightly in a few minor points. The three groups descended from the three original Hutterite settlements in South Dakota. The oldest
With the coming of the first World War the Hutterian Brethren suffered because their neighbors were envious of their economic gains. Their firm maintenance of their four century old position on non-resistance subjected them to peculiarly vicious attacks by over zealous local patriotic officials. In spite of the severity of the local treatment the only conscientious objectors to die as a result of persecution in the camps during the first World War were two young men from a Hutterite colony, Joseph and Michael Hofer. In 1941 while America was engaged in the second World War the name of Hofer was once again in the news.

A group of eleven Bruderhofs, descendants of the first Hutterite Bruderhof in America, established in 1874 at Bon Homme on the Missouri River eighteen miles west of Yankton is called "Schmiede-Leut", because the first leader was a "Schmied" or Smith. The second group of thirteen Bruderhofs called the "Darius-Leut", after the first leader, Darius Waldner, are descendants of the original Wolf-Creek Bruderhof, founded near Freeman, South Dakota. The third group of eight Bruderhofs descends from the original Old Elm Springs Bruderhof founded in 1877 near Parkston, South Dakota. This group is called "Lehrer-Leut", because the two teachers who led the immigration were "Lehrer" (teachers). The present total Hutterian population in North America is somewhat more than 3,400 souls. (1931)


16It is interesting to note the following item from the Lewistown, Montana, Democrat News of May, 1945, although no connection has been established between the two families. From the column Seen and Heard About Town, "Mr. and Mrs. George Hofer of the Hutterite Colony near Grass Range report the receipt of a letter from their son George Hofer Jr. in army training in Alabama in which he states he had completed the first phase of his infantry training."
Realizing that once again the promised land had not been reached, the Hutterian Brudershofs of South Dakota began an immigration to Canada where they had been guaranteed freedom from military service by the Canadian Government. The Hutterite movement to Canada was not a new phase in their history. In 1873 and 1874 when the immigration of these people from Russia to America was taking place, many of them were accepted by the Canadian Government and received in addition to exemption from military service: free grants of land in Manitoba, privilege of religious schools of their own, privilege of affirming instead of swearing to oaths, passenger warrants from Hamburg to Fort Garry for the sum of $30.00 per adult, $15.00 per child under eight years of age and for children under one year $3.00, and were to be provided with provisions during their journey between Liverpool and Collingwood. It is estimated that between 50 and 700 families came to Canada at this time.  

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17Sub section 3 of section 21 of the "Militia Act", Chapter 41 of The Revised Statutes Of Canada, contains the following provision: "Every person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quakers, Mennonites or Tunkers, and every inhabitant of Canada of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, who from the doctrine of his religion is adverse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service, shall be exempt from such service when balled in time of peace or war upon such conditions and under such regulations as the Governor in Council, from time to time prescribes."

In 1944, agitation was under way in Canada to drive the Hutterites out. The people who had welcomed them in 1918 and 1934 now had changed their minds. Led by the Canadian Legion and other patriotic groups the people of Alberta passed in their Legislature a land act restricting the sale of land to the Hutterites even though a bill of rights passed in 1946 declared any citizen of Alberta should be free to acquire land. Once again the Hutterites were at a cross road. Many of the members prepared to move back to the United States but others, who still had some hope of democratic treatment at the hands of fellow Canadians, got ready to fight back.

To the Hutterites, the State in the United States which seemed most ideally suited for the needs was Montana.

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22 From a brief submitted by L. S. Turcotte on behalf of the Hutterian Brethren to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, sitting at the Court House of the City of Lethbridge, Canada, on Monday, February 10th, 1947.

"Last year the Legislature passed a bill of rights. Section 7 reads as follows:

It is hereby declared that every citizen of Alberta shall be free to acquire land and enjoy the use of his home and property without interference or molestation, so long as he conforms to the laws in force in the province for safeguarding the lives, property, welfare and personal rights of other citizens."
Other states had been considered but passed by. In Montana there was plenty of land for all and the holding of large tracts of land by a person or group of persons was not a new thing. So beginning in 1945, the Hutterites began establishing themselves in Montana. The first colonies of the new immigrants settled in Teton, Fergus, Pondera and Lewis and Clark counties.

The immigrating Hutterites were not extended a friendly welcome in Montana. Groups of citizens were quick to organize for the prevention of further acquisition of land by the colonists. On August 11, 1948 a meeting was held at Great Falls, Montana, to plan a state wide fight against the Hutterites. Smaller towns such as Choteau, Montana, had well organized Citizen's Committees to bring pressure on the State Legislature.

Even in the face of opposition the Bruderhofs were established and prospered. Typical of the colonies set up in Montana is the Milford Colony near Augusta. This Colony is a branch of a colony by the same name near Raymond, Alberta, Canada. There are 96 members in the Augusta establishment, twenty-six of which are adult parents and the rest are children. In the colony the average family is about

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23 *Sunday Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon, N.D.
The largest crop of grain ever produced on Flat Creek will soon all be in a large granary just erected by the Milford colony of the Hutterite settlement here. The granary is 70 by 44 and 18 feet high with a capacity of 65,000 bushels. About 35,000 bushels of wheat alone will be stored here this fall. The building is made of 2 by 4's laid on the flat, with five bims, each 14 by 14 by 18, and each holding 3,500 bushels. Threshing and combining have yielded so far this fall 16,000 bushels of barley; 16,000 bushels of oats and more than 35,000 bushels of wheat.25

Though objection has been raised to the Hutterites putting so much of the land under cultivation, it must be noted that they have adopted modern methods of farming and strive to


25 The Great Falls Tribune, Great Falls, Montana, October 13, 1948.
avoid loss of soil by erosion. The Hutterite must till the soil to live even if there is no profit, so he holds the land in high regard. Beside the crops of grain grown by the Milford colony a large number of livestock is raised. About 2,000 head of sheep, hundreds of beef cattle, pigs and 50 dairy cows thrive on the farm along with 2,500 chickens, 800 ducks, 150 geese and scores of beehives.

Such is the situation of the Hutterian Brethren in Montana today. In some communities he has been accepted and tolerated by the people around him even though they wish that the colonies were located elsewhere. In other communities there have been threats of violence and barn burnings. The Hutterite leaders recognize that they are not welcome in Montana and are casting about for newer refuges. Some have considered the possibility of going to Mexico and others have migrated to Paraguay. Their problem is four centuries old. It began in the ignorance and superstition of the 15th century and still exists in the "enlightened" 20th century.
CHAPTER II

BELIEFS OF THE CHURCH

The followers of Jacob Hutter, along with those of Menno Simons, make up the religious movement known as Mennonitism. This movement has as its essence individualism and consequently its members, as a body, never were committed to any one particular confession of faith.¹ Their religious beliefs were gathered from different sources—writings of early church leaders, testimonies of martyrs, decisions of conferences and a variety of confessions of faith drawn up by different parties and factions. Among the confessions of faith which had more or less vogue among certain groups of congregations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are the Flemish Confessions written by George Hansen, minister at Danzig in 1678, and the Gerhard Rossen Statement of 1702. One of the best known of the Confessions


"From the outset these people always considered the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament the only rule of faith and practice for God's children. In the earlier years they had no confessions of faith, aside from the Bible. When, later, they drew up confessions of faith, they did so rather to correct the misrepresentations of their persecutors regarding their belief than that these articles of faith should be considered dogmas of the Brotherhood. Their test of Christianity was not so much in holding certain dogmas as in the actual change of heart and piety of life."
was the Dordrecht Statement of 1632, signed by fifty-one representatives from seventeen Dutch congregations in Holland and northwest Germany. This has been perhaps the most widely used of all confessions. In 1660 it was adopted by the churches in Alsace and the Palatinate. It was imported early into Pennsylvania and became the accepted Statement of Faith for the early American Mennonite Churches. It teaches conservative doctrines and advocates a strict discipline. This Statement is still the recognized Confession for the Old Mennonites, Amish and Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites.

The Hutterian Brethren follow the Confessions of Faith and discipline set forth by Peter Riedeman, who was head pastor for the Hutterian Church from 1542 to 1556. Riedeman's book, "Rechenschaft unserer Religion, Lehre und Glaubens", consists of ninety-five articles, giving a thorough, comprehensive statement of Hutterian faith and practice. Portions of this work have been translated into English by John Horsch in his "Hutterian Brethren (1528-1931)". Since Mr.


