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## Kansas Mennonites During World War I

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*Arlyn John Parish*

**Kansas Mennonites During  
World War I**

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### *Biographical Sketch of the Author*

Arlyn John Parish graduated from Radium, Kansas, High School in 1960. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1964, and Master of Arts degree in 1967, both from Fort Hays Kansas State College. Mr. Parish is a member of Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Alpha Theta. While at Fort Hays State he was also selected for "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities." His major interest is the social history of the United States and Latin America.

# **Kansas Mennonites During World War I**

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. THE KANSAS MENNONITES IN 1917 .....	3
III. THE PRESERVATION OF MENNONITE ATTITUDES TOWARD WAR AND NONRESISTANCE .....	16
IV. THE POSITION ON NONRESISTANCE TAKEN BY THE MENNONITE LEADERS .....	26
V. MENNONITE DRAFTEES AND NONRESISTANCE .....	36
VI. NONRESISTANCE AND THE MENNONITE COMMUNITIES .....	46
VII. CONCLUSION .....	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	57



## List of Illustrations

MAPS	PAGE
Mennonite Congregations in Kansas, 1917 .....	12
Mennonite Congregations in Central Kansas, 1917 .....	13

TABLE	
1. Military Service Accepted by Kansas Mennonite Draftees ..	45

## Preface

The story of the Mennonites of Kansas during World War I has never been told. This account should be of interest both as an incident in general Mennonite history and as an episode in the social history of the United States, for it demonstrates many of the problems of incorporating a minority group into the broader society.

For source material the author has drawn largely upon the material at the Bethel College Historical Library at North Newton, Kansas. This library has a large manuscript collection, most valuable of which was the correspondence of many of the most influential Mennonite ministers. Bethel Library also holds records of church conferences, diaries of Mennonites who were called into the military service, and printed material on each Mennonite church. Additional holdings which concern the Mennonites during World War I include microfilmed records of the Department of State, Bureau of Immigration, Attorney General, and Provost General.

The author is indebted to the many people who have assisted him, especially Dr. John F. Schmidt, Dr. Cornelius Krahn, and James C. Juhnke of Bethel College. The author also acknowledges the following individuals who provided source material for the study: Mrs. Jess Smucker of Sterling, Henry B. Koehn of Montezuma, Ferdinand Schroeder of Goessel, C. E. Spurlock and Ura Hostetler of Harper.



# Chapter I

## INTRODUCTION

Sects and cults which profess doctrines that are contrary to the religious norms of society have a difficult time maintaining their beliefs. If their doctrines are considered to be too dangerous, the sect will usually be suppressed. If their religious ideas are not thought to be dangerous, they will often be tolerated but restrictions will be placed on the promulgation of their doctrine. Without opportunity to spread their beliefs to zealous converts, their ideas will lose their vitality. Gradually assimilation will occur, and their descendants will eventually accept the religious norms of society.

One way that cults and sects can prevent this assimilation and preserve their religion is to migrate to lands where very few people live. Thus, frontier areas are usually best suited for the settlement of such groups. Here they can maintain a religious tradition by keeping their children free from the influence of the outside world. However, most frontier areas are eventually settled, and then it becomes necessary to move again or find other methods to preserve their beliefs.

Practicing the doctrine of separation from the world can serve as a substitute for actual physical separation by migration. The doctrine of separation can roughly be divided into two parts. The first is to refuse to take part in any worldly activity either social or political. The second is to stress nonconformity by making an effort to live differently from the world by using distinct patterns of dress, types of furniture, or means of transportation. By keeping their people from coming into contact with the activities of the world and by teaching them that it is wrong to do so, various sects and cults can maintain their traditional religious beliefs.

However, it is impossible for any religious sect to gain complete seclusion by teaching separation from the world since some contact with outsiders is inevitable. Nevertheless, the degree of seclusion achieved relates directly to the length of time that traditional religious doctrines can be maintained.

The Mennonites of Kansas during World War I serve as good examples of how the doctrine of separation from the world helps sects maintain their traditional religious beliefs. There were eleven separate Mennonite sects in Kansas when the United States de-

clared war on Germany in 1917.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the conflict each of these sects held that it was sinful for an individual to take any part in carnal warfare. After only a year and a half of having their doctrine challenged, there was a noticeable difference in the nonresistant position taken by the Mennonites. This change was barely perceptible in the official doctrine proclaimed by the Mennonite leaders. Yet it was quite evident in the actual stand taken by the Mennonites in the military encampments and at home. Individuals who belonged to sects which stressed separation from the world modified their doctrine of nonresistance less than did those who were members of sects which placed little emphasis on nonconformity.

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1. The author will refer to the Mennonite groups in Kansas as sects. By this he means a religious group that deviates from the general religious tradition and is characterized by an insistence on strict qualifications for membership.

## Chapter II

### THE KANSAS MENNONITES IN 1917

At the time of the United States' declaration of war on Germany in 1917, the eleven Mennonite sects in the state of Kansas had a total membership of 9,411 adults.<sup>1</sup> Each of these Mennonite sects was a religious descendant of Anabaptist groups which were founded in Europe during the sixteenth century.

The Kansas Mennonites in 1917, in fact all Mennonite groups, did not trace their religious ancestry back to the Anabaptists like Jan Matthys or Jan van Leiden who wished to overthrow all secular authorities and establish the "Kingdom of God on Earth." Instead, the Mennonites claim as their founders men like Conrad Grebel, Dirk Philips, and Menno Simons, who were willing to recognize the secular powers as ordained by God to enforce order. They believed, however, that there were certain religious matters over which the secular powers had no authority.<sup>2</sup>

For example, the Mennonites believed that no secular power had the authority to force members of their faith to participate in war. They maintained that no one who accepted the Gospel should be protected with the sword, nor should he protect himself. This doctrine of nonresistance was one of the historical tenets of all Mennonite sects in Kansas.<sup>3</sup>

All Mennonite sects also believed that the Scriptures taught it was wrong for anyone to take an oath. Furthermore, they thought that the secular government had no authority to make them take oaths, for they looked upon this as a religious matter.<sup>4</sup>

The primary tenet of the Mennonite faith was that baptism should be limited exclusively to adult Christian believers. This rejection of infant baptism was a direct attack on the authority of the state churches in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth

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1. U. S., Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916. Summary and General Tables* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), I, 176-177.

2. J. W. Hoover, "Social Attitudes Among the Mennonites" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1915), pp. 50-51.

3. The Mennonites quoted from numerous passages in the Scriptures to support their doctrine of nonresistance. The most often cited verses were "Resist not evil" and "Love thine enemies" from Matthew 5:38, 44. Charles Henry Smith, *Story of the Mennonites* (3rd ed. rev. and enlarged; Newton, Ks.: Mennonite Publication Office, 1960), pp. 22, 787-790.

4. The refusal of the Mennonites to take an oath was primarily based on a literal interpretation of Christ's command to "Swear not at all." Matthew 5:34. *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 785.

centuries. It was also the cause for most of the persecution that the Mennonites endured at the hands of the secular authorities at that time.<sup>5</sup>

These doctrines which the Mennonites professed were based upon the Scriptures, which they claimed to accept without question. Any member who digressed from the standards set by the Mennonites' interpretation of the Scriptures was disciplined by the compelling power of the ban. This was similar to excommunication, for it meant exclusion from the church and sometimes exclusion from all social activities with other members of the congregation.<sup>6</sup>

The refusal of the Mennonites to take part in the worship services of the state churches, take oaths, and participate in carnal warfare caused many secular authorities to persecute them. To escape from persecution, the Mennonites migrated from the Rhineland to various parts of Europe and America. This migration not only preserved their religious doctrines but also caused them to become distinct social bodies. As the faithful moved from one land to another, they maintained the language and culture of their former fatherlands which made them quite different from the people who lived around them. The religious doctrine of the separation of the people of God from the rest of the world tended to prevent their conforming to the culture of the countries to which they migrated.<sup>7</sup>

The Mennonite sects which migrated to Kansas did not come in one large group but in many groups, some large and some small. Most of these immigrants arrived during the 1870's and 1880's while Kansas was still a frontier state. Some came from eastern United States, particularly Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa. However, most arrived directly from Europe. The greatest number of the European Mennonites came from Russia, while others arrived from Prussia, Austria, Poland, and Switzerland.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the Mennonites in Kansas whose ancestors had lived in eastern United States belonged to the Old Mennonite Church.<sup>9</sup> The Old Mennonites numerically were by far the largest division of the Mennonites in the United States, but only a small portion of this branch lived in Kansas. According to the survey made by the

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5. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 112.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

7. E. K. Frances, "The Russian Mennonites: From Religious to Ethnic Group," *American Journal of Sociology*, LIV (1948-1949), 101-107.

