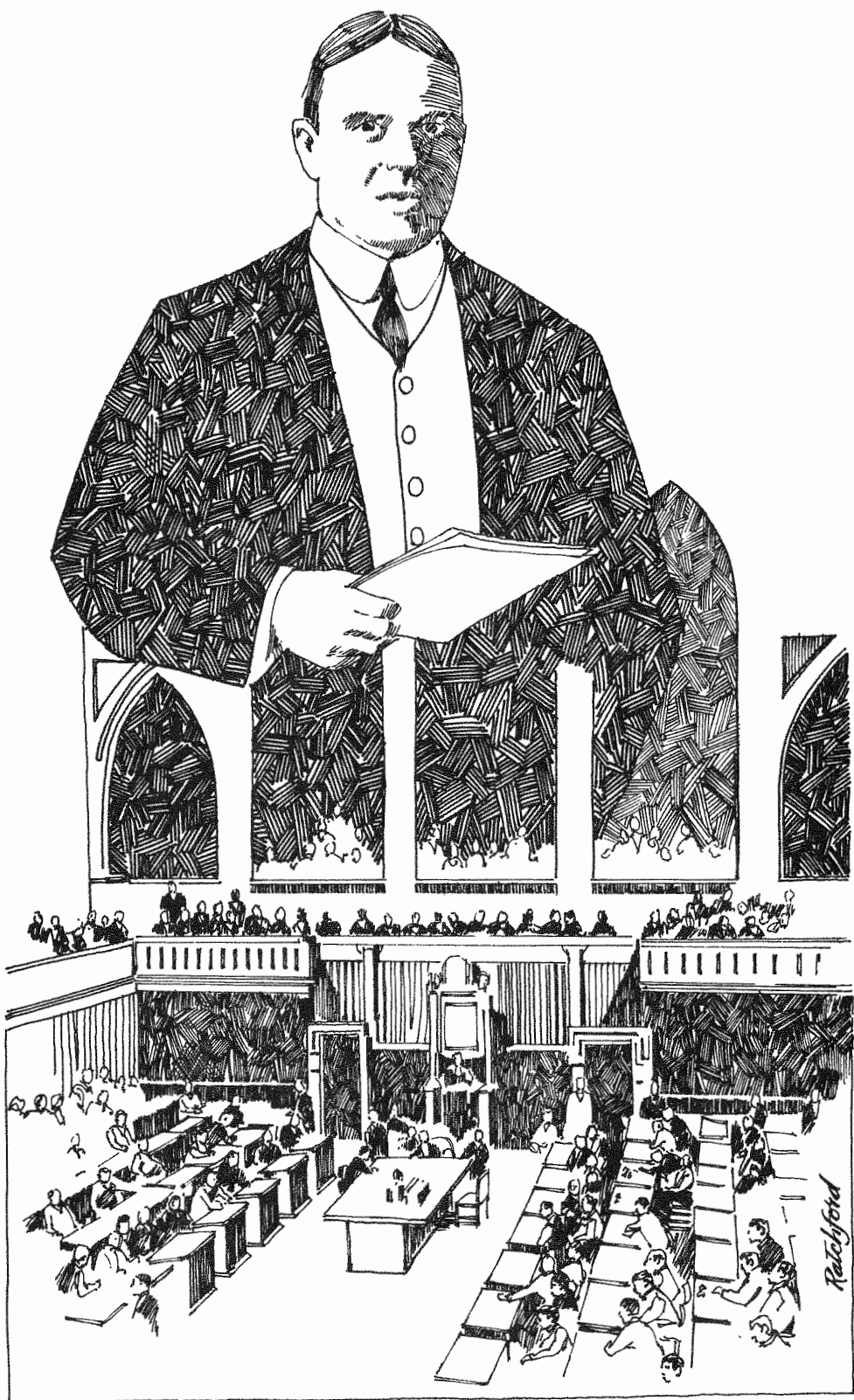


Provenance

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Parliament—For and Against

16. War's Aftermath and Mennonite Exclusion

If there are in the United States or Europe people of any class, whether they be called Mennonites, Hutterites, or any other kind of "ites," we do not want them to come to Canada . . . — JOHN WESLEY EDWARDS.¹

CANADIAN SENTIMENT against Mennonites was aggravated not only by aliens speaking foreign languages in their schools and churches and by their exemption from military service, but also by the amplification of both of these irritations from the United States. From the beginning, Canada guarded herself against possible subversion from the United States, but when that country entered the war Canada was forced to cope with an influx of pacifists and their families. Once again, Mennonites and Hutterites were caught in the middle of the ensuing conflict, which reached its peak with the return of the veterans from Europe. The result was that Mennonites, Hutterites and Doukhobors were barred in 1919 from entering Canada, months after the war had come to an end, and just when over 100,000 Mennonites in Russia, being uprooted by the Revolution, were hoping for a better homeland.

The United States had not entered the war until April 6, 1917, but, as a member of the British Empire, Canada had become concerned about her southern neighbour. Of the 100 million or

more Germans in the world, at least 20 million were living abroad, many of them in the United States. Among this large group of *Auslanddeutsche* (Germans abroad) were five million who had been born in Europe and who had migrated to the West during the decades immediately preceding the war. Many of these American Germans or German Americans had intimate ties with the motherland: i.e. family, culture, business and politics.

Indeed, so influential and strategically placed was the German populace in the United States that Britain viewed its presence with great concern. Suddenly "a skilled and world-wide espionage system" was seen at work everywhere. The mail from relatives, the travels of businessmen, the activities of consular offices, were all viewed with suspicion. Even barbers, governesses and domestic servants were linked to the network of spies. Not least of all, education and publishing were seen as instruments serving the purposes of propaganda:

. . . school books . . . were used along subtle lines of education regarding the greatness of the German mind, the historic nobility of the German rules, the sympathetic geniality of the German character, the wonderful leaps of German science; the German professor was omnipresent in universities everywhere . . . ; books were written and published . . . to build up and perpetuate the belief in German military, scientific, educational and philosophical supremacy . . . ; newspapers in every centre of the United States were found in war-years to have been started, or helped or bribed or otherwise influenced to further German propaganda . . .²

Parallel to a vast German espionage system, as the British and Canadians saw it, were a multitude of pacifist organizations. While these were variously motivated and had a variety of complexions, including an Irish one, in the minds of the patriots these were linked to the internal and external German threat. Pacifists were automatically assumed to be pro-German, making them guilty by association until somehow their innocence was proven. With few exceptions Mennonite and Hutterite political loyalties did not involve Germany, but this is not how much of the American or Canadian public tended to see the situation.³

With the War Measures Act, Canada had taken immediate steps to protect herself against a southern threat. The powers of censorship were first applied to German publications originating

in the United States and circulating in Canada. In one six-month period no fewer than 67 German-oriented papers, most of them from the U.S., were barred from entering Canada.⁴ Included in the group was *Christlicher Bundesbote* (Messenger of Christian Union) which, as the weekly German organ of the General Conference Mennonites, was entering western Canadian communities. The Secretary of State declared that the *Bundesbote* contained "objectionable matter" and barred its Canadian circulation, which was not restored until at least a year after the war had come to an end.

