Accommodation and Withdrawal: The Response of Mennonites in Canada to World War II

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I

Originally a group desiring strict separation from the state and, to some extent, the surrounding society, in time the mainstream Mennonite body tended to adjust more and more to the society around them, while the minority continued to avoid change. This pattern of adjustment by the majority and isolationism by the minority[1] already prevailed among Mennonites in Canada by the 1940's, and when their traditional non-resistance seemed threatened by compulsory military service, their response once again took this pattern.

The Mennonites' espousal of non-resistance was not one of the main points of contention with the state and state-supported religious bodies in the 16th century, as was their practice of adult baptism and the performance of their own marriage and burial rites. Not until military service became compulsory, with the employment of mass national armies, did the non-resistance of the Mennonites meet major opposition from the state. An examination of Mennonite history in Europe reveals that perceived or real threats to their physical or cultural survival always met with a traditional response by the minority of migration to another country where religious toleration appeared to be greater. Occasionally some groups would work out compromises with the governments in question, such as the payment of a substantial tax in lieu of military service in late 18th century Prussia and the program of forestry and ambulance work in late 19th and early 20th century Russia. When these alternatives were not available or when other restrictions were imposed, some chose to seek a new home, while the rest remained and gradually relinquished many traditions including non-resistance. Non-resistance or pacifism was relinquished by the Mennonites in Westphalia as early as 1815, in the

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[1] See C. Henry SMITH's *The Story of the Mennonites*, 4th ed. rev. by C. Krahn (Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957) for a depiction of this pattern in Mennonite history and also K. GEORGE, "The Mennonites and the Protestant Ethic," *Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba*, III, No. 29, 1964-65, pp. 83-89. George noted, in particular that contrary to the Weberian thesis, those Mennonites who adhered most to Anabaptist theology, the minority, were also the least economically successful. In each country in which they resided, the majority became relatively economically successful over time and changed much of their theology and tradition to correspond to their new economic status.

Netherlands by 1850, in Prussia by 1870, in Russia by the 1940's and even by one body in Canada after World War II.[2] Not only was the doctrine relinquished, but in the Netherlands the Mennonite delegates in the States General "...were the most outspoken in their opposition to any exemption clause for religious scruples."[3] In the North German Confederation too, by 1867, little effort was made by Mennonites to secure exemption from universal service.[4]

With the exception of the twenty-one thousand immigrants of 1923-26 and their descendants, the 111,380 Mennonites residing in Canada in 1941[5] were descendants of those who had voluntarily migrated to Canada from other countries for better economic opportunities and to escape assimilation. The first Mennonites in Canada, the so-called (Old) Mennonites, came from Pennsylvania in 1786 and a slow migration continued again after 1800.[6] These people were descendants of Anabaptists who emigrated, or were deported, from Switzerland to the Rhineland Palatinate in the 17th Century. Here they adopted some aspects of German culture including the Palatine dialect, which in Pennsylvania became known as "Pennsylvania Deutsch" or in its incorrect anglicized form as "Pennsylvania Dutch." They came to Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois for land and religious freedom in the 18th and 19th centuries and some left Pennsylvania to come to Canada in the late 18th and early 19th centuries to obtain land, but also because they believed exemption from military service would be more readily guaranteed under the British Crown.[7] The Amish Mennonites, a related but far smaller and more conservative group, came to Canada via Switzerland, Bavaria, Hesse, and Alsace-Lorraine. Mennonites of Swiss ethnic origin are largely settled in Ontario with only very few in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

About two-thirds of all Mennonites in Canada are of Dutch ethnic origin (Flemish and Frisian), rather than Swiss, and the majority settled in

[2] SMITH, *The Story of the Mennonites*, pp. 222-223, 262-263, 288. C. J. DYCK, *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1967), pp. 277 and 233.

[3] SMITH, *The Story of the Mennonites*, p. 222-223.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

[5] *Census of Canada, 1941.* A breakdown of the membership of various Mennonite bodies in 1936 shows that two-thirds (54,378) stem from the Dutch-Prussian-Russian branch, with some 85% (45,979) belonging to the more "progressive" groups with no salient characteristics such as clothing customs or restrictions on modernization. Some 15% belonged to the more conservative groups, such as the Old Colony and the Holdemänner. The Swiss-Origin Mennonites had a total membership of 27,112. Of this branch, roughly 25% belonged to conservative groups such as the Amish and Old Order. G. C. THIELMAN, "The Canadian Mennonites" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1955).

[6] SMITH, *The Story of the Mennonites*, p. 558.

[7] L. J. BURKHOLDER, *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario*, (Toronto: Livingstone Press, 1935), p. 14.

Western Canada, although a substantial number of the 1923-26 groups (the Russländer) located in Ontario. These Mennonites are descendants of those who left the Netherlands during and after the Reformation to escape persecution and settled in the Vistula delta area of Northern Poland and in the Duchy of Prussia.[8] About one-half of the Prussian Mennonites migrated to Russia in the years following 1786 because of restrictions placed on land expansion, the heavy taxes required of them for exemption privileges, and the growing spirit of militarism in Prussia, which resulted in uncertainty about future exemption from military service.[9] While the poorer and more orthodox left Prussia for Russia in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the poorer and more orthodox were also those who left Russia for Canada in the 1870's. In both cases there was an effort to avoid change by the conservative minority, while those who remained tended to become slowly assimilated to the surrounding society. A shortage of land, the threat of assimilation through the Russification drive where Russian was made the compulsory language in the schools, and the introduction of compulsory military service brought roughly 10,000 Mennonites to the United States and 8,000 to Canada in the years 1873-1876, about one-third of all the Mennonites living in Russia at the time.[10]

Those Mennonites, who remained in Russia after the 19th century migration, became gradually accommodated to the demands and pressures of states and society. Although, as a result of deputations sent to St. Petersburg, and the threat of mass emigration, they were excused from combatant service, they performed forestry and ambulance work during World War I. They also prospered economically with resultant changes in cultural and religious traditions. Their gradual assimilation to a capitalist society is apparent in the numbers who were politicians, industrialists and mill owners. However, they were basically an agrarian community in 1915, composed of some 104,000 people with land holdings of almost two and one-half million acres in forty-five colonies, not including several large Mennonite estates comprising 750,000 acres.[11] They valued education and had their own educational institutions: four hundred elementary schools, several high schools, a school for the deaf, business colleges and theological seminaries where both Russian and German were taught. A number attended Russian universities, especially St. Petersburg and the University at Dorpat, while some attended universities in Germany, where

[8] E. K. FRANCIS, *In Search of Utopia: The Mennonites in Manitoba* (Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons, 1955), p. 14.