8. Smith, *Story of the Mennonites*, pp. 650-651.

9. The official name for this sect was the Mennonite Church. It was commonly called the Old Mennonite Church and will be referred to as the Old Mennonite Church in this paper to prevent confusion.

Bureau of the Census, there were 34,965 Old Mennonites in the United States in 1916 and only 1,060 of these lived in Kansas.<sup>10</sup>

The Old Mennonites had the most centralized organization and and the most powerful hierarchy of any branch of the Mennonite church. While most Mennonite sects emphasized congregational control, the Old Mennonites had established a system of bishops who had considerable authority in selecting ministers and in running the national and district church conferences.<sup>11</sup>

Not all Old Mennonite congregations in Kansas belonged to the same district conference. The following congregations belonged to the Kansas-Nebraska Conference: Catlin in Marion County, Hesston and Pennsylvania in Harvey County, Eureka in Pawnee County, Kill Creek in Osborn County, Pleasant Valley in Harper County, Protection in Comanche County, Ransom in Ness County, Shallow Water in Scott County, Spring Valley and West Liberty in McPherson County, and Yoder in Reno County. Two Old Mennonite congregations belonged to the Missouri-Iowa Conference: Bethany in Cherokee County and Olathe in Johnson County. The Argentine mission in Kansas City, Kansas, was jointly operated by the Kansas-Nebraska and the Missouri-Iowa Conferences.<sup>12</sup>

The Old Mennonites placed some emphasis on the doctrine of nonconformity to the world. They adhered to certain regulations in dress to stress this nonconformity. The women wore white caps in public places and the ministers appeared only in the regulation coat. Even though no musical instruments were permitted in places of worship by the Old Mennonites, their use in the home was not prohibited.<sup>13</sup>

A sect whose religious practices were almost identical to the Old Mennonites was the Amish-Mennonites. In fact, these two groups united in 1920. There was one small Amish-Mennonite congregation in Kansas during World War I. It belonged to the Western District Conference and was located near Crystal Springs in Harper County.<sup>14</sup>

Another Amish group that was found in Kansas during World War I was the Old Order Amish. This sect, like the Amish-Mennonites, traced its religious ancestry back to Switzerland, where in 1693 Jacob Amman conceived the idea that the Mennonite

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10. U. S., Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, I, 176-177.

11. J. S. Hartzler and Daniel Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Book and Tract Society, 1905), pp. 210-211.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 299, 304.

13. Abraham Albrecht, "Mennonite Settlements in Kansas" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Kansas, 1925), p. 25.

14. Hartzler and Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History*, pp. 143, 311, 312. See also "Western District," *Mennonite Encyclopedia, A Comprehensive Reference Work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement*, IV (1955), 933.



church in his day was not strict enough in its discipline. To enforce strict discipline the Old Order Amish used the ban. This denied those whose actions or beliefs were out of harmony with the church not only the right of participation in the communion services, but also the privilege of social, economic, or domestic relations with those who remained firm in the faith.<sup>15</sup>

The Old Order Amish emphasized nonconformity to the world. They insisted on wearing hooks and eyes instead of buttons fastened to their dress coats. The men had to wear broad-rimmed hats. There were also dress regulations for the women; for example, the use of hats was forbidden altogether. They observed extreme simplicity in their homes as well as their dress. Rugs and musical instruments were prohibited. Neither was the use of automobiles permitted.<sup>16</sup>

The Old Order Amish people of Kansas lived in compact groups in order to worship together. They assembled in private homes for services since the erection of houses of worship was taboo.<sup>17</sup> The largest Old Order Amish settlements were in Reno County near the towns of Yoder and Partridge. Other settlements were located in Harper, Sumner, and Anderson Counties.<sup>18</sup> About 484 adults belonged to these Old Order Amish congregations in Kansas in 1916.<sup>19</sup>

A division among the Amish in Indiana in 1864 led to the formation of the Defenseless Mennonite Church. This sect was established by Henry Egli. He believed that Christians should not be accepted into the church merely because they had reached a particular age, but that one must first have a definite conversion experience. The Defenseless Mennonites also discarded the Amish dress regulations.<sup>20</sup> The only Defenseless Mennonite congregation in Kansas was located south of Sterling in Reno County and had approximately one hundred members.<sup>21</sup>

Some members of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ also moved from the East to find homes in Kansas. This sect arose from the union of four different groups in 1883—New Mennonites, Reformed Mennonites, Evangelical Mennonites of Pennsylvania, and the

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15. Albrecht, "Mennonite Settlements in Kansas," pp. 110-111.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

18. "Kansas," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, III, 144. Also interview with David Beachy, Yoder, Kansas, June 1, 1967.

19. U. S., Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, I, 176-177.

20. *Evangelical Mennonite Church Manual* (Fort Wayne, Ind.: n.p., 1960), p. 8.

21. Mrs. Jess Smucker, "History of the Sterling Evangelical Mennonite Church," p. 5. Also interview with William Schweizer, Sterling, Kansas, March 28, 1967.

Brethren in Christ.<sup>22</sup> The Mennonite Brethren in Christ emphasized evangelism, feet washing, and accepted the premillennial view of Christ's second coming. Unlike most Mennonite sects which baptized by sprinkling or pouring, the Mennonite Brethren in Christ practiced immersion. The forty-four members of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church in Kansas lived in Harper County.<sup>23</sup>

Most of the Mennonites who lived in Kansas during World War I were not descendants of immigrants from the eastern states but of immigrants who had arrived directly from Europe. Some of the foreign congregations were not affiliated with any particular Mennonite sect when they arrived in the United States; instead they had their own rules and regulations.<sup>24</sup>

The General Conference of Mennonites of North America was well-suited for the assimilation of these European Mennonite congregations. This sect, which was founded in 1860 with the union of a number of congregations in United States and Canada, had for its purpose the union of all Mennonites in America.<sup>25</sup> In this effort, the General Conference allowed each local congregation to have its own particular customs regarding dress regulations, communion service, and mode of baptism. Agreement only on the fundamental doctrines of the Mennonite faith, such as believers' baptism, nonresistance, and the acceptance of the Scriptures, was the only requirement for membership. Furthermore, the General Conference did not approve of a strict enforcement of the ban. This also was to prevent disunity.<sup>26</sup>

Different congregations of Mennonites living in Kansas joined the General Conference of Mennonites of North America at different times. The large Russian Alexanderwohl church in Marion County was the first in 1876. Most of the other Russian congregations in Marion, McPherson, and Harvey Counties also joined. Other foreign Mennonite congregations soon followed: The Swiss Galician near Arlington and Hanston, the Prussian of Newton and Ebling, the Polish of Pawnee Rock, and the Swiss at Whitewater.<sup>27</sup>

With most of the European congregations joining the General Conference of Mennonites of North America, this body became

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22. Jasper Abraham Huffman (ed.), *History of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church* (New Carlisle, Ohio: The Bethel Publishing Company, 1920), p. 34.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 114. See also Records of Quarterly Meetings Held at Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church at Harper, 1916 (MSS, United Missionary Church, Harper).