The decision was, of course, not readily accepted by the Mennonites. Bishop David Toews, speaking for prairie readers and for the publishers in Berne, Indiana, questioned the cessation of the German paper, saying that "we want this paper for church and mission work, not for political ends."⁵ Bishop Toews' case, however, was not helped by the allegation that his father, Bishop Jakob Toews of Newton, Kansas, remembered his Prussian heritage and expressed rather strong pro-German views. The words of the Newton bishop were reported to the Canadian chief press censor second-hand. An agent of the censor quoted the senior bishop as saying the following:

I know it is wrong and sinful to read war news, and form opinions, but I cannot help it; my sympathies are with the Germans, and I hope to see Germany win.⁶

The chief press censor took the view that church papers were "the most dangerous media" for communicating enemy propaganda and causing disaffection "among the foreign population residing in Canada." While the "incorrect and disturbing statements" of *Bundesbote* were contained in paragraphs "more or less obscure," the inclinations and intentions of the publication were to the censor very evident. It contained "gross misrepresentations of the actions and attitudes of Great Britain" and "flagrant manifestations of unreasoning hatred" toward the Empire.⁷

As the war progressed and anti-German feeling swept Canada, other American Mennonite publications were affected. The *Mennonitische Rundschau* entering Canada from Scottdale, Pennsylvania, was excluded.⁸ And a pamphlet of the Holdeman people (Church of God in Christ Mennonite), containing resolutions passed at Lonetree, Kansas, in 1917, was barred from Canada after its circulation in the mails had also been prohibited

in the United States. The doctrinal pamphlet set forth and rationalized the more conservative Mennonite view, which espoused total non-participation and refusal to take part even in food pledges and the Red Cross. Biblical texts were cited by chapter and verse to support the point being made.

Several Canadian publications were also affected. In *Der Mitarbeiter*, the monthly periodical of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, published at Gretna in the West Reserve, editor H. H. Ewert continued to promote bilingual schools, both private and public. The *Steinbach Post*, a German Mennonite community newspaper for the East Reserve, founded as a private venture in 1913 at Steinbach, was suspended in its fifth year. Both papers were disqualified under a general censorship rule prohibiting "publication in enemy languages" unless they were "standard works of religious, artistic, literary and scientific reference, etc." Matters of "a religious character" were being very narrowly defined, much too narrowly for the Mennonite view of religion which at that time was still quite comprehensive. Religious publications, the censor said, could partake "in no sense of the character of a newspaper." All features of a newspaper had to be eliminated "such as trade advertising, news of all kinds, even views of church or denominational meetings."⁹

Der Mitarbeiter had more of a devotional character than did the *Steinbach Post*, but to exclude from its pages all the problems of education and culture would for Ewert have meant its total emasculation. And the *Post*, by its very nature, needed to include all the facets of community life, which in one way or another all touched on religion and the Mennonite view of the world.

The greatest American disturbance in Canada, however, was not caused by German publications but rather by German-speaking people whose identity was compounded by their pacifism. Such German-speaking immigrants were the Mennonites and Hutterites, chiefly those Mennonites and Hutterites or their descendants who had come to America from Russia in the 1870s, and who had discovered that the United States was not the haven for pacifists that they had expected it to be. The Hutterites who had entered Canada from the United States in 1898 had returned a few years later, but American Mennonites by the hundreds had since the 1890s made Canada their permanent home by forming new communities in Saskatchewan and Alberta. In a sense, therefore, the war-motivated migrations were simply an acceleration of interest and movement that had begun before the war.

How many were actually involved in the war-time migrations northward has never been established with accuracy, partly because some of them later accepted the presidential amnesty and returned south. The exaggerated figures quoted in the press and in the House of Commons ranged from 30,000 to 60,000, but the Hon. J. A. Calder, the Minister of Immigration, claimed that no more than 500–600 Mennonites and about 1,000 Hutterites had entered Canada in 1918, the year of the greatest influx.¹⁰ No more than 200 arrived before 1918 and by mid-November of that year the war was over.¹¹ Furthermore, these numbers represented not individual draft-age men, but their families as well, and those families, especially the Hutterite ones, were large. Whatever the number, they came to Canada expecting privileges which apparently were not forthcoming in the States.

The United States entered the war much later than Canada, but for some reason was much more intolerant of pacifists within her borders. Much of this intolerance was probably due to the unclear nature of American law on this matter, and the American public's not having had the educational advantage of that clarification. Recall that President Grant referred the delegates from Russia to the militia laws of the individual states and to the likelihood of America's never being at war, certainly not for 50 years. Besides, there were precedents in the American Revolution and the Civil War, in which conscientious objectors fulfilled their military obligations through the employment of substitutes or the payment of commutation fees.

Times had changed, however, and the imperial rivalries of the day affected America much like the emergence of new empires a half-century earlier had affected Russia. During the First World War, military conscription in America had to be "absolute and universal."¹² The laws that were written into the statute books were supported by public sentiment, which was very much conditioned by the imperialisms of the day and a growing American nationalism.

Before the passage of the Selective Service Act on May 18, 1917, the American Mennonites sent delegates and petitions to Washington asking for exemption for pacifist people, and not without some success. The Act did provide for a certain exemption in the form of an alternate noncombatant service for conscientious objectors. The definition of noncombatant service, however, was left to the President, and when this definition was finally given on March 20, 1918, it had a military context. Paci-

fists were expected to enrol in the military, though in a non-combatant role. In that sense the American Selective Service Act was very much like the Canadian Military Service Act, and it is possible that the latter was modelled after the former.

Meanwhile, drafting of young men had been proceeding in the United States since September of 1917. Draftees were placed in military camps, and those unable to accept the conditions of the draft were held in detention until their case could finally be decided. For the 503 who claimed to be conscientious objectors, 360 for religious reasons, the decision came by way of court martial, usually resulting in prison sentences ranging from one year to life. The maximum term was given to 142 men and 17 were sentenced to death, though none were executed; all received a presidential pardon a few months after the close of the war.¹³ More might have been court-martialed, except for new rulings after June 1918. In March, Congress had legislated that military men could be furloughed to alleviate farm labour shortages, and in June the Secretary of War applied the law to conscientious objectors. A civilian board of inquiry was established to review all the cases. After that about 60 per cent of the conscientious objectors were assigned to farm work in America or to relief projects in France. The process was a slow one, however, and the cases of at least 30 per cent of those detained in camps were not reviewed when the war ended.

Thus, during the course of the war, the law was adjusted in favour of conscientious objectors. But for the American public at large and for camp and prison officials in particular, adjustment did not come easily; intolerance remained entrenched. The result was brutal treatment in camps, guard-houses and jails, molestations of the families, and harassments of entire Mennonite and Hutterite communities.