[9] SMITH, *The Story of the Mennonites*, pp. 280-284.

[10] FRANCIS, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 50; DYCK, *An Introduction to Mennonite History*, p. 147.

[11] FRANCIS, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

their identification with German culture was strengthened.[12] The Revolution and Civil War in Russia cost many their lives, land and property, and totally disrupted their self-sufficient communities. The 21,000 Mennonites, who came as refugees to Canada from Russia in the years 1923-26, although destitute, continued to emphasize the value of education and economic progress.[13]

II

The experiences of Mennonites in Canada up to and including World War I, with respect to such matters as education and military service, illustrates once again the pattern of accommodation by the majority and withdrawal by the minority when faced with pressure to change. The events of World War I also influenced the response of all Mennonite groups to World War II.

By the time World War I broke out, many changes had taken place among the 19th century Mennonites immigrants from Russia, who after 1923 became known as "Kanädier" to distinguish them from the 1923-26 immigrants, who became known as "Russländer." Gradually the autonomous village communes had broken down as rural areas became organized into municipalities and as individually owned farms became more profitable and hence desirable. This development and the later changes in education resulted in the gradual, but inexorable, cultural assimilation of the majority of the Kanädier Mennonites to the lifestyles of other Canadians. The kind of commitment that used to be expected of members of an insulated, self-sufficient community was no longer forthcoming when social control could not be exercised as easily by the leaders. Numerous schisms occurred among Mennonites over the adoption of the public school. Some 5,500 Old Colony people, about one-half of the entire Old Colony group, but less than one-sixth of the Mennonite population of western Canada, left Canada for Mexico in the years 1922-1930 in order to escape what they perceived would be inevitable assimilation, once attendance at the public school was enforced.[14] The

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 195-197 for a history of the Russländer Mennonites, especially their migration to Canada see F. H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus* (Altona: D. W. Friesen and Sons, 1962).

[13] See George, "The Mennonites and the Protestant Ethics" where she notes in 1964: "This new flood of Russian Mennonites, with its two-fold crest, is particularly associated with the growth of the Winnipeg Mennonite settlement. Winnipeg contains now, in increasingly scattered residence, the largest group of urban Mennonites in the world. These Mennonite men and women have penetrated all or almost all the bourgeois sanctums of industry, commerce, and the professions in central Canada's major city..." (pp. 98-99). See also *Mennonites in Urban Canada*, ed. L. Driedger (Proceedings of the 1968 Conference on Urbanization of Mennonites in Canada, University of Manitoba). Reprinted from *Mennonite Life*, XXIII (October, 1968).

[14] C. W. Redekop, *The Old Colony Mennonites* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), p. 17.

majority of Mennonites accepted the public school; in fact, many of the more "progressive" groups welcomed it. Nevertheless, other assimilationist and nationalistic policies, such as the Manitoba Government's flag flying policy, caused some uneasiness among all groups.

The Kanädier Mennonites were totally excused from military service during World War I because of their insistence on the clarification of existing legislation before immigrating to Canada in the 1870's. A clause in the Militia Act of 1868 caused them some concern:

> Any person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quakers, Mennonists or Tunkers or any inhabitant of Canada of any religious denomination otherwise subject to military duty, but who, from the doctrines of his religion is adverse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service, shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace, or war, *upon such conditions and under such regulations, as the Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe* [my italics].[15]

In order to alleviate these fears, they were sent a letter from the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, John Lowe, promising them an "entire exemption" and an Order-in-Council was also passed in 1873 which stated: "That an entire exemption from any military service as is provided by law and Order-in-Council, will be granted to the denomination of Christians called Mennonites." They were also told that the Governor-General-in-Council did not have the power to override the meaning of statute law but officials failed to mention that any statute could be changed by parliamentary procedure.

Although the Order-in-Council of 1873 was based on the statute of 1868,[16] which had exempted all Quakers, Mennonites, Tunkers and other religious pacifists, the Swiss-origin Mennonites of Ontario were, at first, relieved only from combatant service. The Kanädier were declared "exceptions" to the Military Service Act of 1917, while Mennonites in Ontario were required to register and apply for exemption from military service under the Act. Those Mennonites claiming exemption were required to present a certificate of church membership and, in some cases, to appear before tribunals in order to explain their objection to war. Mennonites, who were defined as exceptions to the Act by Order-in-Council of 1873, had merely to prove that they were born of Mennonite parents.[17]

[15] J. A. TOEWS, *Alternative Service in Canada During World War II* (The Publication Committee of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church, the Christian Press, Ltd., 1959), p. 16.

[16] A Statute exempting "Quakers, Mennonists and Tunkers" from military service was passed as early as 1808 and was later confirmed and amended in 1837, 1841, 1846, 1849, 1855, 1859 and 1868. See S. F. COFFMAN, "Mennonites and Military Service." in BURKHOLDER, *A Brief History of the Mennonites in Ontario.*

[17] *Ibid.*, and J. S. HARZLER, *Mennonites in the World War of Non-resistance Under Test* (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1922), pp. 73-75.

The different positions of Ontario Swiss-Mennonites and Dutch-Russian Mennonites in the west, as defined by the Military Service Act of 1917, caused great confusion among Government officials, especially among members of the tribunals, and even among the Mennonites themselves.[18] While some officials declared that Ontario Mennonites should be exceptions to the Act, as were the Kanädier,[19] other officials claimed that Ontario Mennonites must register and apply for exemption. The Military Tribunals tended to react differently to individual Mennonite claims with the result that decisions made in districts across the country varied considerably. Altogether, twelve different decisions were handed down by Military Tribunals in Ontario.[20] As the Ontario Mennonites were as opposed to non-combatant service under military supervision as they were to combatant service, they were distressed when the majority of exemptions were from combatant service only. As a result, they appealed most of these decisions. Some men were ordered by tribunals to perform non-combattant service and upon refusal to do so, several were court-martialed and jailed.[21] Some tribunals also required the Kanädier to register and apply for exemption, although they had been defined as exceptions to the Act. It was not until June of 1918 that it was easier for Ontario Mennonites to become exempted and automatic leave was obtained upon presentation of church certificates. The fact that the majority of Mennonites were rural people during World War I also meant that many were exempted because they were employed in an "essential and basic industry."