24. Smith, *Story of the Mennonites*, p. 650.

25. Albrecht, "Mennonite Settlements in Kansas," p. 12.

26. Henry Peter Krehbiel, *The History of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America*, Vol. I (Canton, Ohio: By the Author, 1898), pp. 56-57.

27. Albrecht, "Mennonite Settlements in Kansas," p. 14.

the largest Mennonite sect in Kansas. It had about 4,937 members in this state in 1916.<sup>28</sup> The congregations in Kansas which belonged to the General Conference church belonged to the western District Conference of the church. This district was originally called the Kansas District, but its name was changed to the Western District Conference with the addition of a few congregations in Nebraska and Oklahoma.<sup>29</sup>

The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, also known as the Holdeman faction, was another American sect that increased its membership by getting the European Mennonites to join its ranks. This sect was founded by John Holdeman in 1859 in Wayne County, Ohio. The Holdeman Mennonites laid strong emphasis on non-conformity to the world. They maintained strict rules for simplicity of dress, including beards for men. They condemned the taking of usury and maintained strict enforcement of the ban.<sup>30</sup>

John Holdeman was quite successful in establishing churches among the European Mennonites in Kansas. Church of God in Christ, Mennonite congregations were located near the following Kansas towns: Hillsboro, Greensburg, Cimarron, Halstead, Durham, Moundridge, Hesston, Montezuma, Copeland, and Inman.<sup>31</sup> Prior to and during World War I, Kansas was the center of the Holdeman church. Of about 1,125 Holdeman Mennonites who lived in the United States, 697 lived in Kansas.<sup>32</sup>

Many of the European settlers in Kansas refused to join any of the established American Mennonite sects. Instead, they organized their own religious bodies which were much like the Mennonite sects to which they had belonged in Europe.

Many of the Mennonites from the Molotschna and the Kuban areas as well as the Volga settlements of Russia helped establish the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America. In Russia they had come under the influence of various Pietist and Baptist groups, and upon reaching America they founded a church which showed the influence of these religious bodies.<sup>33</sup>

The Mennonite Brethren stressed conversion as a single act rather than a gradual process. Baptism was by immersion. Evangelistic

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28. U. S., Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, I, 176-177.

29. "Western District Conference," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV, 933.

30. *Conference Reports, 1896-1962, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite* (Laboma, Okla.: The Publication Board, 1963), pp. 3-18.

31. Albrecht, "Mennonite Settlements in Kansas," p. 57.

32. U. S., Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, I, 21, 176-177.

33. John Howard Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro, Ks.: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1950), p. 64.

meetings were held often. Such practices as testimonial meetings, prayer meetings, and the singing of the gospel songs were common. The assurance of salvation and the second coming of Christ was emphasized in their preaching.<sup>34</sup>

The Kansas congregations of the Mennonite Brethren belonged to the Southern District Conference of the church, which also included congregations in Oklahoma, Colorado, and Texas.<sup>35</sup> Mennonite Brethren churches in Kansas were located near the following towns: Buhler, Dorrance, Hillsboro, Goessel, Inman, Lehigh, Peabody, and Tampa.<sup>36</sup> There were about 1,434 Mennonite Brethren who belonged to Kansas congregations prior to the United States' entry into World War I.<sup>37</sup>

The Krimmer Brueder-Gemeinde was a Mennonite sect that very closely resembled the Mennonite Brethren. They, too, emphasized the need for a definite religious experience and practiced baptism by immersion. The Krimmer Brethren, however, immersed backward while the Mennonite Brethren immersed forward. The Krimmer Brethren also stressed simplicity of dress and condemned such worldly practices as attending circuses and theaters.<sup>38</sup>

The Krimmer Brueder-Gemeinde date their origin back to 1869. They were founded by Jacob Wiebe in the Crimea when he led his followers out of the Kleine Gemeinde church.<sup>39</sup> The Krimmer Brethren established settlements in Marion County in 1874. By the time of the United States entry into World War I, they also had a congregation near Inman in McPherson County.<sup>40</sup> There were about 501 Krimmer Brethren in Kansas in 1916, out of a total of 894 who lived in the United States.<sup>41</sup>

The Kleine Gemeinde, the sect from which the Krimmer Brueder-Gemeinde had separated, also had a settlement in Kansas. The Kleine Gemeinde originated in Molotschna colony in Russia in 1812 under the leadership of Class Reimer. This sect was especially strict on nonconformity to the world. They emphasized simplicity in clothing and forbade all luxury in the home. They condemned

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34. Frank C. Peters, "The Coming of the Mennonite Brethren to the United States and Their Efforts in Education" (unpublished dissertation, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1957), pp. 32-34.

35. Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, pp. 81-82.

36. Cornelius Cicero Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement in the Counties of Marion, McPherson, Harvey, Reno, and Butler, Kansas" (unpublished Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1926), pp. 77-78.

37. U. S., Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, I, 176-177.

38. Smith, *Story of the Mennonites*, pp. 658-659.

39. Albrecht, "Mennonite Settlements in Kansas," p. 15.

40. Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement," pp. 72-73.

41. U. S., Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, I, 21, 176-177.

the reading of all non-Mennonite literature and denounced any Mennonite who would concede that a non-Mennonite believing Christian might be saved.<sup>42</sup>

The Kleine Gemeinde did not come directly from Russia to Kansas, but first settled in Jansen, Nebraska. They moved from Nebraska to Meade County, Kansas, in 1906-1908. By 1916 the only Kleine Gemeinde congregations in the United States were located in Meade County.<sup>43</sup> This sect had about 171 members.<sup>44</sup>

The Defenseless Mennonites of North America, which were in no way connected with the Defenseless Mennonites that settled south of Sterling, had two small congregations in Kansas. One congregation was located in Meade County and the other near Inman in McPherson County. This sect placed a lot of emphasis on nonconformity to the world. It strongly condemned the use of tobacco. Its rituals included baptism in a stream by pouring and footwashing with communion.<sup>45</sup>

One of the reasons these Mennonite sects had selected the frontier state of Kansas for settlement was their insistence on preserving their religious and cultural life as they had inherited it. In order to maintain their way of life, it was necessary to keep separate from the rest of the world. Farming, the occupation of both the immigrants from the eastern states and Europe, was well adapted for the Mennonite's need for seclusion. In order to maintain their separateness, the Mennonites attempted to buy up large blocks of land to create wholly Mennonite communities. This was done in a large part of northern Harvey and southern Marion and McPherson counties and on a smaller scale in parts of Reno, Butler, and Harper Counties.<sup>46</sup>

However, because of the growing land shortage and the large Mennonite families, it became impossible for Mennonite farmers to provide land for all their children in the same locality. Consequently, between 1890 and World War I, many Mennonites migrated to western Kansas and to other states where more land was available. These movements within Kansas occurred in groups whenever possible, so new Mennonite communities might be estab-

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42. Jacob John Toews, "Cultural Background of the Mennonite Brethren Church" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1951), pp. 198-199.

43. Gustav Edward Reimer and Gustav R. Gaeddert, *Exiled by the Czar: Cornelius Jansen and the Great Mennonite Migration, 1874* (Newton, Ks.: Mennonite Publication Office, 1956), pp. 136-137.

44. U. S., Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies, 1916*, I, 21, 176-177.

45. Charles Henry Smith, *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites, An Episode in the Settling of the Last Frontier, 1874-1884* (Berne, Ind.: Mennonite Book Concern, 1927), p. 257.

46. Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement," p. 38.

lished. The founding of Holdeman, Old Mennonite, General Conference, and Mennonite Brethren churches in western Kansas resulted from the Mennonite's constant search for land.<sup>47</sup>

Another result of the overcrowding of the rural Mennonite communities was the movement to towns. After the turn of the century, many retired farmers began to move from the farms to spend their remaining days of leisure. Also, a few Mennonites began entering occupations such as teaching, business, milling, medicine, and newspaper work. Practically all who chose an occupation other than farming were members of the Mennonite sects which placed the least emphasis on nonconformity to the world, such as the General Conference Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren. Most who decided to move from the farm chose to live in a town that was in or near a Mennonite settlement. The following towns had large Mennonite populations: Buhler, Goessel, Hesston, Hillsboro, Inman, and Moundridge.<sup>48</sup>

By living somewhat separated from other Kansans, many of the European Mennonites were able to preserve their own particular spoken language which was a dialect used in the lowlands of northern Germany. Only the younger generation and those in everyday contact with outsiders spoke English with any degree of fluency.<sup>49</sup> For the Mennonites who had come to Kansas from the eastern states, their Germanic dialects were merely a secondary language or were not used at all.<sup>50</sup>

As a written language, many of the Mennonites from Russia and Prussia as well as some from eastern United States used German. It was the language used in their religious literature and Bible. Furthermore, the Mennonites received news of the outside world through German-language newspapers. The two German Mennonite newspapers, *Der Herold* of Newton and the *Hillsboro Vorwaerts* had circulations of about two thousand each.<sup>51</sup>

An important factor in maintaining the faith as well as the German language was the educational system used by the Mennonites. At first all Mennonites were suspicious of sending their children to the public schools. Each congregation, therefore, provided private schools in homes, in private school buildings, or in

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47. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-40.

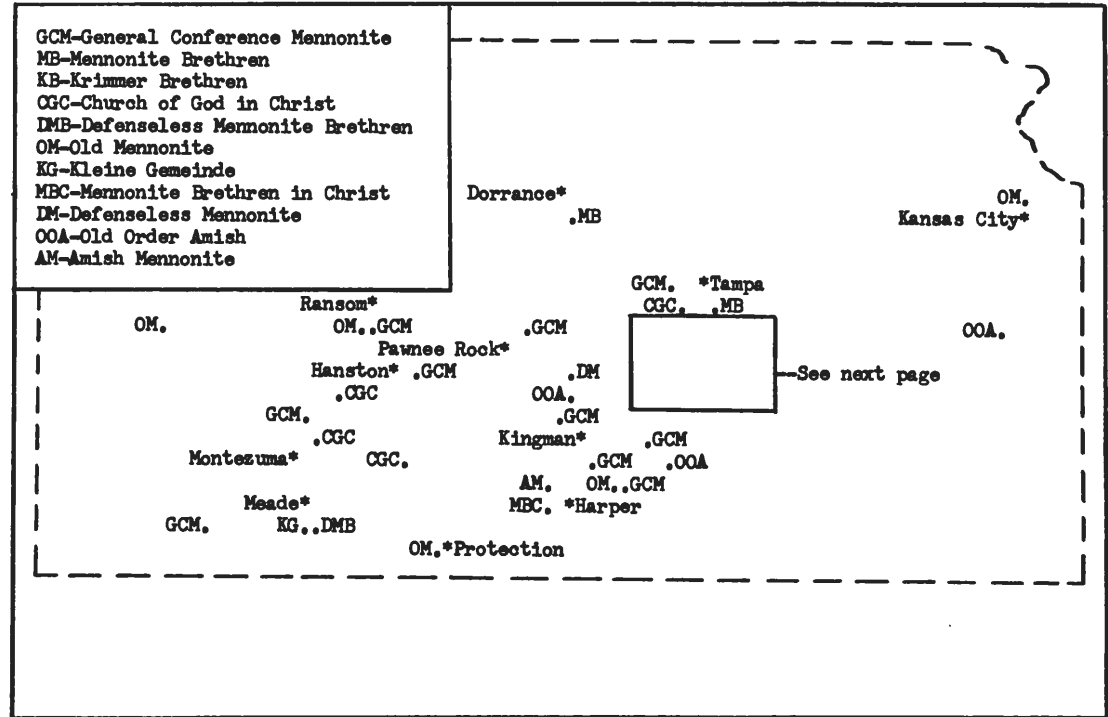
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

49. Smith, *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites*, pp. 239-240.

50. Interview with William Schweizer, Sterling, Kansas, March 28, 1967.

51. James C. Juhnke, "The Political Attitudes and Behavior of the Kansas Mennonites as a Measure of Acculturation" (tentative draft of unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Department of History, Indiana University, 1967), Ch. V., p. 2.

## MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS IN KANSAS, 1917







churches. In these parochial schools the study of the Bible prevailed for many years. In the schools of the European Mennonites, all subjects were taught in the German language.<sup>52</sup>

As the non-Mennonite settlers sold their property in and around Mennonite communities, control of the public schools passed into Mennonite hands. Since public schools received financial aid from the state, the Mennonites found it to their advantage to send their children to these public schools. Since the state laws were lax, the Mennonites could run the public schools as they pleased, including as much German and Bible study in the curriculum as they wished. Therefore, by World War I, practically all of the church schools of the Mennonites had been replaced by public schools.<sup>53</sup>

Gradually the state requirements concerning education were increased. When the state began to enforce the law requiring sixteen weeks of English school, the European Mennonites adopted the policy of having a twelve or sixteen-week term of German school either before or after the English term. As the English school term was extended to five months in 1903 and then to seven in 1909, there was little time left for German school, for Mennonite farmers felt that seven months for both German and English schools was sufficient. Some circumvented the law by continuing to conduct their schools on the old plan of five and two. Other schools put in an hour of German as part of each day's work.<sup>54</sup>

In order to train their own teachers for their primary school system, the Mennonites who placed little emphasis on nonconformity to the world founded preparatory schools in the larger Mennonite communities such as Hillsboro, Goessel, and Moundridge. Also, colleges and Bible academies grew up among the Mennonites of Kansas. At the time of the United States' involvement in World War I, three Mennonite schools existed in Kansas which gave college training. Bethel College at Newton served the General Conference Mennonites. Tabor College at Hillsboro was established by the Mennonite Brethren and Krimmer Brethren. Hesston Bible Academy of the Old Mennonite church was primarily a high school and Bible training center but also offered some regular college courses.<sup>55</sup>

It was primarily the desire to control the public schools which

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52. John Ellsworth Hartzler, *Education Among the Mennonites of America* (Danvers, Ill.: The Central Mennonite Publishing Board, 1925), p. 109.

53. H. P. Peters, *History and Development of Education Among the Mennonites in Kansas* (Hillsboro, Ks.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1925), pp. 23, 55.

54. Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement," pp. 97-102.

55. "Colleges," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I, 636-638.

caused most European Mennonites to take out citizenship papers. During the early years few Mennonites became naturalized. After the turn of the century, however, nearly all took out citizenship papers. Consequently, very few Mennonites were not citizens when the United States entered the war.<sup>56</sup>

Although most Mennonites had become citizens, few took advantage of the right to vote except in school board elections. Some of the members of the sects which placed little emphasis on non-conformity did become involved in politics prior to the World War. Some members of the General Conference were active not only as voters but also as candidates in local and state elections. The Amish, Holdeman, and Kleine Gemeinde refused to participate in all political affairs.<sup>57</sup>

In both religious practices and secular roles, the Mennonite sects of Kansas differed considerably on the importance of nonconformity to the world. Many of the members of the General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, and Mennonite Brethren in Christ felt that a great deal of separation from the world was not essential. They dressed like other Americans and engaged in political and social activities with outsiders. Other sects like the Kleine Gemeinde, Old Order Amish, Defenseless Mennonite of North America, and Holdeman believed that separation from the world was essential. They refused to live in towns, dress like outsiders, or engage in mundane social or political activities. The other Mennonite sects fell somewhere in between these two poles of thought.