"Riedeman was born at Hirschfeld in Silesia, about 1506. He united with the Hutterian Brotherhood in 1529 in Upper Austria and came to Moravia about 1532. In the course of his labors as an evangelist he was again and again imprisoned. Nine years he spent in prison at Gemiind in Upper Austria, in Nuremberg and at Wolkersdorf in Hesse in 1540. The first edition of the "Rechenschaft" was published about 1545."
Horsch's book is the only available source for Riedeman's statement, which is considered as the base of authority by Hutterites today, various parts have been used verbatim in this chapter. It is so done because the changing of a single word often changes the whole idea of a paragraph, thus misrepresenting the beliefs of the Church.

According to a recent writer, the following statement, expressed by a Hutterite churchman, presents the doctrinal beliefs of the present day Hutterite:

"If I should answer the question just as you ask it, I should say; We believe in a personal God; that Jesus Christ was his only begotten Son; that he came into the world to save humanity through the shedding of his blood on the cross. In all these things we agree with most evangelical churches. But if you meant to ask what distinguishes us from other evangelical churches, I should say: We believe in community of goods and have all our property in common; we believe in non-resistance; we do not take oaths; we do not take or hold public office; and we baptize only upon profession of faith." 4

From the preceding statement it may be understood that the Hutterite Church, along with other Mennonite Churches, holds to the usual orthodox beliefs of other Protestant churches on such general church doctrines as Creation, Fall of Man, Trinity, Christ—his nature and function, the scheme

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of salvation, Resurrection and Future Life. The Hutterian Brethren, however, believe "that the relationship between the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the groundwork, the foreshadowing and promise of the New. They feel that many of the Old Testament precepts were intended for Pre-Messianic times alone and that certain points of Old Testament law were expressly abrogated by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount."\(^5\)

The early Hutterite Church was a missionary church, and in 1563 a missionary hymn was composed in the Hutterian Brotherhood. According to the wording of the title of this hymn, it was intended to be used at the departure of the Brethren who were leaving the community as messengers of the gospel. It is probably the oldest of missionary hymns.\(^6\)

"The Larger Church Chronicle" speaks of the missionaries as follows:

"The witnesses to the truth and messengers of God gave testimony earnestly and steadfastly to the Word of the Lord by their life and work, by word and deed. They spoke with power of the Kingdom of God showing how all men must repent, be converted and turn from the vanity of this world and its unrighteousness, from a sinful, vile and wanton life.


\(^6\)Ibid., p. 27.
to God, their Creator and Jesus Christ
their Savior and Redeemer. To all such
work God gave his blessing and grace so
that it was carried on with joy.  

Today the Torch of Light and Word of God is no longer
carried to the world by missionaries of the Hutterite Church.
According to a prominent writer of Mennonite History, the
present day Hutterites are even opposed to missions and mod-
ern methods of church work. It is possible, however, for
an outsider to enter the Hutterian Brotherhood, though the
church does not participate in active missionary work. The
newcomer to the church must give all his property to the
church and is permitted to enter for a trial period. If at
the end of this period he finds the life uncongenial he may
withdraw and his property will be restored to him. In the
last year a group which broke from the Mormon Church of Salt
Lake City, Utah, entered the Hutterite Church.

Though it has been asserted that the Hutterite Church
believes itself to be "the sinless, immaculate bride of
Christ, his mystical spiritual body, the church without which

7 A. J. F. Zieglschmid, Das Klein-Geschichtsbuch der
8 C. Henry Smith, The Mennonites, Berne, Ind., 1920,
p. 269.
9 Joseph Kinsey Howard, "The Hutterite: Puzzle for
Patriots", The Pacific Spectator, Stanford, Calif., Winter
1948.
there is no salvation, writings of the Hutterians show clearly that they do not regard all outside their membership as godless. The Hutterite believes community of goods to be an essential characteristic of a true Christian church and recognizes as Brethren in Christ only those who agree with them on this and other points.

Neither do the Hutterites feel that all the members of their organization are true Christians living consistent lives. Minor transgressions are not followed by severe punishment, but major transgressions, such as desertion, bring excommunication. This form of punishment is announced by the Elders or Bishops of the church, following a vote of the congregation. After the decision is made to excommunicate a brother, the faithful do not eat, drink, visit or talk with the guilty one, and he is not eligible for any of the benefits of the church as long as he does not repent. If a person repents and again desires to become a member of the church, through the Grace of God, he is received through a ceremony by which the head minister announced the restored membership.

The belief that the Hutterite Brethren deny the existence of the original sin is incorrect since they teach that all the descendants of Adam inherited a sinful nature. Infants are saved in spite of the original sin through redemption. The Hutterite does not feel that baptism, especially infant baptism, annuls the guilt of the original sin; instead, they attribute to the blood of Christ that was shed for all men, what in Catholic Theology is ascribed to the act of baptism. According to a writer of Hutterian History, the principle of baptism is explained as follows:

"We confess that all men born into this world are, as the descendants of Adam, included and held under original sin, yea, they are under condemnation to eternal death and destruction. But God, who always has loved his creation and not hated it, has given his only begotten Son to be the reconciliation for the sins of the whole world."

Peter Riedeman, who wrote the account of the Hutterian Confession of Faith in 1545, has this to say of the original


12 Ibid., p. 123.

From translations made by the author of manuscripts and codices in possession of the Bruderhof near Macleod, Alberta, Canada and other Bruderhofs. Hand-Buchel, wider den procès der zu Wurms am Run wider die Bruder so man die Hutterischen nennt ausgangen 1557, Chapter VII.
sin: "original sin before the time that it shows its effect and leads into further sin has no penalty than natural death; it does not bring eternal death." From this it is evident that to the Hutterite and other Anabaptist groups, baptism is merely an initiatory ceremony signifying membership in a body of believers organized as a church. To them the church is a voluntary group composed of those possessed of a regenerated heart and infant baptism is a sign of compulsory initiation into a universal unregenerated state church.

To the Hutterite the community of goods is and was, even in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the highest command of love. Basis for this feeling is both historical and biblical, "and all that believed were together and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need." Historically, cause for the strength of the idea of communal life grew from the fact that the early founders of the church were refugees who had endured persecution for their faith and were willing to lay down their lives for it. They identified themselves with the community, not for what they could get out of it, but to see what it was possible for them to put

13 Ibid., p. 123.
14 Acts, 2:44 and 45.
into a life for the service of God.

In the first half century of Hutterian history, living in a community of the Brethren was prized as a great privilege and absence from it caused considerable distress. All members of the community willingly devoted their time and strength to the good of a common cause. The compelling motive was love of God and Brethren on the ground of sincere Christian conviction for which they suffered torture and martyrdom. Christian love to the Hutterite became a blessed reality and the appreciation of this life of fellowship in Christ even today is more attractive to members of the community than is the unrestrained life of the world outside.

The Hutterite, like the earliest Christians, felt that Christ, by his own example, gave to his followers the principle of non-resistance. War to them is a violation of the command of Christ. The attitude of the Hutterian Church towards war is outlined very clearly in John Horsch's translation of Riedeman's "Rechenschaft"; "... since vengeance is of God and not for us, it should be left to him and not be practiced by us. For since we are followers of Christ, we must also manifest the spirit of Him Who, although he could have done it, did not return evil for evil."15

policy of non-resistance extends even to the refusal to approve of law suits and the performing of police duty.

Neither will the Hutterite contribute to the payment of the cost of war, and once again this attitude is outlined by John Horsch's translation, which reads in part as follows:

"We willingly pay taxes and customs, or however it may be designated, for we have learned this from our master, Christ, who not only paid it himself, but commanded others to do so saying, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's'.

But for warfare, destruction of life and the shedding of blood (when taxes are asked for such particular purposes) we give nothing. This we do not out of wantonness or stubbornness but because of the fear of God, that we may not become partakers of others' sin."  


They are strictly non-resistant. During a liberty bond campaign in 1918, upon their refusal to buy bonds and contribute to the various war funds, many of their sheep and cattle were forcibly taken and sold by the local authorities for the sum of $20,000, which was deposited in the banks with a view to use for war funds. These officials were compelled to abandon these tactics, however, by the authority higher up. The money was then to be returned, but the Hutterites demanded their stock instead of money.


"Since Christians shall beat up or lay down their swords, they can much less manufacture them, for they are of no other use than to harm, wound and destroy (Luke 9:55). Now, as Christians should not practice vengeance (Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 12:19-21), they may not make the means by which others become partakers of their sin. Therefore, we do not
The supposition that the principle of non-resistance, as practiced by the Hutterian Brethren, meant that they condemned the use of force by world powers is without foundation, and they clearly realize that a civil government could not be maintained by the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. They feel that a government that relies on the exercise of the Christian graces and good admonitions, to the exclusion of coercion, would be a government in name only.