Since Swiss-origin Mennonites had to show proof of church membership and appear before tribunals during World War I, they were prompted to re-evaluate their historical stance in regard to war. A committee on War Problems was formed during World War I, which was a forerunner of the Committee on War Problems during World War II, a standing committee of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches. On a larger scale, the Ontario Conference of Mennonites was a member of the Mennonite General Council, a representative and advisory body of the (Old) Mennonite Church with headquarters in the United States. The Peace Problems Committee of this body undertook a three point program in 1927:

[18] M. F. C. BLAIR, then Acting Deputy Minister of Immigration, in a letter dated November 2, 1936 to a Mennonite minister, maintained that an Order-in-Council could not confer new privileges but merely applied existing statutes. Hence, the legal distinction made between the Kanädier and the Swiss during World War I and II, and between the Kanädier and the Russländer during World War II was an incorrect one. TOEWS, *Alternative Service*, p. 29.

[19] Two different opinions regarding exemption were expressed by the Ontario Registrar and the Deputy Registrar of London, for example. HANZLER, *op. cit.*

[20] COFFMAN, "Mennonites and Military Service," p. 296.

[21] TOEWS, *Alternative Service*, p. 42.

1) The strengthening of the non-resistant faith of the Mennonite people themselves by various means, especially through the publication of peace literature and aggressive peace teaching.

2) Representing the church in making her position known to government officials; in obtaining information concerning legislation and trends affecting that position; and in taking the lead in planning proper courses of action in response to such trends.

3) Interpreting the non-resistant faith to other people, particularly Christians seeking information on the subject.[22]

This emphasis on peace education prepared the members of the Ontario Conference of Mennonites better to meet the problems encountered during World War II.[23]

III

The attitudes and behaviour of many Canadians toward Mennonites during World War I also influenced the latter's reaction to World War II. The largest Prostestant bodies in Canada, the Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans, tended to give full support to World War I.[24] Because they felt the war was morally justified, they were critical of those they felt were not doing their part. Their criticism also reflected nationalist thinking prevalent at that time. An article appearing in the *Mail and Empire*, September 26, 1918, entitled "Mennonites should do Military Service" read as follows:

> Attention having been called to the uneasiness existing in some of the Western provinces in consequence of 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.[25]

Methodist ministers appear to have been active in alerting the Saskatchewan government to the so-called "Mennonite menace" and urg-

[22] G. F. HERSHBERGER, *The Mennonite Church in the Second World War* (Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1951), pp. 1-2.

[23] However, peace literature was also distributed by the Mennonite Central Committee, which includes members from the Kanädier and Russländer groups. Also, not all Ontario Swiss-Mennonites strenghtened their stand in regard to non-resistance. The Mennonite Brethren in Christ (later known as the United Missionary Church) dropped it as a church doctrine after World War II.

[24] J. M. BLISS, "The Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review*, XLIX (September, 1968), pp. 83-103.

[25] Military Problems Committee, Newspaper Clippings, Box V, Conrad Grebel Archives.

ed the review of exemption policies.[26] Particularly vocal in their condemnation of Mennonites, however, were various patriotic groups and lodges such as the Loyal Orange Order of British North America and Sons of England.[27] Opposition by individuals and groups was usually expressed by means of telegrams and articles in newspapers but occasionally took the form of sabotage against Mennonite property.[28] The immigration of an additional five hundred to six hundred Mennonites and about one thousand Hutterites from the United States, in order to avoid the draft, increased this pressure to the point that the Government passed an Order-in-Council on June 9, 1919 prohibiting the further entrance of Doukhobors, Hutterites and Mennonites into Canada:

> Whereas owing to conditions prevailing as the result of war, a widespread feeling exists throughout Canada, and more particularly in Western Canada, that steps should be taken to prohibit the landing in Canada of immigrants 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 or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time after their entry; and whereas it appears that persons commonly known as Doukhobors, Hutterite and Mennonites are of the class described:
>
> . . . . . .
>
> From and after the date hereof and until otherwise ordered, the landing in Canada shall be and the same is hereby prohibited of an immigrant of the Doukhobor, Hutterite or Mennonite class.
>
> Rodolphe Boudreau, Clerk of the Privy Council.[29]

Before this Order-in-Council was passed, a rousing debate was held in the House of Commons. Mr. John Wesley Edwards, Member of Parliament for Frontenac, expressed himself as follows:

> We do not want in Western Canada or in Ontario or in any province in the Dominion people who are not prepared to assume their share of the responsibilities of citizenship. 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 and enjoy the privileges and advantages of life under the British flag if they are willing to allow others to do the fighting for them while they sit at home in peace and plenty. We certainly do not want that kind of cattle in this country. Indeed not only do we not want that kind of cattle, but I would go further and support the view that we should deport from Canada others of the same class who were allowed to come in by mistake.[30]

[26] Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," p. 222. See the *Christian Guardian*, October 9, 1918.

[27] *Canadian Annual Review*, XX, p. 892; cited in Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 95.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

[29] *Canada Gazette*, Order-in-Council 1204, June 9, 1919. April-June 1919, Volume 52, No. 40-52.

[30] *House of Commons Debates*, April 30, 1919, pp. 2003-2004.