The stand taken by the Mennonite sects on nonconformity was related to their attitude on all facets of life including nonresistance. In fact, nonresistance can be considered another way of refusing to follow the ways of the world.

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56. Peters, *Education Among the Mennonites of Kansas*, p. 23.

57. Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement," p. 61.

## Chapter III

### THE PRESERVATION OF MENNONITE ATTITUDES TOWARD WAR AND NONRESISTANCE

Nonresistance and the corollary principle of conscientious objection to war were not new doctrines for the Mennonites. Since their origin in Switzerland in the early part of the sixteenth century, they had testified against the taking of human life. Conrad Grebel, their first important leader, declared that "The Gospel and those who accept it are not to be protected with the sword, neither should they thus protect themselves."<sup>1</sup> The early Dutch Mennonites also condemned participation in war. Their leader, Menno Simons, said, "Our weapons are not swords and spears, but patience, silence, and hope, and the Word of God."<sup>2</sup>

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Mennonites in Europe continued to profess their belief in nonresistance. However, during this period it was not difficult to practice this doctrine, for conscription into the military service was little known in Europe prior to the Napoleonic wars.<sup>3</sup>

Universal military service was widely adopted in Europe in the nineteenth century. Conscription and the growing spirit of nationalism induced most Mennonites in western and central Europe gradually to discard the principle of nonresistance. However, some fled to avoid military service, a few to Russia and others to America.<sup>4</sup>

The Mennonite doctrine of nonresistance was not put to a rigorous test in the United States prior to World War I. Because the American Revolutionary War was fought with volunteers, most Mennonites, as well as other pacifist sects, were able to avoid military service. In parts of Pennsylvania, however, pressure was placed on the Mennonites to volunteer. When they refused, they were sometimes required to pay fines or their property was confiscated.

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1. H. S. Bender, *Mennonite Origins in Europe* (Akron, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee, 1942), p. 39.

2. Menno Simons, "Reply to False Accusations," *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, c. 1496-1561*, ed. John Christian Wenger, trans. Leonard Verduin (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1956), p. 555.

3. Thieleman J. van Braught (comp.), *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians, Who Baptized Only Upon Confession of Faith, and Who Suffered and Died for the Testimony of Jesus, Their Saviour, From the Time of Christ to the Year A. D. 1680*, trans. Joseph F. Sohm (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1951), pp. 413-1140.

4. Smith, *Story of the Mennonites*, pp. 231-232, 316-317, 327-328.

To escape possible persecution, a few Pennsylvania Mennonites moved to Canada.<sup>5</sup> The War of 1812 and the Mexican War also were fought with volunteers. Since there was little pressure on the Mennonites to enlist to fight in these two wars, their doctrine of nonresistance again was not severely tested.<sup>6</sup>

During the Civil War Mennonites in both the North and the South faced conscription for the first time. Nevertheless, both sides provided means by which those with conscientious scruples against war could avoid military service. Men who had been drafted could choose from among several alternatives: doing noncombatant work in hospitals, manning supply lines, hiring substitutes, or paying fines of \$300 in the North or \$500 in the South. Nearly all Mennonites chose to pay the fine. In both sections there were some attempts to force the Mennonites to participate in the conflict, but only a few were persecuted for not actively supporting the war.<sup>7</sup>

The Mennonites who migrated to America from Russia after the Civil War also had avoided military service. In Russia they had enjoyed special privileges, including freedom from all military service, as well as exclusive control of their own schools, freedom to use the German language, and a large degree of local autonomy.<sup>8</sup>

When the Russian government threatened to remove or modify these privileges in the 1870's, many Mennonites began to look for other lands where they might be given similar privileges. The Canadian government, in order to get people to settle the vast stretches of unoccupied land, issued an Order of Council in 1873, which exempted the immigrant Russian Mennonites from all military service and granted them other rights similar to those they had lost in Russia. As a result of these liberal concessions, nearly half of the Russian Mennonite immigrants settled in Canada.<sup>9</sup>

Many Mennonites did not wish to settle on Canadian soil because of the unfavorable climate, and they sought similar privileges from the United States. In August, 1873, two Hutterites,<sup>10</sup> Paul and Lorenz Tschetter, and a Mennonite, Tobias Unruh, secured a

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5. Wilbur J. Bender, *Nonresistance in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1934), p. 18.

6. Smith, *Story of the Mennonites*, p. 788.

7. U. S., War Department, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, prepared by Colonel James S. Easby-Smith, Judge Advocate (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1919), p. 14. See also Edward Needles Wright, *Conscientious Objectors in the Civil War* (2d ed.; New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 39-219.

8. Smith, *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites*, p. 23.

9. It is estimated that of the 18,000 Mennonites who came to America between 1874 and 1884, 8,000 settled in Canada and 10,000 in the United States. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

10. The Hutterites were descendants of an Anabaptist group founded by Hans Hut. They also practiced nonresistance but differed from the Mennonites in that they held all property in common.

personal interview with President Ulysses S. Grant. They petitioned Grant to exempt them from military service for fifty years, without payment of money for the exemption. In addition they asked permission to keep their German schools and to be exempt from service as jurymen.<sup>11</sup>

President Grant was unable to give the petition of the prospective Russian settlers any definite reply. Later, Secretary of State Hamilton Fish officially answered by pointing out that the President could not give them the guarantees that they requested. He also said that he hoped the United States would not become involved in a war for the next fifty years. However, if war should occur, "there is little doubt that Congress will find itself unable to except any particular class of citizens on account of their religious creed or scruples from the requirements which it may find necessary to place upon other citizens."<sup>12</sup>

Since the attempt to obtain military exemption from the United States had failed, a number of Russian Mennonites requested from the individual states some type of legal guarantee of freedom from military duty. In the absence of a federal conscription act, compulsory military service in time of war and militia duty in time of peace was left to the states. Many states already had, in one form or another, some type of recognition of conscientious scruples on matters of war. With the urging of eager land departments and railroad companies, a few legislatures of western states passed additional legislation promising exemption from military service for the Mennonites.<sup>13</sup>

Kansas was the first state to pass additional legislation specifically for the Russian Mennonites. In 1865 the Kansas legislature had enacted a law providing that all who had conscientious scruples against bearing arms might secure exemption from military service. According to this law, conscientious objectors could appear on the first day of each May before the county treasurer, make an affidavit as to their convictions, and pay thirty dollars to the public school fund. To meet the wishes of the Russian Mennonites, the legislature, on March 9, 1874, repealed that part of the law of 1865

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11. Petition from Tobias Unruh, Paul Tschetter, and Lorenz Tschetter to President Ulysses S. Grant, August 8, 1873, Miscellaneous letters, General Records of the Department of State (MSS, microfilm, roll 208, Bethel College Historical Library). Bethel College Historical Library hereafter cited as BCHL.

12. Letter from Secretary of State Hamilton Fish to M. L. Hiller, September 5, 1873, *ibid.* Other Mennonites petitioned Congress, but this was to get large blocks of land and was not primarily concerned with freedom from military service. These efforts also failed. Ernest Correll (ed.), "The Congressional Debates on the Mennonite Immigration from Russia, 1873-1874," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XX (July, 1946), 178-221.