Anything that smacked of "Germanism" or "slackerism" was attacked with unmitigated fury; mob action dotted the experience of Mennonites in Montana, Illinois, Kansas, Iowa, Ohio, and particularly Oklahoma. For a man of German ancestry who happened also to be a conscientious objector, America was in some areas the worst of all possible places in 1917-18. Pressure to buy war bonds; scurrilous press treatment; bans on the use of the German language in schools, churches, and on the street; and economic and social ostracism marked the plight of Mennonites during the war.¹⁴

The Hutterites were the special targets of patriotic zealots, who treated them as enemy aliens. Their ministers were assaulted, sheep and cattle were stolen, and court actions were taken designed to absolutely exterminate the colonies in South Dakota.¹⁵ The most torturous treatment, however, was assigned to individual pacifists, and one historian believes that "the darkest chapter in the entire story of the treatment received by the conscientious objectors is that of the four Hutterian Mennonites: Joseph Hofer, Michael Hofer, David Hofer, and Jacob Wipf."¹⁶ So severely were they beaten, starved, and manhandled, first at Alcatraz and then at Leavenworth, that two of them died of the consequences.

The Hutterites had appealed to President Wilson for "liberty to live according to the dictates of our conscience," while committing themselves to be "loyal to our God-ordained government and to serve our country in ways which do not interfere with our religious convictions."¹⁷ But in spite of their appeal and the provisions of the law, they bore the brunt of the special wrath of the American people whose blatant nationalism was so rudely insulted by the Hutterite insistence on a sovereignty higher than the nation-state. In their hour of need, the Hutterites remembered the arrangement made with the Canadian government in 1899.

The Mennonites also remembered that scores of families had successfully resettled on the Canadian prairies at the turn of the century. So they, like the Hutterites, turned their eyes northward.¹⁸ The first Mennonites, only three of them, had left Minnesota for Canada immediately after the declaration of war. Further movement at that time was discouraged by the President's order of one-year imprisonment for anyone caught leaving the country to escape conscription.¹⁹

Early in 1918, the Hon. J. A. Calder, Canadian Minister of Immigration and Colonization, assured the Hutterites that the military exemption provisions granted them by an 1899 Order-in-Council at the time of their first settlement in Canada would be honoured.²⁰ Immediately 17 of the 18 colonies in South Dakota proceeded to purchase land, five of them in Manitoba and others in Alberta. By October the colonies had paid out one million dollars in cash for land and about 1,000 Hutterites had already resettled.²¹ Of the estimated 350 Mennonites who had arrived in Canada by that time,²² a fair number had come to relatives and acquaintances who had previously settled in the

prairie provinces. These groups included complete family units from Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska and Oklahoma settling at such places as Carnduff, Hepburn and Rosthern in Saskatchewan and at Morden in Manitoba, where they founded the Herold Mennonite Church. Some single men found a temporary new home at the Mennonite boarding schools at Gretna and Rosthern, partly because they had been helped in their border crossing and resettlement by the schools' leaders, H. H. Ewert and David Toews. These movements received little public attention.

Among those finding their way to Rosthern were the Rev. Jacob Klaassen and his family from Clinton, Oklahoma. A brother-in-law of David Toews, Klaassen had been on the same trek to Asiatic Russia and in the same immigration to Kansas in the 1880s. After marrying Toews' sister, the daughter of Bishop Jacob Toews, in Newton, Kansas, he had taken up a homestead in Oklahoma in 1895. By 1917 he had several sons of military age, and his concern was not only the military law but also the fact that Mennonites were not united on that question — at least this was his conclusion at the conference session in Kansas. "There was much talk," he wrote in his memoirs, "about how we ought to remain faithful and loyal to our country, but not how we ought to be loyal to our confession of faith."²³

Klaassen sadly agreed with Jacob and Martin, his oldest sons, that they should attempt to gain secret entry into Canada. If they were successful, the family would follow. The boys made their way to Hydro, Montana, where there was a Mennonite settlement and after a few days they found an opportunity to get across the border. Martin was arrested by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and jailed at Moose Jaw because his identification documents were inadequate. From there he was sent to the military base in Regina where David Toews secured his release.

His oldest two sons having been "granted freedom," Klaassen decided to sell his farm and effects and take the rest of his family to Canada. There were other families with similar concerns who wanted their sons to join the party. In order not "to arouse any suspicions" along the way they bought tickets in stages and travelled first to Wichita, then to Kansas City, and then to Emerson, a Manitoba border town, where they "acquired harvest worker tickets for one cent a mile." They crossed the border on August 19, 1918, and eventually made their way indirectly to Rosthern. A third son, Henry (later a church leader and widely known as H. T. Klaassen), who was also approaching military

age, was apprehended en route. Before they could continue on from Winnipeg, he had to face the American consul who "quizzed him thoroughly," but then sent him on his way. "In order not to attract any undue attention in Rosthern," David Toews had suggested that the group step out in Hague, to be brought to Rosthern by car. Finally, it was done in that way.²⁴

The mediators in the new Mennonite immigration were the same land agents and Canadian government representatives strategically placed in various American centres who a few years previously had played such an active role in the Canadian attempt to fill the prairies with suitable agriculturalists. It became a most frustrating role, because it changed from enthusiastic promotion of Canadian land and liberty to cautious interpretation, and finally to reluctant reporting of Canadian restriction.²⁵

At least two completely new communities were formed by these immigrants from the United States, one near Grande Prairie in Alberta and the other at Vanderhoof in British Columbia. These two settlements were farther north and west than Mennonites had yet gone in Canada. Settling on lands adjacent to Bear Lake, northwest of Grande Prairie and west of present-day Clairmont, were Krimmer Mennonite Brethren families from Kansas. Their leader was a D. Z. Wiebe, a lay preacher with five sons of or near military age.²⁶ This new community built its own meeting-house in 1919 and reached a peak of 60 members before disintegration set in a decade later due to migrations back to the U.S., and affiliation with local evangelicals. Of all the Mennonites, the Krimmer had not only gone the farthest north but they also proceeded to relate most energetically to their neighbours. Among their early converts were the George Beliskys, who embraced the new-found faith so thoroughly that they not only insisted on immediate baptism but on its detail in the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren style, meaning immersion. Since it was December, the leaders had no alternative but to cut a hole in the ice of Bear Creek and to baptize the Beliskys in its icy waters.

In the process of evangelism, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren were themselves changed, and later they followed the Beliskys into missionary work, ministry and evangelism in impressive numbers, eventually to lose their Mennonite identity altogether and to become quite respectable. In the early days of their arrival, however, they were the target of community scorn and suspicion. For a time they were even blamed for the death of six trappers in the Bear Lake area, whose murder remained un-

solved. In that experience of early community abuse, they shared the lot of the Mennonite Brethren who were settling to the west at Vanderhoof, in the British Columbia interior. There had been very little settlement in the west coast province until that time — Renata in the southern interior was the only community. What attracted the newcomers was the availability of both lands and jobs in the isolated interior.²⁷ The construction of a railway from near Vancouver to Prince George was providing work opportunities and there was good acreage for sale in the Nechako Valley near Vanderhoof.