Since the Hutterite Church is similar to the Mennonite Church in every respect except for the Hutterian ideal of community ownership of property, it is possible to use the summarization of principles as presented by John Horsch in his book, "The Mennonites: Their History, Faith and Practice."19

In regard to who may understand the Scriptures:

"The way of eternal life is so clearly and

make swords, spears, guns, nor other such weapons. But what is made for the daily need and use of man, such as knives, axes, hoes, etc. we may and do make. But if some one should say, with such implements also one may harm and injure another, we reply that they are not made for the purpose of harm and destruction, and therefore, we can consistently make them. If someone uses them to harm another, that is not our responsibility; let him bear his own judgement."

18 Miss Anne Stahl to Kenneth C. Thomas, April, 1949.

plainly stated in the scriptures that it can be readily comprehended by any pious mind of ordinary intelligence, and is not better understood as men are better schooled and acquire more worldly wisdom but as the heart becomes more pious and the life more conformed to God's word."

In regard to a spiritual priesthood:
"Every soul, through Christ, has direct access to God and all believers are priests of equal rank and authority, and may at all times and in all places approach God without the aid of a priest or minister or consecrated church building or holy place or any ceremony, needing no mediator but Christ."

In regard to the Lord's Supper:
"The Communion is instituted to represent to the believer the broken body and shed blood of Christ in His redemption. It also represents the unity of the 'one body of Christ', that is His congregation. The bread and the wine are simply emblems of His Flesh and His Blood." This ceremony is observed on the Monday following Easter Sunday.

In regard to foot washing:
"Foot washing, as an ordinance, indicates that all believers are standing on a common level. That one member is equal in authority with another, priesthood and lordship having no place among believers."20

In regard to non-resistance:
"The enlightened Christian cannot swear oaths, Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12."
"Neither can he engage in carnal warfare, Matt. 5:38-48; 26:51-53; John 18:36."
"The offices of the government, with a

20 This ceremony is observed today in most of the Mennonite churches, and in the early days of the Hutterite Church was closely followed by the Brethren. Today, foot washing is not performed by the Hutterite Church. They accept and perform this symbol of brotherly love by helping each other, strengthening each other's faith, and being careful for a weaker member.
few exceptions, require a rigid oath, and enjoin such duties that he cannot fill them. According to the Word of God and the example of the early Christians, we are to pray for all in authority, and be subject to them so far as their rulings do not conflict with the teachings of the Gospel; but the Christian is nowhere in the Word taught to help in the execution of the laws of the land. Titus 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-15; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Acts 5:29."

In regard to freedom of conscience:
"They teach that the government of the land should not and could not interfere with religious opinions and matters of faith. It appears to them unseemly that matters of religion and faith should be regulated by the leaders of government."

In regard to slavery:
"The German Mennonites were the first who, with energetic efforts, rose up against slavery as they found it in America. To the Quakers belongs the honor of having carried the work successfully farther."

In regard to the preaching of the Word:
"Ministers and deacons are chosen from the congregation. They are not called "Reverend", and no one, no matter how learned, would accept the title of "Doctor of Divinity". Ministers are provided for according to their necessities, but are never paid a stipulated salary. Neither shall any member be allowed to suffer want or become a public pauper."

In regard to the mode of Baptism:
"From the history of the Brethren we learn that the usual mode of Baptism was pouring. Several instances of dipping and immersion are mentioned, but the Mennonites, from their earliest record to the present time, baptized by pouring. It is only since 1851 that some of the modern Mennonite congregations have been baptizing by immersion. There are at present some Mennonite congregations in America, especially among those who emigrated from Russia,"
who baptize in this way.\textsuperscript{31}

In regard to Church government:

"The Church government can be considered as a synodic set up. It has a council composed of several presbyters for consultation on religious matters. The head minister generally has the most governing power."

\textsuperscript{31}Several Sundays before being baptized, the converts are lectured, informed, and clarified on the articles of the faith of the church by the Bishops, Ministers or Elders. The baptismal ceremony generally takes place one Sunday before Easter Sunday. It is not much different from any other church service except that the sermon pertains to this special occasion and is solely for the benefit and interest of those being baptized. At the end of the sermon and in a kneeling position, the converts profess their faith and agree to live and abide by the rules and regulations of the church. After this they are baptized, blessed and received into the church by the head minister who sprinkles water on the head of each convert as a symbol of membership.
CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE

The communal life as practiced by the Hutterian Brethren is an integral part of their religious belief. Foundation for it is found in the scriptures "and all that believed were together and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Each colony has a manager (householder), a preacher (minister), sometimes an assistant preacher and from one to five trustees, depending upon the size of the colony. These trustees are the leaders of the colony and all are elected by a majority vote of the male members; a two thirds majority of the male members will remove them from office. In addition to these leaders, each operation in the colony has its own boss, thus, there is the dairyman, the sheepman, the poultry man, the hogman, the carpenter, the blacksmith, etc. Each of these men has complete authority over his department and complete responsibility for its success. These positions, like those of the trustees, are filled by a majority vote.

The life of the Hutterite is also communal, because

1 Acts, 2:44-45.
all property is held in common. This means that all capital stock, such as land, machinery, buildings and other goods, is owned by the colony as a whole and is administered by the leaders on behalf of the membership. In central Montana the Hutterite colonies are incorporated. The following is the first part of their incorporation papers:

"The Hutterische Church Society is an international religious church society which devotes its entire membership to farming, stock-growing and all other branches of agriculture; and in addition thereto follows the teachings and tenets of John Huss and Jacob Hutter and of the Hutterische Church Society, living communal lives in colonies as representative bodies known as "colonies", made up entirely of non-profit membership and a community cooperative non-profit organization devoted exclusively to agricultural pursuits for the livelihood of its members, dependants and descendants."  

It should be noted that each person shares equally with his fellow members in the distribution of consumer goods and all those possessions which contribute to a standard of living, such as food, clothing, shelter, labor-saving devices, furniture and household equipment. The basis of distribution is to each according to his needs in equal measure with his fellow members. The dwellings of the Hutterites, however,  

2From a paper, entitled, "The Hutterites", prepared and read by Mr. Howard Dizley to the Lewistown, Montana Chamber of Commerce.
are individual. Each family has its own living quarters, depending upon the size of the family. These suites constitute living quarters only, as meals are prepared in a common kitchen and eaten in a common dining room. The buildings are of the oblong "barracks type"; there are from three to six suites to a building. The buildings in most cases are built by the carpenters of the colony.

The furniture for the colony is very simple but is usually of excellent workmanship. It is produced for the most part in the colonies' own workshops, which are equipped with the latest tools and power driven lathes. Clothing and shoes are also manufactured in the colonies' own shops.

However, many of the new colonies at present must rely on outside purchases. This is one of the biggest drawbacks to the colonies ever becoming entirely self-sufficient. It is impossible for them to grow enough wool or tan enough leather to supply themselves. Hutterite children, like any

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3 This description of the types of living quarters cannot be assumed as general, although it does prevail in the older colonies of South Dakota and Canada. The living quarters of those people living at the King Ranch Colony in Lewistown, Montana, are former ranch homes which were situated on the lands purchased by the Hutterites. These homes were moved to a central point and, along with some brick buildings of the type mentioned above, make up the living units for that colony.
other healthy children, display an unusual knack of wearing out shoes and clothing. Accordingly, many colonies buy their black broadcloth and shoes, or leather to make shoes from Chicago wholesalers.\(^4\) The clothing, which is hardwearing and simple in style, usually drab or subdued in color, is all made at the colony. The women do this work, making use of the sewing machines which each family possesses. Stockings are made from wool raised on the colonies. The women spin the yarn and knit it, by hand, into exceptionally warm and long wearing stockings. The skill of knitting is taught very early, and even the youngest girl has her knitting basket. In some of the colonies, especially the ones in Alberta, Canada, knitting machines have been installed and the women are freed of this labor.\(^5\)

It appears that any modern device which is of labor-saving nature, or of practical value to the colony, is quite acceptable and is not looked upon as an unnecessary luxury.\(^6\) At the Lakeside Colony, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, bread and rolls are baked in large commercial type bake ovens, such

\(^4\)Interview with Miss Anne Stahl of the King Colony Ranch, Lewistown, Montana, April, 1949.

\(^5\)Report of the Legislative Committee Regarding the Land Sales Act, 1944, Alberta, Canada, 1944.