13. Smith, *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites*, pp. 265-266.

which inflicted a monetary penalty for non-performance of military service. Otherwise the exemption clause remained the same.<sup>14</sup>

This exemption clause was one of the major reasons that more Russian Mennonites settled in Kansas than any other state. This exemption, as well as inexpensive land, attracted other European Mennonites who had maintained their scruples against war. For example, Mennonites from Austria, Prussia, Poland, and Switzerland also fled to Kansas during the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

After their migration to Kansas, the European Mennonites kept a close watch on legislation concerning conscription. The political animosities aroused by the disputed presidential election of 1876 disturbed the European Mennonites. On February 3, 1877, representatives of the General Conference church of Alexanderwohl and the Krimmer church of Gnadenau visited the county clerk of Marion County in order to be assured that the Mennonites would be exempted from military service in case war broke out over this issue.<sup>16</sup>

The first war with which the European immigrants came into contact after migrating to the United States was the Spanish-American War of 1898. Many European Mennonites feared that they might be forced to take part in this struggle. A special session of the Western District of the General Conference was called soon after the outbreak of the war to discuss their military status. The resolutions adopted at this meeting confirmed their nonresistant doctrine. However, since there was no conscription during this war, the fears of the Mennonites were not realized.<sup>17</sup>

In 1903 Congress passed the Universal Military Service Act which made all citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five subject to military service but exempted all members of religious organizations opposed to war. The Western District Conference wanted to know the effects this law would have on the Mennonites' efforts to avoid military service. A committee was appointed to write to the President and the United States Attorney-General. The committee was informed that the Mennonites' consciences in matters of war would be respected by the federal government.<sup>18</sup>

While most European Mennonites were closely watching the outside world, the Mennonites from the eastern states showed little

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14. "Militia—Persons Exempt. An Act amendatory of Chapter sixty-four, section two, relating to the Militia, 1868," March 9, 1874, Ch. LXXXV, *The Laws of the State of Kansas Passed at the Fourteenth Annual Session of the Legislature, Commenced at the State Capital on Tuesday, Jan. 13, 1874. Together with Lists of State Officers, and Members and Officers of Both Branches of the Legislature* (Topeka: State Printing Works, 1874), p. 134.

15. Smith, *Story of the Mennonites*, pp. 668-669.

16. Smith, *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites*, pp. 267-268.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

concern. For example, the local conference records of the most politically aware of the eastern Mennonites, the Old Mennonites, do not even mention the Spanish-American War or the Universal Military Service Act of 1903.<sup>19</sup> However, not all European Mennonite sects in Kansas involved themselves in making sure that they were protected from military conscription. The Holdeman, the Kleine Gemeinde, and the Defenseless Mennonite Brethren felt that it was wrong to do so because this would involve them in politics.<sup>20</sup>

With the outbreak of World War I in Europe, the General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Krimmer Brethren continued to watch with concern the world political situation while the other Mennonite sects paid little attention. Most of these European Mennonites in Kansas expressed a deep sympathy for the German people with whom they still had a common culture and language.<sup>21</sup>

Part of the reason for the Mennonites' pro-German position on the war was due to the two German Mennonite newspapers. The *Hillsboro Vorwaerts* and its editor, Abraham L. Schellenberg, took a very strong stand denouncing the Allies for causing the war. The editors of *Der Herold*, C. E. and H. P. Krehbiel, presented a less partisan viewpoint on the conflict.<sup>22</sup> However, even *Der Herold* claimed that "The causes of the present war are: The expansionism and lust of power of barbaric and despotic Russia, the desire for revenge of France and the economic jealousy of England."<sup>23</sup>

One of the few ways that many of the Mennonite people of central Kansas expressed their sympathy for the German people was by donating to the German Red Cross. Contributions were collected by both *Der Herold* and *Vorwaerts*. Periodically the names of the contributors were published in these papers. The donators included Mennonite individuals, youth groups, and congregations.<sup>24</sup> However, there was not unanimous support for Germany among the Mennonites. This was demonstrated by the fact that a few scattered contributions were made to the Russian Red Cross.<sup>25</sup>

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19. L. O. King, T. M. Erb, and D. H. Bender (comp.), *Conference Record Containing the Proceedings of the Kansas-Nebraska Mennonite Conference, 1876-1914* (n. p.: n. p., 1914).

20. *Conference Reports, 1896-1962, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite*, pp. 3-19.

21. Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement," p. 63.

22. Juhnke, "Political Attitudes and Behavior of the Kansas Mennonites," ch. 5, pp. 2-4.

23. *Der Herold* (Newton), December 10, 1914. Translated for the author by James C. Juhnke.

24. *Hillsboro Vorwaerts*, November 13, 1914. Translated for the author by James C. Juhnke.

25. *Der Herold* (Newton), December 3, 1914. Translated for the author by James C. Juhnke.

As the policies of the United States government began to indicate that it might become involved in the war on the side of the Allies, the Mennonites became more concerned. Many Mennonite groups in Kansas sent petitions to the President and Congress expressing their dislike for the growing involvement in the war and for war in general. On August 30-31, 1916, the All-Mennonite Convention at Carlock, Illinois, in which many of the sects in Kansas were represented, sent a petition to President Woodrow Wilson expressing their conviction "that war can never serve as an effective solution to international complications" and that "arbitration and other conciliatory methods, rather than military force, should be encouraged as a far better instrument for the securing of international justice."<sup>26</sup>

The General Conference Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren plus a few Krimmer Brethren and Old Mennonites, who were willing to express their opinion by voting in the presidential election of 1916, found that there was no clear choice between the major party candidates on the matter of keeping the United States out of the war in Europe. Most Mennonites supported Woodrow Wilson's idea that the United States remain neutral, but they were afraid he was gradually drawing the nation into the war by giving aid to the Allies. On the other hand, Charles Evans Hughes refused to take a clear stand on the issue.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find that Mennonite voting habits did not change drastically during the 1916 election. A study of the voting records from Mennonite townships has revealed that the Mennonites of Marion, McPherson, and Harvey counties, who usually voted Republican, stayed with Hughes. He received 59.3 percent of the votes from the fourteen concentrated Mennonite townships studied. Wilson received 33.6 percent of the vote, which was a drop of 5.8 percent for him from the 1912 election. These figures show that the Mennonites did not vote for Wilson in 1916 even though he had kept the United States out of the war.<sup>27</sup>

As the United States became more and more involved in the war, a new problem faced the Mennonites. This was compulsory military service. The War Department had long considered this issue, but until the latter part of 1916 Secretary of War Newton D. Baker held that conscription was both unnecessary and out of step with the military tradition. Then, as a result of studies on the experiences

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26. Petition from All-Mennonite Convention at Carlock, Illinois, to President Woodrow Wilson, August 30-31, 1916 (Henry R. Voth files, MSS, BCHL, folder 87-88).

27. Juhnke, "Political Attitudes and Behavior of the Kansas Mennonites," ch. 5, p. 15.



of other nations with the volunteer system and the influence of military advisors, both Baker and the President became convinced that conscription was necessary for raising an army.<sup>28</sup>

All Mennonite sects in Kansas did not react in the same way when the compulsory military service act was introduced into Congress. The groups whose ancestors had migrated to Kansas from the eastern states generally followed the policy of the Old Mennonites. That was to let it be known that they could not serve in the military, but not to become actively involved in politics in order to receive exemption from the military service. The *Gospel Herald*, published by members of the Old Mennonite Church and read by most eastern Mennonite people, advised displaying "cheerful submission to whatever is laid upon us, rendering loyal obedience to every law of the land so far as we can do so consistently with obedience to the higher law of God."<sup>29</sup>

The Western District of the General Conference Mennonites was the first sect in Kansas to react against the bills in Congress proposing compulsory military service. On April 11, 1917, a special meeting of the Western District Conference was held at the First Mennonite Church in Newton. At this conference a special committee was created to handle all matters concerning the preservation of freedom from the military service. The following brethren were appointed to this committee: Peter H. Richert and Peter H. Unruh of Goessel, J. C. Goering of Moundridge, Henry Peter Krehbiel of Newton, William J. Ewert of Hillsboro, and Gerhard Penner of Beatrice, Nebraska. The President of the General Conference, Heinrich D. Penner from Newton, was also a member of the committee.<sup>30</sup>

What the Mennonites of the Western District Conference wanted was complete exemption in case the conscription legislation was passed. This was stated in the petition composed at the special meeting at Newton: "We petition the Congress of the United States to exempt us and other non-combatant Christians from all compulsory military training."<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the numerous petitions to congressmen, the Western District Conference sent Richert and Unruh to Washington in an effort to obtain exemption by lobbying for their cause. Richert

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28. Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker, America at War* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1931), I, 184.