The Vanderhoof people became quite alarmed, and so did the rest of British Columbia. By August 31, 1918, the Vanderhoof postmaster was advising the Premier of British Columbia that his town had become "the headquarters of all Mennonites coming from the United States." By the end of October "some 200," it was said, had "brought all their possessions from the prairie provinces and the United States and settled permanently."²⁸ Soon the newcomers were identified with the Doukhobors and as "descendants of gypsies." The Mennonites sent a delegation of two to Victoria to clarify their status. P. H. Neufeld and D. J. Dick found that many of their problems were due to inadequate information on the part of government officials. After explaining themselves, they had no difficulty getting their teachers certified, and in the end they were quite amazed that "people, who cannot understand being without arms, have so much consideration."²⁹ They concluded that everything would go well if only Mennonites could live up to their faith. Mr. Dick said:

The Mennonite question is really a great question. According to our confession of faith, we are peaceable, quiet, yielding, upright, living entirely according to God's Word, unarmed people in every way. But often the world points a finger at us and asks, are those also Mennonites? A Mennonite preacher once spoke to an official of the War. The preacher had just explained the defencelessness of the Mennonites, saying, "We are people that live according to the Word of God." Just then, unfortunately, a Mennonite man stumbled by, smoking and cursing. Said the official, "That man accused his neighbour before the courts. Is he also a Mennonite?"³⁰

The task of informing the public was much larger, however, than a single trip to Victoria, because the content of the British Columbia press quickly spread eastward where it was joined to

similar uneasiness over the "invasion" of the Hutterites. Thus, the Canadian public, which like the press did not always differentiate between Doukhobors, Hutterites and Mennonites, was told that Mennonites were "flocking" into the north country. Moreover these German-speaking settlers had plans laid "to hog the best available land" in order "to force Canadian settlers out." As the "pacifists closed in" veterans of the war had no alternative but to take up "homesteads 40 miles from the railway."³¹

Soon headlines, news stories, letters, and editorials identified Mennonites as a most undesirable lot. The *Free Press* referred to Mennonites as "dirty shirkers . . . without doubt no asset to any country."³² An editorial writer in *Saturday Night* found "little, if anything, to recommend them." Mennonites, it was said, were a colonized and communal tribe living and trading among themselves and "retaining undisturbed all their antiquated propensities, most of which are out of harmony with the customs and aspirations of their country."³³ The *Calgary Eye-Opener* reported "German Mennonite colonies [Hutterites] swarming over Alberta . . ." Two million Mennonites from the States were coming to Canada, the *Eye-Opener* said, buying up large blocks of land which "the returning soldier should have."³⁴ The *Ottawa Citizen* headlined charges of "draft-dodging on a wholesale scale."³⁵ And the *Free Press*, often a defender of Mennonites, now concluded that "no immigrant ought to be allowed to come to Canada in the future unless he is prepared to become a Canadian; and to see his children Canadianized."³⁶

Other papers, the *Regina Leader* for instance, were more moderate. On the one hand, the *Leader's* editors wanted every commitment made in the past to these people honoured, since "solemn treaties and binding engagements" were not "mere scraps of paper to be torn up at will." On the other hand, none of those old agreements should "be stretched one point beyond their original meaning" and in the future no further agreements should be made guaranteeing immunity from military service.³⁷

A very few papers, like the *Hamilton Herald*, came out defending or at least clarifying the situation by making some important differentiations. Mennonites were "not communistic" and their numbers both in Canada and the U.S. were small; they were not a major threat. On the contrary, the Mennonites who had been in Ontario for generations were "among the most industrious, thrifty, and prosperous." The *Herald* then proceeded to interpret the Mennonite creed, which for the most part was "Orthodox Christian":

... they give a literal interpretation to several of Christ's injunctions, which most other Christians are content to regard as inapplicable to modern times and conditions. With the Quakers, the Mennonites believe in the doctrine of nonresistance and teach it.³⁸

A majority of people in Canada, however, were completely ready to accept the exaggerated and prejudicial accounts rendered in the press, and not without their own good reasons. The recent influx of large numbers of immigrants from central and eastern Europe to western Canada had given rise to strong fears that there could be thousands of "enemy aliens" within Canada's borders.³⁹ Canadian suspicions were strengthened by the memory of Doukhobor protests, leading in 1907 to the seizure of their Saskatchewan lands, and of conservative Mennonites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan resisting not only the use of English in their private schools but also attendance at English-language public schools.

Public uneasiness, fears and misgivings were also nurtured by other events. The public school attendance acts, which were passed during the war to help anglicize and Canadianize the intransigent, were attended by much publicity, reminding Canadians of the problem in their midst.⁴⁰ The disfranchisement which came in 1917 and the exemptions from military service further inflamed the feelings about special privileges for apparently totally alien, if not enemy, people. There were also troubling inconsistencies about the Mennonites, which occasionally bubbled to the surface and which made conscientious objection seem little more than an escape from citizenship dues on the part of people who were really pro-German.⁴¹ One 48-year-old enlistee with "nine children living and my wife very delicate," for instance, admitted enlisting "while drunk." Yet he wanted out because "I can kill no man."⁴² Bishop David Toews, who signed many identity certificates, was sometimes accused of turning many good-for-nothings into pacifistic Mennonites.⁴³

The problem of questionable ministerial practice came up especially with reference to Klaas Peters of Waldeck, Saskatchewan, a man of many roles and identities. A businessman and land agent, first in southern Manitoba and then in southern Saskatchewan (where he also established a hotel), he travelled far and wide in both Canada and the States and was more informed than most, and quite clever besides. Not surprisingly,

the government had asked him to go to Russia in the 1890s to find more Mennonite immigrants. Thus, Peters, like Gerhard Ens of Rosthern, had much to do with bringing Mennonite immigrants from wherever he could get them to settle Saskatchewan. At one time he was a chronicler and he wrote the story of the Bergthaler church;⁴⁴ at another time, when convenient, he functioned as a minister.