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 2.
as would be found in any small modern bakery. Dough mixing, cream separating and churning of butter are done by power-driven equipment. The laundry is done by mechanical power-driven washing machines of the commercial revolving drum variety, and the clothes are dried by power-driven centrifugal force driers. The laundry equipment is built by the carpenters and metal workers in the colony.\(^7\)

Work at the Lakeside Colony is organized on a routine duty roster basis, with the members taking turns, week about, in the performance of the various tasks. For instance, three women may have the duty of cooking for one week, the next week it will be another three, and so on until all who are eligible for this work have had their turn. The same procedure is used for milking, baking, dish washing and all other colony chores. The specialists have their helpers too, each of the young men being liable for assignment to help the dairyman, poultryman, carpenter or mechanic, if and when help is needed. Even though the Hutterite is not hesitant about using the newest and latest of modern equipment for aiding him in his struggle to exist, it must not be assumed that there is a place for the modern devices of pleasure in

\(^7\)It must not be assumed that all of the colonies are as fortunate as the one described above. It is one of the oldest colonies of the group and is located east of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.
his life. Because of this there are no radios, pianos or other musical instruments. They will use trucks but not automobiles.

The Hutterite, always having followed the occupation of agriculture before leaving Russia, continued to do so after settling in the United States and Canada. For a number of years the Hutterite colonies used the older methods of farming, but today in some of the colonies it is possible to find modern farm machinery together with modern agriculture methods. In most of the colonies there are to be found diesel caterpillar tractors, modern tillers, seeders and other cultivating machinery, combines and threshing machinery. Most of the colonies also have well equipped repair shops for this equipment. Since the women look after the milking there are no milking machines, but there are often found, either in the colony or in town, efficient dairy rooms with ice or cold storage in which is stored considerable perishable food.

8Mouth organs are played by some of the younger men, and the children love to sing and are very proficient at it. It is interesting to note that during an interview with Miss Anne Stahl of the King Colony Ranch, Lewistown, Montana, in which the above point was being discussed, the children who had gathered on the front porch began to sing one of the modern hit tunes. Noting my astonishment at this, Miss Stahl explained that visitors to the colony often left their car radios on for the children, and they quickly picked up the songs.
The main source of meat supply for the colonies appears to be cattle, sheep, hogs and poultry. Ducks and geese seem to be the most popular type of poultry since from these two the down and feathers for pillows are obtained. It is apparent that none of the colonies with their modern machinery and abundance of help are overworked. The colonies are in every sense of the word, isolated, self-contained units in the social and economic life of the community around them.

The best description of the life of the typical Hutterite is presented in an article by Marcus Bach. Mr. Bach used as his typical colony the Bon Homme Colony of South Dakota.

"Life begins at 5:30 A.M. with the ringing of a bell. About everything that happens in the colony is regulated the same way. The bell calls men and women to work, and summons them to meals. The bell rings to indicate the time of day, for there are no watches in the community. The bell is used for almost everything, except a call to church.

At 5:30 a squad of wives marches to the cowyard for the milking. They do this every morning and night. You remember the scene not only because of the reminder that here is one spot where man still has the upper hand, but also because of the milk stool which each woman carries. It is the only colorful object in the colony. Hutterite attire is black and gray, homes lack pictures or curtains, the

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9 Report on the Legislative Committee regarding The Land Sales Prohibition Act, 1944, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, p. 3.
paint on houses and barns is drab. But the milk stools are enameled a fiery red, with the owner's name printed on the seat in rich design.

In the refectory the sexes are segregated. The tables are long sturdy boards, with benches instead of chairs. The food is served in dishes from which everyone helps himself without the formality of passing. Occasionally everyone eats from the main dish . . .

After the meal is ended with a prayer the men file out to their appointed jobs. In the yard three thousand geese are honking, laundry carts are being hauled to the wash house, teams are being driven to gardens and fields. This whirl of activity explains why the Hutterites are prospering.

Even after supper the individual is still governed by colony rules. After the evening milking a child runs from house to house calling: "Church time, church time". Then the pastor walks solemnly from his home, carrying the hymnal, a Bible and the Book of the Brethren, the latter written entirely in longhand and containing the unpublished sermons and letters of the early church fathers. When the pastor is inside the school the assistant overseer and seven elders arrive, each wearing a black preacher's hat. Then the select men, women and children come, always singly, and take their places on crude benches.

The services begin with a hymn, "lined out" by the pastor. Ansegem, they call it, meaning a recitation of each line before it is sung. The congregation picks up the hymn, singing in solemn, droning fashion. There is no musical instrument. The singing is a lamentation. It is the spirit groaning for liberation, the soul moaning over the world's sins.

The men file out first, and no one thinks of holding the door for the person following. They avoid each other's company until they are a respectable distance from the sacred building. The women go straight home, the children resume their activities in the
The Hutterian Brethren, even from its earliest beginning, had a remarkable school system. From the beginning attendance was compulsory. In the Hutterian Bruderhof there were usually two schools, the so-called small school and the large school. The first was a kindergarten for children from two to six. At the age of six the children were put into the large school which was under the control of a male teacher. The writer of the Hutterian Confession has this to say about the schools:

"Sisters who have been found qualified are appointed for the small schools by the church. It is their duty to care for the children, and as soon as they can talk, to lay the word of the testimony of God into their mouths. They teach them to pray and to understand whatever is within the child's grasp. In this school the children are kept until they are able to read and write, at about five or six years. At this age they are given over to the school master who teaches them, and in addition, leads them on in the knowledge of God so they learn to know and do the Will of God...So we teach our children from little up to seek not the temporal but the eternal things."

These early schools were effective, and, at a time in


11 Peter Riedeman, Rechenschaft unserer Religion, Lehre und Glaubens, Reprint, Berne, Indiana, 1902, p. 130.
Europe when general education was in a pitiful condition, the number of illiterates among the Hutterites was small. Today the Hutterite still strives to educate his children both in the way of God and for the benefit of the community.

The present day Hutterite school is located on the colony and is as good or better than the average rural school. The school is supported by taxes paid by the colony and is controlled by the county superintendent of schools. Teachers are not of the Hutterite faith and the subjects taught are the same as those taught in every school in America. Besides this schooling the Hutterite child attends a class in German and religion one hour before and one hour after regular school. As a general rule Hutterite children leave school as soon as they may legally do so, but those who wish to do so may take correspondence courses in high school work. Since the church does not believe in higher education, few if any Hutterite children attend college. The effectiveness of the schools maintained by the Hutterites today is shown clearly in this testimonial written by Owen Williams, Inspector of Schools at Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, on January 12.

According to Miss Stahl of King Colony Ranch, Lewistown, Montana, she has taken correspondence courses for high school work from the correspondence school at the Montana State University. At the present time she is enrolled in a course of Health Education at the Montana State Normal School, Dillon, Montana.
"At the request of the Hutterite Brethren of Southern Alberta I am testifying to the efficiency of the schools in the colonies where public school districts have been organized.

As the official trustee of these districts, I have been responsible for the selection of teachers and for the maintenance of their schools during the year. The leaders of these colonies have always cooperated with the Department of Education in the schools and have invariably supported their teachers.

When the isolation of the children in these schools is considered, their attainment in the English branches is all the more remarkable.

Incidentally, it should be mentioned that in one of the colonies all unemployed boys and girls must attend school during the winter months—this is by order of the manager of the colony.

All of these districts are sound financially. They pay their taxes promptly. In the Hutterite District of the Lethbridge Inspectorate, all obligations to banks, teachers and school supply houses are regularly made at the end of each month.

During the inspection of these schools I have never witnessed mentally deficient children. In fact the Hutterites have the proud boast that since their arrival on this continent only one instance of such is on record.

I believe that if the present system of official trusteeship is maintained over the colony schools, we shall secure as good results for them as in the ordinary ungraded schools of the Province."13

From all indications the Hutterites have found what they

desire in cooperative planning. Each man has developed some aptitude or craft and uses it for the good of all. He gets joy from the teaching of the same work to his son and a thrill in raising good crops. For wisdom they rely on the sermons of their pastors, for beauty the songs of their faith and for companionship their families and nature. The Hutterites do not claim to have found Utopia, but they are happy in perpetuating a tradition which dates back four hundred years, and which today is more prosperous than at any time in their history.
CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF THE HUTTERITES IN CANADA

Opposition to the Hutterites in Canada first made its appearance in the Alberta Legislature on March 11, 1942. This opposition was in the form of a Land Sales Prohibition Act and was introduced by the Honourable Solon Low. In introducing his bill, Mr. Low made the following statement to the legislature:

"The Alberta Government action in proposing legislation to prohibit the sale of land to any enemy alien and Hutterites was to allay public feeling which has been aroused to the point of threatened violence in some instances. . . ."