29. "Our Attitude," *Gospel Herald*, X (April 12, 1917), 25.

30. Report of special meeting at First Mennonite Church at Newton, Kansas, April 11, 1917, Minutes Western District Conference, pp. 2-3 (MS, BCHL).

31. Petition from Western District Conference to Congress, April 11, 1917 (Voth files, MSS, BCHL, folder 79).

and Unruh found that there was considerable difference between the exemption clauses of bills in the two houses of Congress. The bill which was presented in the Senate was prepared by George Earl Chamberlain of Oregon. Richert and Unruh declared that this bill was acceptable since it granted exemption from military service for members of sects with doctrines against participating in war. However, the bill prepared by Stanley Hubert Dent of Alabama and other members of the House Committee on Military Affairs was not as desirable for the Mennonites. It provided that the President could require those with scruples against participation in war to do noncombatant work. Efforts by Richert and Unruh to get members of the House Committee on Military Affairs to amend the exemption clause of the Dent Bill so it conformed to the Chamberlain Bill proved futile.<sup>32</sup>

With the passage of two different conscription acts by the two houses of Congress, a joint committee was formed to work out compromise legislation. Richert remained in Washington to talk to members of the joint conference committee, trying to convince them that they should select the Senate exemption clause which would have meant complete exemption from military service for the Mennonites.<sup>33</sup>

The Mennonite Brethren of Kansas and Oklahoma had also sent representatives to Washington to ask for exemption from military duty. Professor Howard W. Lorrenz, President of Tabor College at Hillsboro, and Rev. M. M. Just of Fairview, Oklahoma, presented a petition to Kansas and Oklahoma congressmen asking that the same complete exemption be granted nonresistants in the United States as had been granted to the Russian Mennonites in Canada.<sup>34</sup>

The other European Mennonite sects did not lobby in Washington as did the General Conference and the Mennonite Brethren. Even though the smaller sects in Kansas agreed with their more politically conscious brethren that they should not serve in the military, they felt that it was not right to become involved in politics in order to secure exemption. However, the smaller sects did watch closely the activities of the General Conference Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren. They even attended many of the conferences of the Western District. For example, the April 11, 1917, conference

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32. Letter from Peter H. Unruh to Peter Janzen, April 25, 1917 (Peter H. Unruh files, MSS, BCHL, folder 1).

33. Letter from Peter H. Richert to Swigart, May 10, 1917 (Peter H. Richert files, MSS, BCHL, folder 83).

34. *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 21, 1917, p. 3. See also *Fairview [Oklahoma] Post-Dispatch*, April 28, 1917 (Voth files, MSS, BCHL, folder 87-88).

was attended by representatives of the Krimmer Brethren, Defenseless Mennonite Brethren, and the Holdeman Mennonites.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of the efforts of the various Mennonite groups, Congress refused to exempt nonresistants from all military service. The exemption clause of "An act to authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment" approved on May 18, 1917, stated:

SEC. 4. . . . and nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to require or compel any person to serve in any of the forces herein provided for who is found to be a member of any well-recognized religious sect or organization at present organized and existing and whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form and whose religious convictions are against war or participation therein in accordance with the creed or principles of said religious organizations, but no person so exempted shall be exempted from service in any capacity that the President shall declare to be noncombatant.<sup>36</sup>

There were several reasons why complete exemption was not granted nonresistants. First, not all nonresistant groups requested that they be granted complete exemption. Many members of the Church of the Brethren and the Society of Friends were willing to accept noncombatant service. Even some members of the Eastern District Conference of the General Conference Mennonites expressed a willingness to perform some noncombatant duties in the military. Second, not all Mennonite groups which would refuse to accept noncombatant service felt that they should pressure the government to exempt them because it would mean involvement in politics. Third, there was a growing sentiment in the United States that all should be willing to serve in the military; there were pressure groups in Congress that wanted to make sure no one was exempted.<sup>37</sup>

Until the passage of the Conscription Act in 1917, the nonresistant principle of the Mennonite sects of Kansas had not been put to a severe test. The ancestors of the Kansas Mennonites, unlike their brethren in Europe, had evaded military service. The Mennonites who came directly from Europe escaped by migration. Those who came from the eastern United States escaped by living in a country where one could buy his way out of military service.

All Mennonite sects in Kansas continued to profess that they

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35. Report of special meeting at First Mennonite Church at Newton, Kansas, April 11, 1917, Minutes Western District Conference, p. 2 (MS, BCHL).

36. An Act to authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment, approved May 18, 1917, Public Law No. 12, 65th Congress, H. R. 3545, U. S., *Statutes at Large*, XL, Part 1, 78.

37. Letter from Peter H. Richert to Swigert, May 10, 1917 (Peter H. Richert files, MSS, BCHL, folder 83).

would refuse all military service right up to the time of the Conscription Act. Therefore, the different positions taken by the Mennonite sects in Kansas during World War I would not be determined by their positions in the past, for all had accepted the principle of conscientious objection to war up to the time the Conscription Act went into effect.

## Chapter IV

### THE POSITION ON NONRESISTANCE TAKEN BY THE MENNONITE LEADERS

The nonresistant position that the Kansas Mennonites would maintain throughout World War I was determined in part by their ministers. The religious leaders not only taught and interpreted the doctrine of nonresistance but also served as the Mennonites' representatives in the disputes with the government.

When the Conscription Act was passed in 1917, the Mennonite leaders were in agreement concerning the nonresistant tenet of their faith. The ministers of all major sects in Kansas informed the federal government officials that the Mennonites could accept no service within the military establishment. The leaders of the Western District of the General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Krimmer Brethren asked for complete exemption from all service. However, if the government was unwilling to exempt them from all service, they stated that they would be willing to accept various kinds of agricultural, industrial, or Red Cross work. The list of acceptable work presented to various government officials by these three sects was summarized: "we can render any service, outside the military establishment, which aims to support and to save life."<sup>1</sup>

Other Mennonite leaders in Kansas also expressed their convictions against military service. The Old Mennonites and the Amish agreed with the above position except on one point. They felt that it would be to their advantage not to offer themselves for any service whatsoever.<sup>2</sup> The Holdeman position was similar. They did not state alternatives for military service, but merely declared: "Our principles are opposed to war in any form through the teachings of our Savior and the Gospel; therefore it is inconsistent to be under the military arm."<sup>3</sup>

Before the Mennonite ministers could decide whether or not to accept noncombatant work, as was to be assigned to conscientious

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1. Letter from delegates representing four conferences: Western District, Northern District, Mennonite Brethren, and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren to Provost Marshal General E. H. Crowder, July 2, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 142).

2. Letter from T. M. Erb, Business Manager of Hesston Academy and Bible School to Peter H. Unruh, June 18, 1917 (Unruh files, MSS, BCHL, folder 1).