Mr. Pedlow, Member of Parliament for South Renfrew, and a Quaker, objected to this inflammatory speech, as did Mr. Euler, Member of Parliament for Waterloo. The Mennonites responded to the Order-in-Council of 1919 by sending delegations and letters to Ottawa asking for a repeal of the legislation. Their concern was heightened by correspondence received from relatives indicating a desire to leave Russia because of the Revolution and civil war in that country. With the election of Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King, a man who was acquainted with both eastern and western Mennonites because of having been born in Waterloo County and having been a Member of Parliament for Rosthern, Saskatchewan,[31] the Order-in-Council was rescinded on June 2, 1922 with the following conditions:

a. that the Mennonites who would be admitted to Canada would find shelter and support among their brethren,
b. that they would be placed on the land as farmers and
c. that the privilege of complete military exemption granted to the earlier group in 1873 would not apply to them.[32]

The Government again took into account the Order-in-Council of 1873 while formulating amendments to the National War Services Regulations of 1940 which authorized compulsory service for home defence.[33] In these Regulations only the Kanädier were defined as Mennonites and were required to apply for postponement of military training under Section 18 (1). They were required to report for a medical examination along with other men of their age group and within eight days to file an application for postponement of training in writing to the Divisional Registrar. In order to receive postponement, they had to give proof of continuous church membership. Swiss-origin Mennonites and Russländer had to apply for postponement of military training as "Conscientious Objectors" under 19 (1) of the Regulations. They had to follow basically the same procedure as outlined for the Kanädier except that they had to prove either in writing or before the Board that they conscientiously objected to combatant service on religious grounds. Actually, as the war progressed, the Mobilization Boards required all to conform to 19 (1) of the Regulations, whether they were Swiss-origin Mennonites, Russländer or Kanädier.[34]

[31] THIELMAN, "The Canadian Mennonites," p. 51.

[32] FRANCIS, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 203. According to the immigration regulations of this time, all refugees and immigrants from Eastern Europe had to meet standards of occupational suitability, accept placement by the Department of Immigration and Colonization or be sponsored by relatives in Canada. See D. CORBETT, *Canada's Immigration Policy* (University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 40.

[33] See the amended and consolidated Regulations, by Order-in-Council of March 18, 1941, for the distinction between Kanädier and Conscientious Objectors. After 1942 the Act was amended to permit conscripted men to be sent overseas.

[34] TOEWS, *Alternative Service*, p. 45.

The fact that Mobilization Boards expected exemption from military service to be based solely on the principle of conscientious objection by the individual, instead of on the tenet of religious liberty, posed many problems for the Mennonite community. Young men were suddenly called upon to give a convincing theological defence of a tradition which they had inherited and which they had never needed to understand fully or justify. This was particularly true of the Kanädier, who had been exempt as a corporate body during World War I and had, therefore, not stressed peace education as much as the Swiss-origin Mennonites. The following observation would seem to apply to the situation of the average Mennonite man of draft age during World Wars I and II:

> In the minds of some people there is an inclination to regard every objector as a martyr for the Protestant conscience. Yet, the sectarian objector is not necessarily a person of generous impulses and high moral sensitivity for whom the obscene carnage of war is directly contrary to a religion based on love. He is not the kind of Protestant who is always questioning the way he should go. In the sect group consciousness replaces the individual conscience.[35]

Because some individuals could not convince Mobilization Boards of their objection, they failed their hearings and were told to report for military service. More men were jailed in Manitoba than in any other province for failing to report for military service after their applications for conscientious objector status were rejected.[36]

Mennonite leaders were uncertain, during the war, whether they should recognize only church members as being eligible for conscientious objector status or whether they should also recognize adherents. In view of the Mennonite practice of adult baptism, this question presented a special dilemma. On the one hand, if membership was insisted upon, a number of young men would probably join the armed services and thus be lost to the Mennonite community, while on the other hand, if membership was not insisted upon, the sincerity of the leader and the whole concept of non-resistance might be questioned. The following excerpt from a Bishop of a Russländer church to a Bishop of the (Old) Mennonites illustrates how the problem was perceived by one Mennonite leader:

> To me this [membership] is a very serious question. A neglect on our part to do what we can for these young men may in some cases mean death to them and not only physical death, but it may mean a turning away from our church

[35] D. A. MARTIN, *Pacifism: An Historical and Sociological Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 184-186: "Some men could only say..." their fathers had told them to believe that way and they shouldn't go to war." L. DRIEDGER, "A Sect in a Modern Society, A Case Study, The Old Colony Mennonites of Saskatchewan" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1955).

[36] This happened in Manitoba for other reasons as well, namely, the education controversy, the immigration of some conservative groups to Mexico, the emigration of some Hutterites and Mennonites from the United States in order to avoid the draft, and the evidence of some pro-German sentiments among the Russländer.

> and from Christianity, and if in that condition they are killed in battle, what will be their lot after death.[37]

The groups that recognized adherents as being eligible for conscientious objector status were those where sacred and secular traditions had become fused and institutionalized over the centuries.[38] Those groups that recognized only baptized members were groups where more recent attempts had been made to revitalize sacred traditions and to separate them from purely secular traditions. Consequently, the Old Order Amish, the Old Order Mennonites, the Old Colony and the Russländer denominations (the General Conference Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren) recognized adherents. The (Old) Mennonites, in keeping with their emphasis on peace education, recognized church members only. For the most part, the dilemma of the Mennonite leaders was solved by the members of the Mobilization Boards, who tended to insist on church membership.

The excerpt from the letter above reveals another interesting aspect, namely, that the leader could use against the member, not only the threat of excommunication if he joined the active service, but also the threat of "eternal damnation." How many young men might have been influenced by this is difficult to ascertain.

IV

In the first few years of World War II, and in the months preceding it, Mennonite leaders had feared what might be expected of them in connection with military service and with alternative service. In general, all Mennonite leaders opposed giving up their historical non-resistant stance and yet there was some variation in their reaction to societal pressure. The leaders of the Russländer, still relatively new Canadians, were in many ways most anxious to be accommodating to a country which had admitted them when public opinion was still adverse to their admittance. At a joint meeting of the Russländer and Kanädier churches in Winnipeg on October 14, 1940, several ministers of the Russländer churches spoke out in favour of alternative service, stating that it was their Christian duty, as well as their duty as citizens of Canada to do this work.[39] They felt that ambulance work, since it was dangerous, would present an opportunity to be "effective witnesses" of their faith, particularly as others were risking

[37] Letter from Bishop D. Toews to Bishop C. Coffman dated September 12, 1939 Conference of Historic Peace Churches, Box 1, folder 5, Conrad Grebel Archives.

[38] An example of the fusion between a secular tradition and a sacred one is the connection that was made between "Deutsch and Religion." See EPP, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 322, and E. K. FRANCIS, "The Russian Mennonites: From Religious to Ethnic Group, *American Journal of Sociology*, LIV (September 1948), pp. 101-107.