In 1942 the original act preventing the sale of land to the Hutterites and enemy aliens was passed. This act was amended in 1943 to include prohibition against leases of land, but since it dealt with enemy aliens, the Dominion government disallowed the Act. The Alberta Legislature passed a new act in 1944 which prohibited sales and leases of land to the Hutterites only. In 1945 the Act was amended, making it effective until the end of hostilities. The Land Sales Prohibition Act as it now stands came into effect on

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1Edmonton Journal, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, March 17, 1942.
May 1, 1947. Under this act Hutterite meant "any colony or society of Hutterites or Hutterian Brethren, whether corporate or un-incorporate, and any member of a Hutterite colony or society."² The general provisions of the Act state: 1) each colony already established in the Province of Alberta must forward to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, a legal description of land owned and operated by the colony, 2) no colony already established should enlarge its holdings by buying more land, 3) the colony could, in spite of imposed limitations, acquire enough land to make up for land loss by irrigation requirements or other public purposes, 4) no new colony could be established within forty miles of any part of the property already held by an established society, 5) no acquisition of land should exceed in area 6,400 acres, 6) no person should sell or lease any land in the Province to a colony unless it has first been offered for sale under the provisions of the Veterans Land Act, 1942.³

The opposition to the Hutterites in Canada, as in Montana, is based on economic, moral and social grounds, with the economic objection assuming the most important aspect.

The economic objection to the Hutterites in Canada was spearheaded by the Canadian Legion. In its brief, urging

³Ibid., p. 10.
the extension of the Land Sales Prohibition Act, the Legion stated its belief that the Hutterites were detrimental as follows:

"Many owners of land, adjacent or near the area in which Hutterite colonies are situated, have refused to sell land to ex-service personnel through the Veterans' Land Act, because of an understanding that when the ban on Hutterite purchase is removed the land owners will be able to sell to the Hutterites at a much higher price. This has effectively prevented the rehabilitation of the applicants and is impeding the work of the V. L. A. in settling the Veterans.

In the southern part of the province, particularly in those areas where it is known the Hutterite colonies desire to buy land, prices have gone so high that the Veterans' Land Act does not feel that it can possibly attempt to compete for ownership of these lands. The reason for this is that the Hutterites, having been able to take advantage of high prices during the war, due to the fact that they were conscientious objectors and were not in the service themselves, are willing and able to pay prices far above the economic or normal market value of these lands. In effect, these people, by their desire to acquire these lands, regardless of price, have made it impossible for our veterans to rehabilitate themselves."¹

To answer these arguments the Hutterites state that it was deplorable that the price of farm lands had risen at a

¹From a Brief Presented to the Special Committee on the Hutterite Land Question, at Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, by the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League, Alberta Provincial Command, 1943.
time when veterans' re-establishment was under way, but they felt that the competition was from all farmers of Alberta who had a series of profitable years which resulted in those farmers having surplus funds for investments of land. They sincerely believed that the Hutterites were not in competition with veterans who wished to purchase land, and that it was far-fetched to blame the rise of prices in farm lands all over Alberta on the desire of four thousand Hutterites to purchase a few more sections of land.  

Being desirous of working out some agreement which would safeguard veterans' rights, many plans were set forth by various people. In one of these it was suggested that the land of Alberta be divided into two groups. In one group, land which was suitable for veterans' settlement was to be placed and safeguards set up so that veterans were to have

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5From statistics such as these the Hutterites wished to show that they were not in serious competition with Veterans who wished to purchase land. From a brief presented by T. S. Turcotte of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, on behalf of the Hutterian Brethren to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, Feb. 10, 1947.

| Farm Population in Alberta | 383,964 |
| Hutterite                 | 4,000   |
| Farm land occupied in Alberta | 67,621 sq. mi. |
| " " " " by Hutterites      | 275 sq. mi. |
| Average number of persons per farm | 3.85 |
| " " " Hutterites per farm  | over 30 |
| Number of farms in Alberta | 99,732 |
| Number of farms occupied by Hutterites | occupying average of 10 farms, each 350 acres |
the preference over the Hutterites in the purchase of this land. To be just in this regard, veterans were to have the preference over everyone else in the purchase of such land. In the other group was to be placed land which was not suitable for veterans. No one would be able to object to the Hutterites purchasing this land. In this way they felt that the real reason, which was to drive the Hutterites out of Alberta, would be brought to light and the people would not be bamboozled into believing that it was being done to help the veterans.6

Also in Canada, as in Montana, it was argued that Hutterite colonies did not spend as much money as the ordinary farmer, and the establishment of a Hutterite colony is bad for the merchants' business. The Hutterite church says that this is not true, as "the average colony farming nine or ten sections of land spends between $40,000 and $45,000 a year. This is an average of between $4,000 and $4,500 for each section of land."7 It was suggested that this compared favorably with the average spending of other farmers. It is true that the Hutterites do not spend their money in the same manner.

7Ibid., p. 642.
as other farmers, but some merchant or implement dealer gets part of the $40,000 to $45,000 which is spent each year.

Morally the opposition to the church in Canada, as in Montana, is based on the policy of non-resistance. Because of religious convictions, the Hutterites are conscientious objectors and refused to bear arms in defense of Canada. They were not alone in this belief and in reality formed only a small part of the conscientious objectors. The 1941 census of the Dominion showed that there were over 100,000 Mennonites in Canada, of which 8,000 were in Alberta. There were over 18,000 Adventists and over 16,000 Doukhobors in Canada.8

It should also be remembered that the main group of Hutterites came to Canada while the first World War was in progress, and even though conscription was in force in Canada, the Dominion Government granted them exemption from military service. During the second World War, Hutterites in the age groups liable for military service performed alternate service in labor camps. Selective service officials took a census of each colony and made a ruling in each case regarding the man power required to farm the colonies' lands. The

8 From a brief submitted by T. S. Turcotte of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, on behalf of the Hutterian Brethren living in the Province of Alberta, to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Alberta, sitting at the courthouse in the city of Lethbridge, Monday, Feb. 10, 1947.
surplus man power served in labor camps. If selective service officials ruled that a man of military age was essential for farming operations at the colony, the colony paid $15 a month to the Red Cross for this man's service.9

As far as aiding in financing the war was concerned, the Hutterites did not purchase the ordinary Victory Bonds which bore interest, because they felt that if they collected interest they would be profiting from war. Instead, they purchased bonds which were interest free, and in all, the colonies in Alberta purchased nearly half a million dollars in interest free bonds.10

As far as the social objection to the Hutterites in Canada is concerned, it is very similar to that voiced in Montana; that the Hutterite was not a citizen and should not be allowed to acquire land, and that Hutterites purchase a large block of land in the middle of a farming community and thereby destroy the community life of the remaining citizens. As far as the question of citizenship is concerned, it might be pointed out that a large part of the Hutterites have been in Canada since 1918 and according to law any person born in Canada after 1918 is a citizen of Canada. In any event

9Ibid.

10The colonies of Montana also followed this example and the King Colony Ranch, according to Miss Anne Stahl, still holds about $10,000 in this type of bond.
ownership of land in Canada has never depended upon citizenship. It is estimated that of the ten richest property owners in southern Alberta, five are and always have been citizens of the United States.\textsuperscript{11}

If one were to examine the location of most of the colonies in Canada, it would be clear that the statement that the Hutterites destroy community life by purchase of large blocks of land near Canadian communities is unsound. In most cases, the colonies are located at the outer edge of a settled area or along the bank of a river. A good example of this is the Hutterville Colony, which has only one neighbor to the south, and the remaining land south of the colony is ranch land for a distance of twenty-four miles, to the American border.

It is sincerely felt by the Hutterites of Canada that the people who welcomed them in 1934 do not now desire them as neighbors, and that most of the arguments against them grow from either envy of their productive lands or the hatred of a few toward a minority group. The Hutterites know that when they were admitted to Canada, it was known that they were conscientious objectors and lived communal lives. Furthermore, the governments of the Dominion and of the Province

knew that the Hutterites engaged in farming as the only means of livelihood, and that the Hutterites had to buy land in order to exist. Therefore, since all things come from the land and the ownership of the land is a fundamental right of a democracy, the Hutterites feel that their being deprived of that right is just a step toward the prohibition of similar rights to other members of that democracy.
In the period following World War II, Americans have been shocked at the persecution of minority groups in different parts of the world. Yet here in America, a minority group is being opposed by the citizens of the different states. This opposition has shown up especially in Montana, where a religious group called the Hutterites are being ridiculed because of their beliefs, and even threatened with barn burning, by honest citizens who sincerely believe that they must strike out to protect themselves. Warren R. Austin, chief U. S. delegate to the United Nations, in a statement at Lake Success concerning the persecution of Cardinal Mindszenty, a Czechoslovakian prelate, expresses the general American feeling about persecution of minority groups as follows:

"The world has learned from bitter experience that the persecution of religious groups is not only an offense against the moral conscience of mankind, but is also a warning signal of the spread of tyranny and oppression of all kinds.