Around 1900, while still in southern Manitoba, Peters had, like Gerhard Ens of Rosthern and others, become fascinated with the writings of the dissenting Lutheran theologian named Immanuel Swedenborg. Gradually, small Mennonite groups of Swedenborgian disciples were formed, and Klaas Peters as a Swedenborgian minister ordained in 1902 ended up leading one of these New Church of Jerusalem groups at Waldeck near Herbert. This ecclesiastical connection, his role as a justice of the peace, and his management of a hotel made his Mennonite identity quite questionable. But Mennonite leaders had allowed him to go with them to Ottawa because he knew his way around and he in turn had found the Mennonite connection useful when it came to keeping young men out of the war. Under police investigation for some time, his activities as an "alleged Mennonite minister" caught up with him in court after the war had ended and contributed further to the detriment of the public image of the Mennonites.⁴⁵

The Mennonite cause was hurt even more by the positions taken by most other religious communities and their spokesmen in Canada. Even "alien" church leaders, like the bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, had become quite zealous about the war effort. Having at first encouraged the faithful to support the Austrian-Hungarian cause, he soon reversed himself under pressure and became more zealous for the British side.⁴⁶ Others similarly went out of their way to prove their loyalty. The large Protestant denominations were apparently fully behind the war effort. The primate of the Church of England in Canada urged his people to support the active prosecution of the war.⁴⁷ And the general superintendent of the Methodist Church called upon all Methodists to ascend to "the height of sacrifice" and "catch the martyr spirit of true Christianity."⁴⁸ According to J. S. Woodsworth, a recruiting service of St. James Church, Montreal, on October 4, 1915, by-passed hearing a New Testament lesson to give ear to a series of church and community leaders who deliberately attempted "through a recital of the abominable acts

of the Germans to stir up the spirit of hatred and retaliation." Woodsworth reported further:

The climax was reached when the pastor in an impassioned appeal stated that if any young man could go and did not go he was neither a Christian nor a patriot. No! The climax was the announcement that recruiting sergeants were stationed at the door of the church and that any man of spirit — any lover of his country — any follower of Jesus — should make the decision then and there.⁴⁹

It was not only reactionary preachers who presented arms, but rather progressives in the fledgling Canadian social gospel movement who heralded the war as part of the great moral crusade towards the building of the kingdom.⁵⁰ Given the crusading spirit of the day, in which Canadianization and Christianization of immigrants were seen as one, geared to preparing good citizens ready to fight in British imperial wars, it is not strange to find the main-line Anglo-Saxon churches speaking out in opposition to the Mennonites.⁵¹ The Presbyterians in a well-publicized action said:

Attention having been called to the uneasiness existing in some of the western provinces in consequence to the recent advent of large numbers of Mennonite settlers from the United States, the executive [of the Board of Home Missions and Social Service] express their disapproval of the policy of permitting large numbers of persons of foreign language and tradition to settle in contiguity so that the process of assimilation becomes unduly slow and the growth of the proper national spirit is retarded. They are strongly of the opinion that all persons entering the country as settlers should be prepared to undertake their fair share of all national burdens, including national defence, and the strongest discouragement should be given to the instituting of schools in which work is carried on in the German or other foreign language.⁵²

There were, of course, other religious pacifists of varying degrees in Canada. The Catholics of Quebec had, for the most part, opposed conscription. In Toronto W. Greenwood Brown, of the Quaker organization, remained an opponent throughout the war, and in Winnipeg the Rev. J. S. Woodsworth was saying repeatedly that Christ was against war and that moral issues

could not be settled by force.⁵³ There was no coalition of all those pacifist forces, however. Mennonites at least, being not even joined to each other, were not connected to the Woodsworth cause, and their historic Upper Canada alliance with the Quakers had also been modified with the changing times and personalities.

The federal government found ways of appeasing public opinion. As we have seen, Mennonite preachers from the States had been prevented by immigration officials from entering Canada to conduct anti-war revival meetings. Also, the chief press censor had halted publication of German Mennonite papers and barred certain literature from Canadian circulation.⁵⁴ Furthermore, attempts were made to exclude the arriving immigrants from exemption privileges. At first it was explained that Canadian guarantees to pacifist groups applied only to those immigrant movements protected by special orders-in-council — those of 1873 for the Mennonites, 1899 for the Hutterites, and 1898 for the Doukhobors. Such explanations, at first unfounded, did become law with the limiting Order-in-Council of October 25, 1918.

Some agitators also sought a way out in the British-American conventions, which obligated one nation or empire to draft or to repatriate the draft-dodgers and deserters of the other. That plan also fell through because Canada could legally draft only British subjects and repatriation did not sit well with a government which had officially welcomed the immigrants. Finally, Canada agreed to have Americans registered at American consulates while intending to draft them, but the war's end cut the plan short.

All these efforts to pacify the agitators were not enough, not even after the end of the war. The return of the veterans fanned the flames that otherwise might have died out. Government ministers travelling west were besieged by petitions from all kinds of groups and individuals. The resolutions and telegrams to Ottawa of the veterans' groups and political organizations were widely publicized. The Great War Veterans Association was particularly adamant, and threatened to allow returned veterans to confront these new settlers who were getting the desirable lands. The Great War Next-of-Kin Association wanted Mennonites in Canada to be drafted and anglicized "and those outside kept there."⁵⁵

The agitation of veterans' groups and citizens' clubs was inconsistent and paradoxical. The veterans, for instance, stressed their having fought against totalitarianism and for fundamental human rights; however, they had not fought for total freedom

of conscience. The Orangemen had also forgotten their tradition, and S. F. Coffman was quick to catch this. He reminded Member of Parliament W. D. Euler of this fact:

I noted that the Orange friends are not of the same faith as their honoured head Prince William of Orange who was among the first rulers to grant relief to the people of nonresistant faith and to the Mennonites who had their first organization in his country, under the leadership of Menno Simons, a Hollander. I understand why the Orange Society should oppose religious liberty for it is the very thing for which William contended.⁵⁶

All of the public pressure finally reached Canada's lawmakers in a way which they could not resist, and, even though the war was over, the politicians followed through on the demands born in the patriotism of international conflict and nurtured by the war's aftermath. In the spring of 1919, Parliament was ready to amend the Immigration Act of 1910, and the Cabinet was in the mood to issue restrictive Orders-in-Council, which affected first the Mennonites, Hutterites and Doukhobors, and later the Negroes, Chinese and Japanese. At this point, the most "undesirable" people were the Mennonites. Parliamentarians waxed eloquent as they pled for maintaining "the purity of the stream of our immigration" by cutting off the indiscriminate flow of "undesirables."⁵⁷ As one M.P. put it:

The War Veterans of Canada have taken a position against the immigration of Hutterites and Mennonites into western Canada . . . But apart from the returned soldiers, a number of Canadian clubs throughout western Canada have declared themselves against the entrance of these people into the Dominion. Now the Canadian clubs, as I know them, are supposed to represent a very high type of citizenship, they want to perpetuate the very best ideals of our citizenship, and if after mature consideration by men of all parties and of all creeds, the Canadian clubs in Winnipeg and elsewhere in the West declare that it is not in the interest of Canada that these people should be allowed to settle in this country, I think their views are worthy of the attention of this Committee.⁵⁸

Most derogatory in his comments was John Wesley Edwards, a physician, Methodist and Liberal-Conservative Member of