[39] D. P. REIMER et. al., *Erfahrungen der Mennoniten in Kanada Während des Zweiten Weltkrieges 1939-1945* (Winnipeg, Steinbach), p. 83.

their lives. They pointed out that the young men in their churches concurred with them in this, as evidenced by the numbers who volunteered not only for non-combatant service but for active military service. Furthermore, they believed that work in a medical corps would alleviate the hostile feelings of other Canadians towards Mennonites.[40] Mr. B. B. Janz of the Mennonite Brethren Church (Russländer) stated that Judge Embury of Regina had been very pleased when this work was volunteered, whereas before he had been very critical of those, who in his opinion, had attempted to "hide."

The leaders of the Kanädier and of the Swiss-origin Mennonites were strongly opposed to work in a medical corps primarily because it would be under military supervision. The Kanädier felt they had been the true defenders of the faith in Russia when they had refused to agree to ambulance work. The disagreement between the Kanädier and the Russländer in Canada over this issue resulted in the organization of two separate committees which each sent its delegations to the Government at Ottawa. The Kanädier Mennonite churches formed an "Aeltestenkomitee" (Committee of Elders) on September 14, 1940, a committee which turned out not to be as successful in maintaining favourable relations with the Mobilization Boards as the Conference of Historic Peace Churches, an inter-denominational organization composed of Swiss-origin Mennonites, Russländer, Brethren in Christ and Quakers. The Kanädiers' refusal to join the Conference of Historic Peace Churches[41] may have had some bearing on the fact that quite a number of men failed to attain conscientious objector status in the west.

However, the Swiss-origin Mennonites in Ontario were also opposed to work in a medical corps. At a general meeting of all Mennonite groups on May 15, 1939, the representative for the (Old) Mennonites, Dr. H. S.

[40] The alternative service work performed by Mennonites during World War II did not elicit as favourable a response as did their enlistment in combatant service. An article entitled "Manitoba Shows Manifestations of Racial Prejudice" appeared in *The United Church Observer* in June of 1943. The article denounced prejudice against Mennonites and pointed out that there were as many Mennonites in the armed forces as in the conscientious objector camps. It also pointed out that the United Church had always fostered understanding between Mennonites and the United Church in Manitoba. Particular praise was afforded a Mennonite family where four men were serving overseas. However, it must also be noted that, although the United Church officially supported the war effort, it did permit its members to be conscientious objectors and a fair number were engaged in alternative service work. Also, a splinter organization of the United Church, The Fellowship for Christian Social Order, maintained a pacifist stance throughout the war. United Church of Canada, Board of Evangelism and Social Service, Peace & War Files, United Church Archives, Victoria College, Toronto.

[41] An invitation to attend a meeting of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches was extended to the Kanädier in January of 1942 but was declined because one participating group, the Sommerfelder, was not in favour. Executive Committee, Conference of Historic Peace Churches, Minutes and Correspondence, 1941-1944, Box 1 (XIV-11.1). See also REIMER, *Erfahrungen*, p. 114.

Bender, emphasized the importance of peace education and expressed the church's disapproval of ambulance work, work in industries producing war materials and making contributions to war loans.[42] The leaders of the (Old) Mennonites also feared that taking different positions on the question of ambulance work would unnecessarily divide the Mennonites of Canada as the following statement from Mr. Coffman of the (Old) Mennonites to Mr. Toews, a spokesman of the Russländer, shows:

> We have had some contacts with the Russian Mennonite Brethren here regarding their position and have stressed the need of all of our people having a common attitude regarding all Mennonite service, whether combatant or non-combatant. Any person tolerating any form of non-combatant service will compromise the faith of all. We feel that the Government has granted an entire exemption and that is the only Scriptural position that any of us can take. There are reports that some have claimed the Mennonites can fight as well as other people. This was publically stated in some of the daily papers. We could have no defence for such persons, nor for any who agree with such a position. Those statements were made by certain Mennonite young men in Kitchener, who told of what they had done in Russia...[43]

Mr. Toews replied to Mr. Coffman as follows:

> If for any reason any section of our people should have to suffer, I for one believe that others should be prepared to suffer with them, although they may personally feel that non-combattant service is not against their conscience or conviction.[44]

In spite of this reply, Mr. Toews was not able to prevent a minister of the Russländer group from speaking in favour of work in the medical corps during a joint delegation to Ottawa on November 14, 1940.

As was pointed out, the Russländer Mennonites, being fairly recent refugees and new immigrants, seemed to be very anxious to prove their loyalty to their new country. However, as is true of immigrants anywhere, their status in the new country was not yet firmly established. In Russia, they had been reasonably prosperous and respected by the neighbouring Russians and Ukrainians; in Canada, they had to start at the very bottom of the economic ladder and their difficulties with the English language and North American culture made adjustment arduous. The suddenness of their decline in fortune made many wish to retain their heritage as long as possible. Although their emotional attachment to Russia was strong, they were bitter about the way they had been treated, and consequently were strongly opposed to the Communist government. At the same time, they continued to foster an interest in the German culture and language. The

[42] REIMER, *Erfahrungen*, pp. 42-43 and 48.

[43] Military Problems Committee, Correspondence, Conference of Historic Peace Churches, Box 1, folder 5.

[44] *Ibid.*

German language had been adopted by the forbears of the Russländer Mennonites at the close of the eighteenth century in Prussia; the Dutch language having been in usage until then.[45] In Russia, the German language had been carefully nurtured in the churches and schools so that it came to be strongly identified with religious teachings and in itself became almost a sacred tradition.[46] In Canada, opinion leaders of the Russländer urged all Mennonites to preserve the German language and, through a series of articles appearing in the 1930's in the immigrant newspaper, *Der Bote*, attempted to encourage a strong identification with all aspects of German culture.[47] The Russländer also felt gratitude towards Germany because of the kindness of the Government when they were fleeing from Russia. Refugee camps and financial aid had been made available to them by President Hindenburg.[48]

Although a few Mennonite men actually became involved in the Nationalist-Socialist cause and some were involved in brownshirt demonstrations and organizations in Winnipeg,[49] it would seem that the majority, in the face of Canadian anti-Germanism[50] and news reports about Germany, felt ambivalent about their German heritage. During the 1931 census, 39% of all Mennonites declared themselves to be of German ethnic origin, as compared to 42% who said they were of Dutch origin, while during the 1941 census only 28% declared themselves to be of German origin, as compared to 58% who claimed Dutch origin.[51]

Nevertheless, the number of voluntary enlistments in active service by Mennonite men suggests either that the children of the Russländer reacted against their parents' pro-Germanism, or simply that overall assimilation had already proceeded so far that they felt a compulsion to

[45] C. Henry SMITH, *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites* (Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, 1927), pp. 17-18.