That is why Americans of all faiths, dedicated to the principles of democracy reaffirmed by the declaration of human rights, are alarmed and shocked by this ominous portent."1

If this statement supposedly expresses the views of an American, then it is time we "put our own house in order."

Many people, however, feel that as yet the question of the Hutterites is not a problem. That is a case of hiding one's head in the sand for whenever the interests of one group clash with those of another, no matter how minor the causes, a problem exists and must be recognized as such.

The opposition to the Hutterites in Montana, as presented by those citizens who sincerely believe that the Hutterite is a menace to their way of life, is based on moral, social and economic grounds.

Morally, their opposition arises from the fact that the Hutterite is a member of the well-known "peace churches" and non-resistance is to him an integral part of his religion.

His objection to war and participation in it has been one of the greatest causes for opposition to the church during the years. In the United States, during the first World War, many of them were imprisoned and tortured because of their belief.²


"Some of the prisoners at Fort Leavenworth, including Mennonites and Hutterites, suffered tortures that would have done credit to the Medieval inquisition at the hands of prison guards and officials, for refusing to perform certain services which they regarded as inconsistent with their religious convictions. They were regarded by the prison authorities as ordinary criminals and not as political prisoners."
During World War II the granting of agricultural deferments and recognition of non-resistance as reason for deferment from draft caused much ill feeling. In Lewistown, Montana, where the Hutterites have been established since 1911, ill feeling grew out of the fact that the young Hutterite men would come into town and people seeing them felt that it was unfair for them to be home and their boys to be at the front. Intelligent cooperation between the head of the church and the citizens of the town removed this feeling by restricting the young men to the area of the colony. According to Rev. Joseph Stahl, six or seven boys from the Hutterite colonies at Lewistown were in the government service, some of them even serving

Some refused to work on the ground that the prison was a part of the military system; others for various reasons, refused to put on the uniform; still others refused to work because of sympathy for those who were disciplined for unjust causes. Some of these men may have carried their logic to unnecessary lengths, but no matter what the provocation, there was no justification for the harsh measures adopted in breaking the spirit of these men, whose only crime was a tender conscience. Among the methods resorted to were continuous solitary confinement in cells in a hole under the basement of the prison, sleeping on a cement floor between foul blankets full of vermin, read and write or talk, manacled in a standing posture for nine hours a day to the bars of a cell. In addition, they were frequently beaten and tortured by the guards.

Interview with a prominent business man of Lewistown who wishes to remain anonymous, but who is in a position to speak with authority due to his dealing with the Hutterites.
In order to overcome this moral objection the Hutterite Church, along with the other "peace churches," such as Mennonite, Friends, Brethren and Methodists—with the Methodists outnumbering even the Quakers,—permitted their young men to serve as "smoke jumpers" in lieu of military service. Not only did the young men participate in this type of fire control, but many helped in other phases of Park work.

Typical of the smoke jumper camps which housed these conscientious objectors was the one near Nine Mile, Montana. This camp was administered by the Mennonite Central Committee, which sent to each camp a director and a camp nurse. The men were fed and housed by the government, but took care of their own discipline. For their service they received no pay, but were later granted a small clothing allowance by the government. The men were orderly in town and the entire forest service department was well impressed by their sincerity.

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5 Smoke Jumper, Dec. 1944, published by the men of Civilian Public Service Camp, 103, the smoke jumpers camp; administered by the Mennonite Central Committee with headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania.


7 Interview with Miss Alice Page of the U. S. Forest Service, Missoula, Montana, April, 1948.
Since community of goods is one of the distinguishing marks of the Hutterites, moral objection to them grows out of the average American's fear of the word communism. The communism of the Hutterite Church grows from Acts 2 which teaches communism of consumption only. On a higher technical and economic level than primitive Christians, they have succeeded in establishing a communistic organization of production and consumption under the command and discipline of Christian love and the spirit of their Master. The Hutterite households, with their families, each form a "body politic", providing for the needs of their members under the guidance of religious principles of education, management of production, consumption, trade and social welfare, including medical care and protection of the aged.

The contrast which exists between Hutterian communism and modern Russian communism scarcely needs to be pointed out. The one is founded on biblical teachings and Christianity and is purely religious, while the other is of a political revolutionary nature, growing from a bitter class struggle. Russian communism is irreligious and materialistic to

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9 Ibid., p. xi.
to the core, presenting a militant atheism, teaching an unprecedented hatred of God and anything that is divine. Hutterian communism is entirely voluntary, receiving into membership only those who meet certain religious conditions. This contrasts sharply with "Red communism", which clearly uses compulsion to accomplish its ends. "The Communist Party in Russia comprises only a small percentage of the population and is today ruling that unhappy land with the iron hand of terroristic dictatorship, in a word, "red" communism is in principle and method the very reverse of Hutterianism."10

Socially the Hutterite is objectional in that he is attempting to live apart from the world, and people do not understand him. His neighbors resent his refusal to accept the responsibility of citizenship. In a rural area any community needs the best efforts of all the people in the district to be really successful, and the Hutterite hangs back. He does not vote or hold office, but is a citizen of the United States, since our constitution expressly states "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside." Religiously, however,

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10. Ibid., p. xvi.
the Hutterite regards himself as a citizen of the Heavenly Kingdom and does not take out naturalization papers. Their fathers accepted Martin Luther's idea that governments must use force because the human race had fallen into sin, but they differ with Luther by maintaining that executive administration and enforcement of law is not a Christian's business since un-Christian principles have been used.12

The question of education is also one of the factors causing a lack of harmony in the social relationship between the Hutterite and his neighbor. People feel that education forms the background of society and conditions the manner in which governments function; that an adequate system of public education is a pre-requisite to a successful democracy. It is this medium that brings together and resolves the composite sects and racial groups in this country into Americans. In its broad, philosophical aspect it provides the means whereby the individual may obtain a better enjoyment of life, and may become a more useful citizen who can make some contribution to the country that shelters him.

As has been pointed out in chapter 3, the Hutterites do maintain good schools in their colonies. However, many citizens feel that the better qualified teachers do not wish
to teach in Hutterite schools, and therefore Hutterite children receive somewhat inferior instruction. This they feel could be remedied by the Hutterite children attending the larger schools. Hutterite children have only ten percent of their enrollment in the intermediate grades and none in high school. Most Hutterite pupils receive less than grade VIII standing, as they all leave school at fifteen years of age. The elders prefer to keep the young people of the colony from acquiring a higher education, because they are most anxious that their young people shall remain on the land as farmers.

To do justice to the Hutterites it must be pointed out that they do feel that their schools are sufficient for their mode of living. They lend encouragement to the young men to learn practical trades such as carpentry, blacksmithing, etc. They also permit their older children to take correspondence courses from high schools and colleges. Reverend Joseph

13Report of The Legislative Committee Regarding the Land Sales Prohibition Act, Alberta, Canada, 1914. This figure refers to the condition existing in the Canadian schools. No information on the Montana schools was available to me.

14Ibid.

15In an interview with Miss Anne Stahl of the King Colony Ranch at Lewistown, she stated that she had taken courses from the correspondence school of Montana State University, even in Aeronautics. She is at present taking health education by correspondence from Montana State Normal School at Dillon, Montana.
Stahl of the King Colony Ranch at Lewistown sums up the Hutterite education as follows:

"The Hutterites are peace loving, law abiding citizens. They render all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; and honor to whom honor is due. They have no penitentiary, crime or juvenile delinquency records. They appreciate the wise American Government and wide awake Congressman. In their humble prayers they ask that the government be blessed with wisdom, Psalms 72:1,2. "Give the King thy judgment, oh, God, and thy righteousness unto the King's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and the poor with judgment."16

Perhaps the greatest objection to the Hutterite Church is the economic one. Those who oppose the Hutterites on this ground say that when the colonies settle near a town the value of property drops. This is true, and, at the risk of being facetious, may be illustrated as follows: Suppose a man owned a newspaper business in a town. The Hutterites buy up large areas of land around the town. Now instead of selling five or six newspapers to the families who formerly lived on the land bought by the Hutterites, he sells only one newspaper to the colony, thus he loses about four sales a day.17

Another point of opposition to the Hutterites on economic grounds is the economic one. Those who oppose the Hutterites on this ground say that when the colonies settle near a town the value of property drops. This is true, and, at the risk of being facetious, may be illustrated as follows: Suppose a man owned a newspaper business in a town. The Hutterites buy up large areas of land around the town. Now instead of selling five or six newspapers to the families who formerly lived on the land bought by the Hutterites, he sells only one newspaper to the colony, thus he loses about four sales a day.17

16 From an open letter from Rev. Joseph Stahl to Miss Marion Fabrich of the Teton County Citizen's Committee, Aug. 1948

17 This is a weak illustration but was presented to me by a very intelligent public servant of Lewistown, Montana.
economic grounds is that they buy nothing from town, instead dealing with wholesalers and depriving local business men of their profits. It is true that the church attempts to grow or manufacture all its needs, but this is impossible, consequently, the King Colony Ranch at Lewistown, Montana, spends from five to six thousand dollars a year for groceries at a supermarket there.\footnote{18} The Hutterite feels that ill will should not arise from their manufacturing clothes or shoes, for they must buy the leather and wool cloth, thus the only loss is the cost of manufacturing which the local merchant does not receive anyway.