Parliament for Frontenac. Edwards used the word "cattle" repeatedly in his April 30 speech to describe the undesirable class, conscientious objectors, namely Mennonites.⁵⁹ Mr. I. E. Pedlow (M.P. for Renfrew S.), who, as a Quaker and a pacifist, felt himself included in the cattle reference, objected strongly on the grounds that conscientious objectors were "devout and eminently respectable and loyal citizens."⁶⁰ Joining Pedlow as a defender of the Mennonites was Mr. W. D. Euler, M.P. for Waterloo, who described them as "absolutely loyal," and "true Canadian," and volunteered the view that "if all of the inhabitants of Canada were Mennonites, Canada would never be at war."⁶¹ The Pedlows and Eulers were minority spokesmen, however, and on the following day the government issued the order-in-council which prohibited Mennonites, Hutterites and Doukhobors from entering Canada. The reason given was that they were deemed

... undesirable, owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of living, and methods of holding property, and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time after entry.⁶²

The new ruling made even temporary entry of preachers and other visitors difficult, at least until S.F. Coffman and David Toews had once more clarified the situation in Ottawa and that clarification had reached the immigration officers at the ports of entry. Bishop E. L. Frey of Ohio was once again turned back at Windsor, the third time since 1916. This time Coffman was anxious for some differentiation between various classes of Mennonites, because in his opinion no conditions in *Ontario* had led to the expulsion order. But this time "the law made no distinctions in classes of Mennonites."⁶³ None the less, Coffman worked on the matter and soon the Immigration Minister opened the door to Bishop Frey. Thereafter, some distinctions were made. Two Amish brothers from Oregon bought a parcel of land at Ryley, Alberta, and gained admittance as immigrants because the Immigration Minister's office concluded that Amish were distinct from Mennonites, and consequently "not barred by the Order-in-Council."⁶⁴ Others could not enter quite that easily. American mission workers being placed in Toronto and teachers coming to Rosthern all had to go through a good deal of red tape before they were admitted. David Toews had great difficulty

securing the admittance of one C. K. Penner of Beatrice, Nebraska, to teach at the German-English Academy, not because of legal impediments but because of bureaucratic bungling. In exasperation Toews wrote in September 1921, "Are we criminals who are deserving such treatment?"⁶⁵

When immigration officers were in any doubt about visiting Mennonites returning to the United States, they would ask for a deposit of money. On one occasion a party of 17 people from Mountain Lake, Minnesota, were held up at Emerson because they could not produce a deposit amounting to \$50 per person. They were therefore detained until a sufficient amount could be wired from home. For the night the group had the option of going either to the hotel or to the jail. For economic reasons they chose the jail and survived the night with six quart pails of hot coffee and blankets provided by immigration officials. Additional money did not arrive on the following day, and so the officer accepted what they had, \$275, and sent them on their way.⁶⁶

The new immigration ruling had other implications which affected both Mennonites in Canada and those abroad. In Canada there were new and more determined pressures on the Mennonite private schools, particularly in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The conservative Mennonite leaders became finally convinced that Canadian values were incompatible with their own, and that unless Canada would permit them to co-exist in freedom they would have to find another home. By mid-1919, a delegation was on its way to Latin America in search of a future for 6,000 Mennonites, who prepared in their hearts to leave Canada. Additional petitions such as the following to the provincial and federal governments, bore no fruit.

We Mennonites, of the Reinland-Mennonite Church or the so-called Old Colony, who have immigrated into Canada, feel obligated to express our thanks to the kind and honorable Dominion government as well as to the provincial government for the truly benevolent protection and assistance which we have received; because of this we pray to God: "O Lord God, bless our king, the leaders of our land, and all the officials and executives in Canada as you have in the past, in that you directed your intents and desires so that we could exercise our religious rights, including the right to have our own schools under the protection of the government in joy and peace. Now give them wise hearts

and your Holy Spirit, that they may rule wisely in all Canadian and British nations." Such similar prayers are offered publicly every Sunday in all of our congregations for the British government, under whose protection, thank God, we are privileged to live. We have learned that the possibility exists that a revision of the provincial school acts will be presented to the legislative house. This revision has the intention of revoking the privileges of having our own independent schools, which the Mennonites have enjoyed since the time of our immigrations . . . It has been our tradition in our old home, Russia, that all our children learned reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, industry, and cleanliness, in such a manner as to meet the requirements of the agricultural way of life to which we have belonged.⁶⁷

At the same time, a delegation was being dispatched to North America from Russia, where 110,000 Mennonites had also concluded that they and the new regime were incompatible. The overthrow of the tsarist regime by the revolutionaries and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in 1917 was followed by a prolonged civil war which was fought in part on Mennonite soil in the Ukraine. As the war front moved to and fro — some villages of Chortitza and Molotschna changed control as many as 23 times — the Mennonite paradise collapsed. Crops were ruined, villages burned to the ground, institutions destroyed, women and girls raped, horses and cattle stolen and many men killed. At one point the Mennonites organized their own *Selbstschutz* or self-defence system to protect themselves against the worst of the marauders, who were the followers of Nestor Makhno, a former cowherd for wealthy Mennonites. That, however, was not the Mennonite way, and the action was regretted, especially as the violence of the *Selbstschutz* was met with greater violence by rebels and Red Army regulars. Besides, there was no defence against venereal disease, typhus and the famine which followed in the wake of social disorganization and crop destruction. The threat to physical survival was accompanied by the Soviet decrees which were threats to the religious and cultural survival of the Mennonites. The schools were placed completely under state control and the churches were faced immediately by anti-religious agitation and, in some instances, closure.⁶⁸

Faced by the collapse of their paradise, Mennonites began to flee their homes. Some, perhaps 100 families, followed the retreating German troops as early as 1918. Some were evacuated by the retreating White Armies via Odessa and the Black Sea. Included

in this group were 62 men who had fought with the White Armies. As Red control tightened, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of others hoped to leave. Those Mennonites who had remained in Russia in the 1870s had multiplied and now numbered more than 100,000.

Where, when, and how to go became urgent questions. In December of 1919, a delegation of four called the *Studienkommission* (study commission) was chosen and sent abroad, first to seek relief and, second, to find a new home. They left Russia on January 1, 1920, and within a few months, the leaders of the delegation were seeking entry into Canada for themselves and for their co-religionists in Russia.⁶⁹

Of course, in many ways it was not the right time for the Mennonites to be knocking on Canada's doors again. They had been barred from entering the country by the full force of the law, supported by public opinion. Simultaneously, even the conservative Mennonites who were already in the country were saying it was undesirable as a homeland. The separated people began to debate whether separation was the answer — or the obstacle — to their survival.

In other ways the time was propitious. A new leader on the Canadian scene, William Lyon Mackenzie King, had not forgotten the importance of the Mennonite people to his political success. His benevolence, coupled with the determination of the Mennonites, eventually succeeded in opening the Canadian door — and a new era in the history of the Canadian Mennonites.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Wesley Edwards, Liberal-Conservative Member of Parliament for Frontenac, in the House of Commons, *Commons Debates*, April 30, 1919, p. 1929.
2. "German Propaganda and Plots in the United States," *Canadian Annual Review* (1917), pp. 254-69; "German Organization in the United States," *Canadian Annual Review* (1916), pp. 221-27.
3. "Pacifists in the United States," *Canadian Annual Review* (1917), pp. 270-77; "US Alien Enemies and German Propaganda: Pacifists and the War," *Canadian Annual Review* (1918), pp. 253-61; "Pacifism in Canada," *Canadian Annual Review* (1916), pp. 445-46.
4. *Canada Gazette*, 1917.
5. PAC, *Chief Press Censor*, Record Group 6, E, Vol. 13, 116-c.5.