[46] See EPP, *Mennonite Exodus*, and also F. H. EPP, "An Analysis of Germanism and National Socialism in the Immigrant Newspaper of a Canadian Minority Group, the Mennonites, in the 1930's" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; University of Minnesota, 1965).

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] FRANCIS, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 194; EPP, "An Analysis of Germanism . . .," pp. 32-33.

[49] The participation of some Mennonites was pointed out and denounced by a Mennonite reader in *Der Bote*. Cited in EPP, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 324.

[50] The following appeared in a newspaper in Lethbridge, Alberta: "Probe Church Fire Royal Canadian Mounted Police were investigating today the possibility of burning last night of two Mennonite churches at New West, forty miles northeast of Lethbridge. The buildings were burned to the ground. Residents said the German language was used in the churches." (Military Problems Committee, Box 2, folder 2, Newspaper Clippings, C.H.P.C.) The Canadian Legion, Boards of Trade, United Farmers of Alberta, Miners' Unions and Service Clubs also advocated the elimination of the German language from courses of instruction in high schools and universities. In October 1940, the Canadian Legion made known it favoured a ban on German at church services and in public places. THIELMAN, "The Canadian Mennonites," pp. 249-256.

[51] EPP, "An Analysis of Germanism . . .," p. 19.

conform to societal demands. In Manitoba, where Russländer and Kanädier Mennonites are concentrated, some two thousand Mennonites or 44% of those eligible enlisted, most of them voluntarily.[52] The total number of Mennonites who entered combatant service was 7,500, as many as became conscientious objectors.[53] It has been estimated that of those eligible for service among the Russländer, 50% entered combatant service.[54] Of those who served, many did so with distinction and one won the Distinguished Service Cross.[55] The total number of enlistments among Swiss-origin Mennonites is not available. However, out of a total of some 451 young men from various churches in the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, it was found that only 15% joined the active service.[56]

While the Kanädier attempted, at first, to avoid all obligations in connection with military service, and the Russländer, by offering to perform non-combatant service, were more accommodating, the Swiss-origin Mennonites, especially the (Old) Mennonites, adopted a position towards the demands of the state which may be labelled "controlled accommodation" or "vocational pacifism."[57] This was an attempt to:

> maintain the sectarian protest against war while at the same time participating in the larger society... [It was an attempt] to avoid the limitations on power that are imposed on the tendency of the sect to withdraw. [58]

Although in agreement with the Kanädier about avoiding non-combatant service under military supervision, the Swiss-origin Mennonites took more positive action than the former in the sense that they became involved in the presentation to the Government of a program of civilian alternative service, as well as in the organizing of an inter-denominational body to negotiate with the Government.

As the international situation became more precarious in the early months of 1939, various churches, whose religious doctrines included pacifism, began to send memoranda to the Government in order to reaffirm their position in relation to war and military service. The Brethren in Christ (a non-Mennonite body, but also pacifist) and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ were the first to submit joint statements. As early as July 1939, Mr. J. H. Sherk, a minister from the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, had an interview with Mr. W. D. Euler,[59] Minister of Trade and

[52] FRANCIS, *In Search of Utopia*, p. 238.

[53] THIELMAN, "The Canadian Mennonites," pp. 293-294.

[54] EPP, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 331.

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] Military Problems Committee, C.H.P.C., Reports, WWII, Box I XIV-11.4.

[57] J. M. YINGER, *Religion in the Struggle for Power* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1946), p. 212.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] E. J. SWALM, "The Organization of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches," Records, Conrad Grebel Archives, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

Commerce, a man who had shown sympathy towards Mennonites during World War I and during the immigration debate. Peace Problems Committees were soon appointed by the churches concerned, and the committee of the Brethren in Christ Church called a general meeting of Peace churches on July 22, 1940, which met at the Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo, Ontario. The following bodies were present at the meeting: the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, Brethren in Christ, the Mennonite Church (Old), the Old Order Mennonites, the Amish, the United Mennonite Churches of Ontario and the Ontario District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church.[60] The first four groups, apart from the Brethren in Christ, were Swiss-origin Mennonites; the last two were composed largely of Russländer. At this meeting, a letter from Mr. Fred Haslam, Secretary to the Canadian Friends Service Committee, was read which described a project for non-military national service being proposed to the Government and asked for the cooperation of other Peace Churches. A committee was accordingly formed which interviewed members of the Society of Friends, and upon finding that they were agreed on all important issues, including the refusal to do non-combatant service, unless it was under civilian authority, the Society of Friends was asked to join the association of Peace Churches.

The Society of Friends formally joined the Conference of Historic Peace Churches on September 3, 1940, at which time a constitution was drawn up and the details of organization worked out. A short time later the Old Order Amish and the Old Order Dunkard also joined the Conference of Historic Peace Churches. The Executive consisted of five members from various Mennonite bodies and one from the Society of Friends.[61] A working committee known as "Military Problems Committee" was also appointed and the Non-Resistant Relief Organization of World War I was continued. The voting members of the committees consisted of all officials of participating groups and all lay members present who were sponsored by their respective churches. Of all churches, the (Old) Mennonites had the largest number of representatives. Meetings were to be called by the Chairman or by any Committee or recognized representative. All young men eligible for military service from the participating churches were asked to register with the Conference of Historic Peace Churches.

Controlled accommodation to the demands of the state was possible only because Conference delegates were able to establish effective relationships with government officials. The sending of letters and delegations to Ottawa and other cities were the means most frequently

[60] TOEWS, *Alternative Service*, p. 31.