The greatest opposition on the economic level arises from the question of taxes. In the articles of incorporation as presented in a preceding chapter\footnote{19} it was shown that the Hutterite Colony at Lewistown was 1) a religious society corporation 2) a non-profit organization 3) a community cooperative 4) a corporation. As a religious society corporation the question as to whether Hutterite farmers must pay Montana corporation license taxes will depend on proof that colony incomes are used solely for religious purposes. This item

\footnote{18}{Interview with Miss Anne Stahl of King Colony Ranch, Lewistown, Montana, April, 1949.}

\footnote{19}{See chapter III.}
taken from a Montana newspaper testifies as to the tax problem which exists in this sphere:

"The board (state equalization) will examine books and records of the colonies to be submitted in support of their contention that their money is used only for religious purposes. Religious corporations are exempt by law from paying corporation license taxes.

The board met yesterday with representatives of Augusta, Pondera and Chouteau Hutterite colonies. The colonies had been notified corporate taxes were due.

Colonies pay local and state property taxes without protest.

The Hutterites maintained the land being farmed is strictly "religious property".

When John A. Matthews, board chairman, asked whether the church or the colony operates the lands, a colony spokesman replied, "It's the corporation."

Hutterites told the board each colony does not hold its own funds to use as it pleases, but all expenditures must be approved by the elder in Canada, head of the entire church and of all the colonies. 20

Testimony showed that heads of each colony conferred often on financial policy.

The board was told "all income is for the church—but we have to live and we have to branch out once in awhile." 21

As a corporation the Lewistown colony pays corporation

20 There is some doubt as to whether this is particularly true. Many Hutterite Colonies in Montana did not come from Canada, and even though those colonies which have come to Montana in the past year may be under the elder in Canada, there is some doubt that the old Montana colonies are subject to his rule. It has been impossible to find any material either denying or substantiating this.

21 Great Falls Tribune, Sunday, July 5, 1949.
taxes and corporation license fees. As a community co-operative the Eutierite colony is not as fortunate as other big business cooperatives. It must pay income taxes. The United States government collects from each male member over twenty-one an individual income tax and also an income tax on the whole as a corporation.

To summarize the Eutierite problem in regard to taxes one might say they are American citizens and they are incorporated under our laws as a religious, cooperative corporation. They will tend to prosper as other farmers prosper. This cannot be avoided because obviously with their plain living and lack of luxuries they will accumulate profits faster in good times and be better able to stand hard times. They seem

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22 The Daily Missoulian of May 10, 1949 carried this article on "big business" cooperative corporations and the objection to them by big business because they were exempt from federal income taxes.

"Typical of "big business" cooperative corporations, the income tax exemptions of which are objected to by private companies:

1) Huge feed mill, elevator and seed plant of Eastern States Farmers' Exchange at Buffalo, N. Y., valued at $6,400,000. Eastern States Co-op does nearly $80 million in volume annually and is wholly tax exempt.

2) The 17,500-barrel-a-day petroleum refinery of Consumer's Cooperative Association, Kansas City. CCA owns four other refineries, has interest in a fifth and operates 994 oil wells. In 1948 its volume was $54 million and profits in excess of $8 million."
to have tax advantages and yet, if you look at them as a church, they are not tax free as other churches. If you look at them as a cooperative they are not taxed as one, but are forced to distribute their entire net gain and pay taxes on it each year.

As yet there has been no effort on the part of the Montana legislature to attempt to bring about a solution to the Hutterite problem. This does not mean that those who oppose the church have been inactive. Sincere and honest citizens have banded together to form citizenship committees and are endeavoring to bring action by applying pressure upon their representatives. Many hot heads have advocated direct action, but so far it has been avoided. Others, through stories such as the one related here, but for which it has been impossible to find definite proof, have attempted to lower the Hutterite in the eyes of the people of Montana. The story is told of a young Hutterite who ran up a bill of fifty dollars in a local tavern, and when pressed for payment, it was necessary for the head of the colony to make restitution. Knowing the bill would be paid, the young Hutterite asked the tavern owner to double the amount and then they would split the difference.

Also used by the enemies of the church are unfounded newspaper items such as this taken from a Montana paper:
"While we are speaking directly of the sect called Hutterites, still we wish it understood clearly that there are many other branches of the same kind of belief, such as Hussites, Mennonites, Doukabours, Amish and on and on and on and on.

The last of these people to arrive within our state are the Hutterites who purchased three tracts of irrigated farm lands and moved in in a body from Canada. One group is near Augusta and two groups are near Choteau. It is alleged that every last male in the three groups were armed with American citizenship papers when they crossed the boundary line. How this was accomplished we do not know, but it must be remembered, it usually takes an alien four years in order to earn citizenship rights in the United States and that after he has settled here.

They are communists and make no pretense otherwise. They live in communities and everything is owned in common. Their schools teach a limited course of studies, or so it is fair to believe, and all teaching is done in a foreign language.

The Hutterites arrived in Montana and already within the past few months, they have created much disturbance. They absolutely ignore all state laws they possibly can and they refuse to pay the local taxes. They are to be classed with the animal of the field when it comes to intellect...

The above "news item" and story has been included to show how opposition can be built up against any
minority group. It is no secret to the Hutterite that he is opposed in Montana, and his attitude toward this opposition is ably stated by Reverend Joseph Stahl of King Colony Ranch, Lewistown, in an open address to the secretary of the Teton County Citizenship Committee:

"Faith has had prosecutors since the beginning of time. Therefore we are little disturbed."24

24 Open address by Rev. Joseph Stahl to Miss Marion Fabrich, Secretary of Teton County Citizens Committee.
CHAPTER VI

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

The future of the Hutterische Church is one of darkest grey. With the old colonies of many years ago, when transportation was poor and a trip to town a rare occasion, the problems of living as a group were not so complex. Today, however, as the Hutterites are constantly pushed into more settled areas, and as civilization constantly pushes itself upon them, external friction with County, State and Nation takes place. This friction in its final analysis is primarily a culture conflict. Such conflict has often resulted in a life and death drama being enacted in the United States Army’s camps for conscientious objectors.1 It has also been enacted in the Supreme Court of the United States where the Church has been waging a losing battle for the right to retain their charters as corporations. Further evidence that the Church is losing its battle in the Supreme Court is the recent decision by the Court “that zoning laws made to keep certain neighborhoods white or white and non-asiatic, are purely pri-

vate agreements and cannot be enforced in law." Therefore, if landowners in parts of Montana or elsewhere in the United States feel that the Hutterites are not economically or socially desirable citizens, nothing prevents those landowners from agreeing not to sell their land either directly or indirectly to this religious body. These external conflicts have tended to drive the colonists closer together. However, the greatest worry facing the leaders of the Hutterite Church today is the natural conflicts arising within the Church itself.

First among the internal conflicts in the Hutterische community is a natural enmity existing between the institutions of family and community. In this sociological battle between the two institutions the community has the upper hand at the present time. In the Hutterite community the economic unity of the family is practically non-existent since the father has no more economic interest for his family than for any other family in the community. The role of the mother materially is non-existent as food is prepared in common kitchens and served in a common dining hall. Children learn

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2Shelley vs. Kramer, 334 U. S. -1 (1948)
not to look to the family for support but to the community.3

The family is also the enemy of the community in that when an issue arises, loyalty to the family is likely to be stronger than loyalty to the group. The drive of parental love has not been conquered in Hutterite communities in spite of four centuries of culture control.4

Another problem arises from the fact that the Hutterite colonies are making money. They cannot help but do so as their standard of living is not as high as members of the community which surrounds it.5 With the increase in capital there is also an increase in the demands of its members for more money for themselves and their families. That the danger of the desire for more money to the community, is fully recognized by Hutterische community leaders is attested by this statement made by one of them, "It happens to the younger boys. They wish money. But we don't allow that. Kill it as soon as it happens. Don't allow them to do it. Money

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4Ibid., p. 132.