- Letter of David Toews to Chief Press Censor, Col. E. J. Chambers, July 30, 1917.
6. *Ibid.*, Letter of B. G. Johnson, Yuma, Arizona, January 23, 1917. From this and other correspondence it appears that Johnson was an agent of the press censor.
7. *Ibid.*, Letter of Col. E. J. Chambers, Chief Press Censor, to John F. Foster, Consul-General for the United States, July 24, 1919.
8. "Censorship Notice," *Canada Gazette*, June 26, 1919, p. 30.
9. PAC, *Chief Press Censor*, Record Group 6, E, Vol. 138, 370-g-a-25 and 119-s-2.
10. Hon. J. A. Calder, Minister of Colonization and Immigration, in *Commons Debates*, May 19, 1919, p. 2570.
11. Allan Teichroew, "World War I and Mennonite Migrations," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XLV (July 1971), p. 246.
12. Guy F. Hershberger, *War, Peace and Nonresistance* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1944), 113 ff.
13. Hershberger, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
14. Teichroew, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-28.
15. Victor Peters, *All Things Common: The Hutterian Way of Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), pp. 43-5.
16. Hershberger, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
17. David Hofer, Elias Walter, and Joseph Kleinsasser, "The Hutterite Brethren and War," *Gospel Herald*, X (August 9, 1917), pp. 354-55.
18. For additional treatment on experiences of Hutterites and Mennonites during the First World War, see John D. Unruh, "The Hutterites During World War I," *Mennonite Life*, XXIV (July 1969), pp. 130-37; Donald C. Holsinger, "Pressures Affecting the Mennonite German-Americans in Central Kansas During World War I" (Bethel College research paper, March 1970), 57 pp.; Jacob Klaassen, "Memories and Notations About My Life (1867-1948)," translated by Walter Klaassen, 41 pp. Also see: Leonard Gross, "Alternative to War: A Story Through Documents," *Gospel Herald*, LXVI (January 16, 1973), pp. 52-5, one of a series; Roy Buchanan, "A Time to Say 'No'," *Christian Living*, VII (September 1960), pp. 6-10, 34-5, first in a series of six; James C. Juhnke, "John Schrag Espionage Case," *Mennonite Life*, XXII (July 1967), pp. 121-22; James C. Juhnke, "The Agony of Civic Isolation: Mennonites in World War I," *Mennonite Life*, XXV (January 1970), pp. 27-33; Rufus M. Franz, "It Happened in Montana," *Mennonite Life*, VII (October 1952), pp. 181-84.
19. Teichroew, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-49.
20. A. M. Willms, "The Brethren Known as Hutterites," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXVI (August 1958), p. 392.
21. PAC, *Immigration Branch*, Record Group 76, 1, Vol. 173, 58764,

2. Letter of Alexander Adams, Winnipeg, to J. A. Calder, Minister of Immigration and Colonization, October 19, 1918.
22. Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen & Sons, 1962), pp. 99-101.
23. Jacob Klaassen, "Memories and Notations About My Life," *op. cit.*, p. 29.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
25. PAC, *Immigration Branch*, Record Group 76, 1, Vol. 173, 58764, 1 and 58764, 2. Notable among the Canadian Government Agency representatives were J. C. Koehn of Omaha and Mountain Lake, J. A. Cook of Kansas City, M. J. Johnstone, Watertown, South Dakota, and F. H. Harrison, Harrisburg, Pa.
26. Frank H. Epp, "The True North (2): The Church that Disappeared Whose Influence Lives On," *Mennonite Reporter*, IV (March 18, 1974), p. 11.
27. Teichroew, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-32.
28. PAC, *Immigration Branch*, Record Group 76, 1, Vol. 173, 58764, 2. Letter of J. W. Paterson, Postmaster, Vanderhoof, British Columbia, to John Oliver, Premier of British Columbia, August 31, 1918.
29. PAC, *Immigration Branch*, Record Group 76, 1, Vol. 173, 58764, 3. J. Dick article in *Our Visitor*, translated from *Unser Besucher*, XVIII (April 15, 1919), Mountain Lake, Minnesota.
30. *Ibid.*
31. "Mennonites are Flocking into North Country," *Vancouver World*, November 1, 1918.
32. "A Matter of Moment," and D. A. Ross, "Protest Against Mennonites," *Winnipeg Free Press*, September 4, 1918.
33. "Mennonite Presence Deeply Resented," *Saturday Night* (c. 1918-19).
34. "The Mennonite: The War Veteran," *Calgary Eye-Opener*, October 5, 1918.
35. "Western Furore Over Exemption of Mennonites: Charge That Situation is Permitting Draft-Dodging on Wholesale," *Ottawa Citizen*, September 25, 1918, p. 6.
36. "A Matter of Moment," *Free Press*, September 4, 1918.
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40. E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites of Manitoba* (Altona, Man.: D. W. Friesen & Sons, 1955), pp. 161-86. See also J. A. Stevenson, "The Mennonite Problems in Canada," *The Nation*, CVII (November 9, 1918), pp. 551-52.

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42. PAC, *Army Headquarters Records*, Record Group 24, C.I, Vol. 115. Letter of Heinrich Klassen, Osler, to Department of Militia and Defence, June 2, 1916.
43. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
44. Klaas Peters, *Die Bergthaler Mennoniten und deren Auswanderung aus Russland und Einwanderung in Manitoba* (Hillsboro, Kans.: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, n.d.), 45 pp.
45. PAC, *Army Headquarters Records*, Record Group 24, C.I, Vol. 115, 1918 Correspondence of Chief Inspector, Civil Section.
46. "The Alien Enemy Question of 1918," *Canadian Annual Review*, XXVIII (1919), pp. 578-81. See also Paul Yuzyk, *Ukrainian Canadians*.
47. "The Churches in the Election," *Canadian Annual Review* (1917), pp. 628-30.
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54. Frank H. Epp, *I Would Like to Dodge the Draft-Dodger, But . . .* (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1970), pp. 11-12.
55. PAC, *Borden Papers*, M.G. 26, H, RLB 1167, 121120. Letter of Robert L. Borden to Michael Scott, Winnipeg, February 7, 1918.
56. CGC. SFC. Letter of S. F. Coffman to W. D. Euler, House of Commons, May 19, 1919.
57. Donald Sutherland, Liberal-Conservative M.P. for Oxford South in *Commons Debates*, April 30, 1919, p. 1912.
58. Major Daniel Lee Redman, Unionist M.P. for Calgary East, in *Commons Debates*, April 30, 1919, p. 1922; William Ashbury Buchanan, Liberal-Unionist M.P. for Lethbridge, in *Commons Debates*, April 30, 1919, p. 1914.