[61] Conference of Historic Peace Churches, Conrad Grebel Archives (all information about this organization and its activities was found in the Archives, unless otherwise indicated).

employed by Conference delegates. On several occasions, the proposals of the Conference delegates became implemented as government policy, while on other occasions, continued pressure on government officials resulted in the repeal, or, at least, review of unfavourable decisions and policies.

The first delegations to Ottawa took place on September 5th and 24th, 1940. On September 5th, Messrs. E. J. Swalm, J. B. Martin, F. Haslam, and D. Toews met Mr. Justice T. C. Davies, Deputy Minister of the Department of National War Services to "...offer ourselves to be of help in working out problems arising out of our position on war and peace."[62] On September 24th a list of Divisional Registrars was obtained and interviews with those at London and Toronto arranged. Perhaps one of the most important delegations was the one sent on November 14, 1940 to interview Major-General L. R. La Fleche, Associate Deputy Minister of the Department of National War Services and Mr. T. C. Davies, Deputy Minister. Here the proposals for a non-military form of alternative service were presented, proposals which, in large measure, became part of the Alternative Service Program implemented by the Government in the summer of 1941.

It should be pointed out, however, that Major-General La Flèche's reaction to the proposals concerning alternative service was initially negative. In fact, his reaction to the majority of the proposals put forward by Mennonites remained essentially negative, so that Mr. J. B. Martin was to remark: "God definitely led us to bypass the Major-General and interview the Honourable J. T. Gardiner, Minister of War."[63] The meeting with Mr. Gardiner a few days later proved more successful, as he appeared to be "sympathetic." On March 14, 1941, during the debate on the War Appropriations Bill, Mr. Gardiner referred to the proposals as follows:

> They [the Mennonites] were prepared to attend at camps and take training in first aid and ambulance work, indicating that they had no objections whatever to facing danger... provided they were not asked to kill... I mention the Mennonites because of the liberality, if I might use that expression, of the Mennonite people in making offers to do other things, since they object to military service itself.[64]

The first call-up for Alternative Service was announced on May 29, 1941and provided civilian work in camps operated by the Department of Mines and Resources. The total number of Conscientious Objectors received at Alternative Service Camps from 1941 to March 31, 1943 was

[62] J. B. MARTIN, "The Churches and Official Contacts with the Government," Records, Conference of Historic Peace Churches, Conrad Grebel Archives.

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] TOEWS, *Alternative Service*, p. 38. At the meeting of November 14, 1940, Mr. B. B. Janz of the Mennonite Brethren Church had suggested that some young men would be prepared to do ambulance work under military supervision.

3,091,[65] while the total number of Conscientious Objectors during the entire war was 10,851,[66] of whom 70% of the latter were Mennonites, that is, 7,543.[67]

The Conference of Historic Peace Churches was also able to negotiate with the Government in other matters affecting Mennonites and other pacifists during World War II. The purchase of Victory Loans caused concern because it was felt that the money would be used for the manufacture of munitions. After making representations to the Minister of Finance, the following arrangements were made: a special sticker was attached to Victory Loans, and Non-Interest Bearing Certificates (Series B) were designed, so that the proceeds of both were to be used to "alleviate distress or human suffering due to war." The total amount subscribed to Series B Non-Interest Bearing Certificates and Victory Loans with stickers attached was $4,672,410.16 by May 2, 1945.[68]

Previously it was noted that in Manitoba at least eighteen men were jailed for failing to report for military service, after their applications for postponement were rejected. The Conference of Historic Peace Churches also made representations on the behalf of these men but little was achieved. The Department of National War Services insisted it could not review individual cases because the Divisional Boards had exclusive jurisdiction over them. In Saskatchewan, in the spring of 1942, some men were told by their Divisional Boards to undertake basic military training, after which they could elect some form of non-combatant service. Although some Russländer had made an offer to undertake such work, no form of non-combatant service was arranged by the Government until 1943.[69] After a delegation was sent to Ottawa on January 13, 1942 this matter was discussed and the Department of National War Services advised the Divisional Boards that non-combatant service was not yet available, and that, in fact, only two kinds of service existed at this time — active military service requiring military training, and alternative service (civilian) in camps operated by the Department of Mines and Resources. A letter was also received by the Conference from Mr. Mitchell, Department of National War Services, on June 26, 1942 stating that the Department had reviewed the cases of over one-hundred men who had failed to obtain conscientious objector status.

When a program of non-combatant service was arranged in 1943, it did not attract many volunteers, perhaps in part, because the Conference

65 MARTIN, "The Churches and Official Contacts with the Government."
66 TOEWS, *Alternative Service*, p. 81.
67 EPP, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 331.
68 MARTIN, "The Churches and Official contacts with the Government."
69 TOEWS, *Alternative Service*, pp. 68-69.

of Historic Peace Churches objected to military supervision and to the fact that the non-combatant units would not be separate units, thereby making religious supervision and instruction impossible.[70] Consequently, only seven hundred conscientious objectors volunteered for this service and two hundred and twenty-seven actually served in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and the Royal Canadian Dental Corps.[71]

The Conference of Historic Peace Churches also attempted to resolve differences with the Government concerning education and the placing of special restrictions on conscientious objectors. A special difficulty arose when defence training was made compulsory in the high schools in Ontario. Interviews with Mr. Barclay and Mr. Althouse of the Department of Education in October 1942 resulted in the abolition of defence training but a course entitled "Physical and Health Education and Cadet Training" was retained. A further interview with Dr. McArthur, Minister of Education, obtained the right to be exempted from such a course on the basis of religious scruples. On January 6, 1943 a Mennonite father wrote to Mr. Sherk, Secretary of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches, that Mennonite boys at a Leamington high school were being compelled to take part in rifle drill. When the boys objected, the principal asked them to leave the school and his attitude changed only slightly when he was told of the interview with Mr. McArthur. The Mennonite father observed that he would rather have the boys stay home than bring too much pressure to bear on the principal, adding "Public sentiment here is very tense in respect to the C.O.s..."[72]

Delegations were also sent to Ottawa to protest against the National Selective Service Regulations PC 10924 of December 1, 1942, which stated that conscientious objectors could not attend university. At this time other young men, who were not conscientious objectors, were exempt from military service on the grounds of being enrolled at university. A letter and petition from fifteen Mennonite students at the University of Manitoba was also sent to the Prime Minister in regard to this restriction. Similar protests were made by the Conference of Historic Peace Churches against the regulation which stated that only those student ministers, whose denominations supplied chaplains to the armed forces, could receive postponement from military service. It was not until October 23, 1945 that the Alternative Service Branch granted permission for a limited number of conscientious objectors from Peace Churches to attend universities and church-training institutions.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

[72] Executive Committee, Conference of Historic Peace Churches, Minutes and Correspondence, 1941-1944, Box I, Conrad Grebel Archives.