5This information was received during an interview with a prominent business man of Lewistown, Montana. Though he is anonymous he has had business dealings with the Hutterite colonies and is therefore in a position to speak with authority. (April, 1949)
Recognized also as a threat to the future of the Church is the fact that there has been centuries of interbreeding among the Hutterite families. Outside marriages are rare: "Nowadays a young man is often assigned to work at another colony, and there he is guided in his search for a wife by the pastor, who, consulting the Stamnbaum, (genealogical chart), may advise which girls are eligible. Once in a while a Mennonite girl or an Old Order Amish maiden from outside is courted by a Hutterite, but this is rare, for young men know that marrying in "mixed style" is frowned upon." In spite of the above custom regarding the marriages of its members the Hutterisch Church points out with pride that none of its members have ever been confined to a state mental institution. Supposedly feeble mindedness is one of the results of interbreeding. During an interview with Miss Anne Stahl of the King Ranch Colony at Lewistown, Montana, she expressed the belief that this was perhaps due to the fact that the exercise and diet of the people prevented any ill effects.


8Interview with Miss Anne Stahl of the King Ranch Colony at Lewistown, Montana, April, 1949.
There are many other conflicts arising within the Church. Among these are: (1) a recognized discrepancy between the outmoded folkways and mores and present conditions, such as the use of automobiles and permitting one's picture to be taken. These folkways are being cast off by rationalization, a good example of which is found in this statement by Joseph Kinsey Howard of Great Falls, Montana:

"Men are permitted to drink wine or beer and men often stop at bars. Whiskey and other spirits are supposed to be forbidden as is tobacco in any form, but when a drink of hard liquor is offered, they frequently accept. This has caused some suspicious Westerners to believe that the colonists are too cheap to buy whiskey, but the Sect's leaders explain that the men accept the drink to avoid giving offense, even though this requires a minor compromise with principal."

(2) Social control over the assignment of work and distribution of privileges such as trips to town, etc. (3) Conflicts caused by increasing contact with outside culture. This has been used as a method for destroying the church by its enemies. The feelings of the Hutterite leaders toward this type of attack are clearly presented in this paragraph taken from an open letter written by Rev. Stahl of Lewistown, Montana.

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to a member of the Teton County's Citizen's Committee. "In another article it is stated that you suggested being good to the Hutterites in order to win them over. You would make little progress since all Hutterites are very well cared and provided for."\[10\]

This long list of trials and tribulations must not lead one to believe that there is no hope for the Hutterische Brethren for there are some rays of sunshine in the future of the Church. In the United States itself a group of Mormon living near Salt Lake City, Utah, have broken away from the Mormon Church and have made arrangements to enter the Hutterite Church.\[11\] In October of 1948 Dr. Flem Denning and Gustav Adams of Salt Lake City made a number of visits to the Milford Colony near Augusta, Montana. Here they studied the colony's plan of communal living which they wished to use also in the Aaromite Colony, soon to be located about 200 miles from Salt Lake City.\[12\] This group of about 150 men, women and children have already purchased or filed homestead

\[10\] From a direct address by Rev. Joseph Stahl of King Ranch Colony, Lewistown, Montana, to Mrs. Marion Fabrich, Secretary of Teton County Citizen's Committee, 1948.

\[11\] I had the privilege, while visiting King Ranch Colony at Lewistown, Montana, of reading a letter sent to Rev. Joseph Stahl of the above colony, from this group.

claims for about 6,000 acres of land. The colony will be 100 miles from the nearest railroad and is now waiting to open roads to its future home.

Hope also exists in the Hutterite Church that it may send some of its members to a new home in Mexico. There are at present strong Mennonite settlements there, especially in the state of Durango. Last year delegates of the church traveled to Mexico City, where they conferred with officials on the question of settlement. In the party were A. E. Kazakoff and his son, George, who are colonization agents, Bishop John Wurz, ranking Hutterite leader from the Wilson Colony, southeast of Lethbridge, Canada, Rev. Charles Waldner, leader of the West Haley Colony and Rev. John Waldner, Magrath Colony. With conditions in Mexico being so unsettled, there has as yet been no announcement as to the success or failure of the Mexican negotiations.

Perhaps the brightest hope for the Hutterische Church is the tiny South American country of Paraguay. Here a nation hopes to build up its depleted man power by offering to the unwanted peoples of the world land and protection from the

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13 Mennonite Life, North Newton, Kansas, April, 1947.
oppression of required military service. To the Hutterites it is a promised land where its youth can once again be reared in accordance with the laws of the church, untainted by the evils of modern civilization.

At present there are two colonies of Hutterites in Paraguay numbering about 450 people. These people are members of the former "Bruderhof Muehlf" which had formerly been located at the edge of the Rhon Hills, sixty miles east of Frankfurt, Germany. In 1937 religious persecution in the Reich forced them to flee to England. With the coming of the second World War the Hutterites, who are pacifists, decided to leave this refuge. Paraguay offered them land, and 334 men, women and children left for this frontier in the tropical wilderness. This account tells of the journey of the Hutterites to their new home:

"Landing at Buenos Aires, we then journeyed for ten days and nights up the river to Asunciion, capital of Paraguay. Conditions, especially sleeping accommodations were bad beyond anything they had expected. For many days more a small barge, attached by ropes to another boat, carried them up the Paraguay River to the town of Puerto Casado, just north of the Tropic of Capricorn.

A primitive railroad bore them deeper into the interior. They described it as looking like the "first iron horses" which snorted over the plains in the United States in 1860. It took the train eleven hours to cover a hundred

miles. At the end of the rail line they loaded themselves and their belongings into wagons which carried them to the little Mennonite colony of Filadelfici, deep in the Paraguayan wilderness. But even this was not the end of their journey. After a sojourn in the hot insect infested jungle of the Chaco, they heard of a land in Alto, Paraguay, on the other side of the Paraguayan River which was known as Primavera (land of springtime). In this rolling forested country, they have finally settled down to build permanent homes."

This movement to Paraguay is no minor immigration. It is a major undertaking of the entire Mennonite Church. To the ten thousand displaced Mennonites in the United States and British zones of Germany they are sending chartered ships. The displaced persons, mostly of Dutch extraction, will be carried (2,000 at a time) to Paraguay where they will join the Hutterite and Mennonite refugees from the United States and Canada. Here they will be supplied by the Mennonite Central Committee with farmland, tools and seed with which to take up their simple lives. In 1946, the Central Committee spent $3,000,000, an average Mennonite contribution of $15. 1947 resettlement of D. P.'s and others will cost an estimated $2,500,000. Most Mennonites have come to regard such assessments as an inescapable price of sheeplike living in a wolves' world. 17 Typical of the organization in one Mennonite Commu-

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16 *Scholastic (The American High School Weekly)*, Dayton, Ohio, October 6, 1941, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4, p. 6.

ity for relief of these people is this: "Food, clothing, farm machinery and such essentials as sewing machines, some of them almost new, are leaving Newton, Kansas, almost every week for the jungles of Paraguay and Uruguay. There, defying nature and periodic native uprisings, displaced Mennonites from Germany, behind the Iron Curtain, and even from Canada, are carving new homes out of the virgin soil. At Bethel College, an amateur installed wireless setup keeps in constant touch with the colonies south of the border and there have been transcontinental wireless conferences among Mennonite community leaders in Kansas and the Chaco. New is the drive to send plows, disks, cultivators, wagons and other horse-drawn equipment to the South American settlers. Each family can be given only $100 to start their farm, and sometimes ten of the newcomers have to share a single plow."18

In 1524 Conrad Grebel, leader of an earnest little band of Swiss Bible students wrote, "True, believing Christians are as sheep in the midst of wolves."19 This tiny band of students later became known as the Hutterites and Mennonites. Today their descendants are still conscious of leader Grebel's words and so are doing their best to get some of their brother sheep to safer pastures.

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Most of the material available to me on the Hutterian Brethren was written in the German language. Such sources of information as the Larger Church Chronicle and the Smaller Church Chronicle, both of which are complete histories of the Church; manuscripts and codices, along with collections of letters and sermons, which are in possession of the Bruderhof near Macleod, Alberta, Canada, would have been useless to me since I have no knowledge of the German language. Mr. John Horsch, in his book, The Hutterian Brethren (1528-1931), has condensed and translated these Chronicles and manuscripts. For this reason, I found it necessary to rely heavily on his work for the chapter on the history of the Church. Mr. Horsch is very prominent as a writer of Mennonite history, as he has written several other books on that subject.

Since the thesis itself is one relating to the current problems of the Church, it was necessary for me to use books and magazines and newspaper articles very extensively. I also used to a considerable extent material presented to me by Miss Anne Stahl of the Hutterite Colony of Lewistown, Montana. This material I consider as the most valuable in aiding in the formation of this thesis.

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