59. John Wesley Edwards, *loc. cit.*
60. Isaac Ellis Pedlow, Liberal M.P. for Renfrew South, in *Commons Debates*, April 30, 1919, p. 1930.
61. William D. Euler, Independent Liberal for Waterloo North, in *Commons Debates*, April 30, 1919, p. 1928.
62. PAC, *Order-in-Council*, Record Group 2, 1, 923, May 1, 1919, and 1204, June 9, 1919.
63. CGC. SFC. Letter of S. F. Coffman to M. C. Cressman, Kitchener, Ontario, October 11, 1919.
64. PAC, *Immigration Branch*, Record Group 76, 1, Vol. 174, 58764, 7. George J. Kanagy, Hubbard, Oregon, to Minister of Immigration, November 29, 1920, and reply, December 11, 1920.
65. *Ibid.*, David Toews to J. A. Calder, Minister of Immigration and Colonization, September 21, 1921.
66. PAC, *Immigration Branch*, Record Group 76, 1, Vol. 174, 58764, 8. Letter of T. J. Connell, Inspector, Emerson, to Thomas Galley, Commissioner, Winnipeg, June 30, 1922.
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68. John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921-1927* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967), pp. 21-50.
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Epilogue

THE END of this Canadian Mennonite history in 1920 bears some resemblance to the time of the movement's birth in Switzerland in 1525, to Upper Canada around 1800, and to Pennsylvania before that time. In all of these times and places, the experiences of the Anabaptist-Mennonites could not be described without reference to the state and their relations to it. Those relations were expressed in terms of "the separation of church and state," though not infrequently such separations were really confrontations. After all, the original meaning of separation was that the state did not have authority over the religious conscience, could not prescribe religious liturgy and ordinances, and should not conduct or supervise ecclesiastical organization and appointments.

For the Anabaptists, the doctrine of separation meant, among other things, the subordination of the state to God. Consequently they spoke of an allegiance to an authority higher than the state on some matters, though not counter to it on most matters, and in many everyday affairs actually quite complementary to it.

This higher authority was variously described as the Kingdom of God or the Lordship of Christ. Historically, the higher authority applied most critically to military service, to which the Mennonites objected. But it often extended also to the total value system of the outside society. The societal focus in Canada was the public school and its overt attempt to prepare children not for the advance of the Kingdom but for the undergirding of the Empire.

Since the Mennonites also respected and obeyed the rulers, their paradoxical position confronted them with a real dilemma. Somehow they had to reconcile their position, which normally emphasized obedience, with the occasional stance of critical resistance and determined disobedience. They learned that one way to resolve the dilemma was to isolate themselves geographically and to withdraw also socially and politically. As *die Stillen im Lande* (the quiet in the land), they learned, as it were, to mind their own business, seeking only to be industrious in their agriculture, self-sufficient in their communities, happy in their families, and devout in their religion. As far as they were concerned, the state could likewise go its own way, even engage in wars, without Mennonite protestation, as long as it didn't force them to join such adventures. In the isolation of the two spheres of life from each other, the separation of church and state began to take on new meanings. The confrontation element in the original separation was replaced by non-involvement, and the separation of church and state was largely redefined in those terms by the Mennonites. The confrontation which did remain was primarily the witness of an alternate society.

As has been amply illustrated in this history, there was, however, another experience of the "separate people" of which this epilogue must give account, namely that of the internal fragmentation. The temptation is great to simply write off their many divisions as by-products of Mennonite stubbornness and petty quarrelling among the leaders. Or, at best, as the inevitable consequence of political pressure, social harassment and many migrations and resettlements.

The roots of internal separation, however, lie much deeper and must be sought in the origins of the Reformation and Anabaptist movements themselves. The reactions against the size of the universal Roman church and against the pressures of the mighty Roman empire were general. Out of the Reformation came a host of separated protestantisms and new political en-

tities. The independence-minded nobles on the edge of the empire welcomed the persecuted Anabaptists not only because of their entrepreneurial usefulness but also because of a certain spiritual commonness, the desire of both to disentangle themselves from the ecclesiastical and imperial monoliths.

The Anabaptists, however, added another factor to the equation of separation, namely their definition of the church as an intimate and sharing community of believers. The cosmic dimensions of the Kingdom of God did not escape them, but for them there could be no universal kingdom of righteousness — the Holy Roman Empire was ample proof of that — without a firm foundation in the hearts of true believers and without committed congregational communities. Such faithful nuclei were like the mustard seed and the yeast in the biblical parables, eventually destined to fill all the earth and leaven the whole lump of human society. They were, in short, prototypes of the coming Kingdom of God.

These communities could not exist without some authority and some discipline. The serious intent of the Anabaptists and the situation in which they found themselves required that the rules of their small congregations be spelled out rather clearly (with the passing of time, quite legalistically) and enforced rather consistently. Thus the stage was set for a kaleidoscopic Anabaptism whose many separate parts could only be multiplied by persecutions and immigrations on the one hand, and by internal differences of opinion, nurtured by personality clashes and leadership conflicts, on the other. Viewed more sympathetically, however, the fragmentations can be explained, at least in part, by repeated attempts, still motivated by the original impulse, to renew and redefine the small community through which God did his work in the world. And they further allowed the varieties of social and theological dynamics within the Mennonite fold to seek their own, while retaining those essentials which all Mennonites had in common.

Be that as it may, Mennonite identity and integrity did not particularly require complete ecclesiastical unity. Most Mennonites had never seen themselves in those terms. To be sure, not all were satisfied with fragmentation, and this is why every time of disjunction also gave birth to calls for unification. The result was the conference system, more precisely systems. Also in their ecumenical formations, only a plethora of possibilities could satisfy all the divergent Mennonite needs.

Thus the Mennonites began to choose several different directions for themselves as they faced their future. While some saw that future in terms of small, self-contained, unrelated communities and in withdrawal from society, others saw the need for accommodation and involvement. This latter position, however, also pointed in several directions. For some it meant total integration with society to the point of secularization; others sought only partial adjustments. For some it meant the conversion of outsiders, both at home and abroad, and their enrolment in Mennonite membership lists. For others it meant primarily a religious confrontation with both state and society, especially on the question of militarism. Again, for some accommodation meant a little bit of all of these in varying proportions.

After 1920 the Canadian Mennonite story provides ample expression for all of these options. History repeated itself in many ways. There were additional migrations from Russia to the Americas, from North America to South America, and from exposed communities to isolated areas within Canada. There were also additional differentiations between the conservatives and the progressives, between Mennonite culture and Anglo-Saxon culture, and not least of all, in another world war between pacifism and militarism. In all of these events during the ensuing decades, the question of separation, or the reaction to it, became more directly a question of survival. The pursuit of that theme, however, must be left to a second volume.