Efforts were made at all times by C.H.P.C. officials to maintain friendly relationships with government officials. It was noted in the minutes of the C.H.P.C. that, when the administration of the National War Services Regulations (1940) was transferred from the Minister of National War Services to the Minister of Labour on September 26, 1942, relations improved. When on April 7, 1943 the responsibility for directing Alternative Service work was vested in the Employment Service, the demands of industry and agriculture became known to those people in charge of directing Alternative Service Work. Because Canada was experiencing a labour shortage, especially in agriculture. Alternative Service Officers were authorized to direct postponed conscientious objectors to employment in agriculture and other essential industries. As of December 31, 1945 almost two-thirds of all conscientious objectors were employed in agriculture.[73] Depending on his earnings, a conscientious objector was required to pay from $3 to $50 a month to the Red Cross, so that by December 31, 1945, a total payment of $2,222,802.70 had been made to the Red Cross.[74] The transfer to agriculture had positive consequences, not only for the conscientious objectors, but for relationships between Mobilization Board members and the members of the C.H.P.C. A report of a delegation to London, Ontario observed that "The representatives of the Board assured us of their friendly attitude toward C.O.s and toward those of the C.H.P.C. in particular." On the other hand, the relationship with Major-General La Flèche, Associate Deputy Minister of the Department of National War Services, remained strained. A request by C.H.P.C. officials for an interview with the Major in order to discuss the possibility of training alternative service workers for "post-war relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation" overseas was answered as follows:

> I have your letter of yesterday's date and give you my first impression which is that all should help win the War and that those who do not do so can hardly hope for a share of the fruits of the sacrifices which should be made by all.[75]

However, a letter dated May 3, 1943 from the External Affairs Department expressed approval and readiness to grant passports if the project was approved.

A great many letters were written to the Conference of Historic Peace Churches by young men asking for advice and help in regard to applying for conscientious objector status and in clearing up misunderstandings of various kinds. The case of a young man who was granted a postponement of military service on the grounds of being employed in an essential in-

[73] Toews, *Alternative Service*, p. 60.

[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 93 and 108.

[75] Letter from Major-General La Fleche to Mr. Sherk, Secretary of the C.H.P.C. dated April 20, 1943. Military Problems Committee, C.H.P.C., World War II, Box 2, Conrad Grebel Archives.

dustry, but whose postponement was eventually revoked, and whose subsequent application for conscientious objector status refused, was just one of many similar cases. A letter from the Chief Justice, Chairman of the Mobilization Board, on May 12, 1944 stated: "Our Board has never accepted a simple statement from a pastor that the man was a conscientious objector but has required to be satisfied, in most cases, by an interview with the applicant himself."[76] The case aroused such controversy that a petition with one hundred and forty names, consisting primarily of the young man's neighbours including many who were not pacifists, was submitted to protest the decision of the Board. The records disclose that the young man was sentenced to hard labour on October 28, 1944, but that the sentence was remitted on November 8, 1945. Nevertheless, the proportion of postponements granted on the basis of conscientious objection to men who were members of Peace Churches was higher than those granted to men who were not members of such churches.[77]

Although not always successful, the work of the C.H.P.C. became so well recognized that ministers from other churches occasionally turned to it for help. A United Church minister, who had a son at an Alternative Service Camp, wrote to the C.H.P.C. asking for a letter of introduction to be presented to officials there. A letter from a group of United Church ministers to the Minister of Labour, protesting against some of the conditions of Alternative Service work and the restrictions placed on conscientious objectors, also emphasized the cooperation of the C.H.P.C.

V

Although branches of 16th century Anabaptism had been closely connected with movements concerned with social and economic change,[78] these more active branches had been quickly suppressed by various European governments. While large numbers were martyrs for their faith in the beginning, eventually Mennonites came either to submit to governmental demands or they immigrated to another country in order to avoid change. The attitude of those who tried to separate themselves from the demands of state and society and to avoid change has been described as one of: "... 'defencelessness' and not pacifism'. The emphasis [was] on suffering by members of Christ's kingdom for His sake, rather than on the hope of bringing in a general ordering of society in which coercion would be unnecessary. The social order [was] viewed pessimistically and [could-

[76] Conference of Historic Peace Churches, Correspondence, E. Shantz file, Box 2, Conrad Grebel Archives.

[77] TOEWS, *Alternative Service*, p. 48.

[78] For an account of the militant millennarianism of some early Anabaptists see SMITH, *The Story of the Mennonites*, pp. 70-82.

not] be 'Christianized.'"[79] In Canada, partly as a result of economic changes and overall assimilation, the trend towards submission to governmental and societal pressure continued, as evidenced by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ who relinquished non-resistance as a church doctrine after World War II, by the Russländer who endorsed non-combatant work under military supervision, and by the large proportion of Mennonite men who eschewed a historical tradition and enlisted in combatant service. The "flight from change" response was exhibited by those Old Colony Mennonites who immigrated to Mexico in order to avoid assimilation threatened by the nationalistic policies of provincial governments as a result of World War I, principally, the introduction of the public school in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. A third response was exhibited by those Mennonites who attempted to control the extent of their accommodation by presenting an acceptable alternative to military service and by organizing in order to effectively negotiate with the Government. They also forsook the pessimistic view of society held by the most passive and sectarian of the Mennonites. The Conference of Historic Peace Churches was concerned, not only with securing rights for conscientious objectors, but also with expressing disapproval against all wars. By continuing to send petitions and delegations to various governments protesting foreign policies and nuclear testing after World War II, the Conference of Historic Peace Churches demonstrated that it believed the social order could be changed and improved.

[79] R. C. DETWEILER, *Mennonite Statements on Peace* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1968), pp. 16-17.