3. "Report of General Conference at the Lone Tree Church, Galva, Kansas, October 29-November 3, 1917," *Conference Reports, 1896-1962, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite*, p. 25.

objectors according to the Conscription Act, it was necessary to determine exactly what type of work the President would designate as noncombatant. Therefore, most sects wrote government officials in an attempt to learn if service would be performed outside the military. The replies received by all Kansas Mennonites failed to answer this question. No matter who wrote or to whom it was written, the answer was the same, merely a restatement of the last sentence of the Conscription Act's exemption clause, "That no person so exempted shall be exempted from service in any capacity that the President shall declare to be non-combatant." This quotation was followed by information that regulations governing exemptions would soon be prescribed by the President and made public.<sup>4</sup>

Many sects in Kansas sent delegations to Washington to find out what type work would be required of noncombatants. One delegation represented three Kansas Mennonite sects: the Western District Conference was represented by J. W. Kliewer, P. H. Unruh, and H. P. Krehbiel; the Mennonite Brethren by M. M. Just and H. W. Lohrenz; and the Krimmer Brethren by David E. Harder of Hillsboro. They talked to Secretary of War Baker and various other officials in the War Department, but were unable to find out how President Wilson would interpret noncombatant service.<sup>5</sup> The Holdeman Mennonites sent Jacob Dirks of Halstead, Daniel B. Holdeman of Hesston, and F. C. Fricke of Ithaca, Michigan, to Washington in the middle of July, 1917. They were accompanied by Aaron Loucks, the Old Mennonite leader from Pennsylvania. They talked to some officials in the Provost General's Office, who informed them that the President still had not defined what would constitute noncombatant service.<sup>6</sup>

This information was not made available by the President before June 5, 1917, the day all young men were to register for the draft. Since it was still the general feeling of the Mennonite leaders that their people would be exempted from military service as they had been in the past, they asked their men to register. The *Gospel Herald* stated: "To register requires the violation of no principle of nonresistance." It also pointed out that after the registration the

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4. Letter from E. H. Crowder to H. W. Lohrenz, June 22, 1917, Selected Items from Miscellaneous Correspondence File, Records of the Selective Service System (MSS, microfilm, roll 208, BCHL).

5. Letter from delegates representing four conferences: Western District, Northern District, Mennonite Brethren, and Krimmer Mennonite Brethren to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, June 28, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 142). See also *Topeka Daily Capital*, July 1, 1917, p. 2B.

6. Letter from Aaron Loucks to H. P. Krehbiel, July 24, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 143).

exempted classes would not be subject to the draft.<sup>7</sup> In order to show that they were qualified for exemption, most Mennonite men carried a certificate of membership when they registered. This showed that they belonged to a religious organization whose existing creed or principles forbade members from participating in war.<sup>8</sup> Many Mennonites looked upon registration with the certificate of membership as an opportunity to record themselves properly and give the powers that be a knowledge of their individual attitude on the war question.<sup>9</sup>

The long-awaited announcement of exemption did not come before the time that it became apparent that Mennonite draftees would be required to report to the military encampments like all others. Therefore, prior to the call of the men to camp, the Western District Conference made a hurried effort to find out if non-combatant service would be under civilian or military control.<sup>10</sup> The reply received from the Provost General's Office was the same. "When President has defined noncombatant service in the sense of Act it will be duly published so as to be brought to the attention of all parties."<sup>11</sup>

Generally, the Mennonite leaders merely requested exemption. However, as the time for reporting to the encampments drew near, the Western District Conference made an attempt to show that the War Department could not legally make nonresistants serve in the military. Richert argued that the intention of the Conscription Act had been to allow Mennonites to serve outside the military. He pointed out that he had presented a petition to keep the Mennonites out of the military to the House Committee on Military Affairs while it was in the process of revising the conscription bill. When the bill was revised, "the word 'military' was struck before the word 'service.' Instead of 'military service' for non-resistants, the revised bill, which is now law, reads simply 'service' which the President shall declare to be non-combatant." He then stated that this "shows that the intention of the law makers was to leave a way open for *other than military service for non-combatants.*"<sup>12</sup> The government did not answer Richert's argument until long after

7. "War Problems for Non-Resistant People," *Gospel Herald*, X (May 31, 1917), 146.

8. Letter from W. S. Gottschall, President of the Middle District Conference, to H. P. Krehbiel, May 24, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 142).

9. "War Problems for Non-Resistant People," *Gospel Herald* X (1917), 146.

10. Telegram from H. P. Krehbiel to E. H. Crowder, August 22, 1917, Selected Items from Miscellaneous Correspondence File, Records of the Selective Service System (MSS microfilm, roll 208, BCHL).

11. Telegram from E. H. Crowder to H. P. Krehbiel, August 23, 1917, *ibid.*

12. Letter from P. H. Richert to the Attorney General's Office, August 26, 1917 (Richert files, MSS, BCHL, folder 83).

the Mennonite draftees had begun reporting to the military encampments.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of the fact that the nonresistants would be called to military encampments, Baker assured the Mennonites that their doctrines would be respected. He explained that no one would be required to accept any work in violation of his conscience. He also said that those who could not accept the work given to them would not be mistreated.<sup>14</sup>

Since Baker had so assured them, the Mennonite leaders encouraged the men who had been drafted to report to the training camps when they were called. The Old Mennonite, Amish, Defenseless Mennonites, and Mennonite Brethren in Christ told draftees to "present themselves to the authorities and meekly inform them that under no circumstances can they consent to service, . . . under the military arm of the Government."<sup>15</sup> The General Conference Mennonites of Kansas recommended that those called, "respond to the call in so far as the response does not conflict with the Word of God, nor with our Creed and Principles concerning Military Service, which service we cannot render in any form."<sup>16</sup> Even the strict nonconformist Holdeman Mennonites declared: "Since Secretary of War Baker has given the promise that none of our brethren would be compelled to do any service that may be contrary to his faith or conscience, it was resolved that they should go to the camp."<sup>17</sup>

For some very strict nonconformist groups which were out of contact with other Mennonite sects as well as with the outside world, it was the call to the encampments which first made them aware that their nonresistant doctrine might be threatened. The Defenseless Mennonite Brethren and the Kleine Gemeinde of Meade County were uncertain what to do when their men were called. Their ministers, Jacob Isaac, J. G. Classen, and John R. Reimer, made a quick trip to Topeka and asked Governor Arthur Capper to assist them in obtaining exemption. Capper told the group that

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13. The immediate reply of the government did not answer his argument. Letter from William C. Fitts, Assistant Attorney General, to P. H. Richert, August 31, 1917, *ibid.*

14. "Resume of an Interview Bro. A. Loucks had with Secretary Baker in September, 1917," *Information* (Goshen, Ind.: n. p., 1918).

15. "A Statement of our Position on Military Service as Adopted by the Mennonite General Conference, Representing Sixteen Conferences in the United States, Canada, and India," August 29, 1917 (Richert files, MSS, BCHL, folder 84). Those from Kansas who signed were T. M. Erb and D. H. Bender, Hesston; J. R. Brunk and C. D. Yoder, Windom; J. D. Mininger, Kansas City; and J. M. Brunk, Wichita.

16. Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on Exemptions of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America at Reedley, California, September 6, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 150).

17. "Report of General Conference at the Lone Tree Church, Galva, Kansas, October 29-November 3, 1917," *Conference Reports, 1896-1962, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite*, p. 20.



he could do nothing, but assured them that their conscientious scruples against war would be respected if they reported to the encampments.<sup>18</sup>

After many of the Mennonite young men from all sects in Kansas began to arrive at the military posts in September and October, 1917, the War Department made it clear that it intended for all nonresistants to accept service in the military. The explanation by the Provost Marshal General was that the President was not authorized under the Conscription Act to draft men for service not connected with the military establishment, for he was only authorized by it to assign certain persons "to service in that portion of the military establishment, which he shall declare to be noncombatant." The reason given was the purpose of the Act as stated in the title: "To authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment of the United States."<sup>19</sup>

The War Department also changed the exemption forms which were filled out by conscientious objectors at their local draft boards. The older form of exemption certificate, Form 174, stated that conscientious objectors would be required to serve "in some capacity declared by the President to be noncombatant."<sup>20</sup> The new one, Form 1008, declared that they would have to serve in "such military service as may be declared noncombatant by the President."<sup>21</sup> This made it clear that the War Department intended for all nonresistants to serve in some capacity in the military machine.

The Western District Conference leaders noticed this change even before Form 1008 went into use. They requested that "the local board may be given orders to cross out the word 'military' between the words 'such' and 'service' in Form 1008."<sup>22</sup> The answer of the War Department was the standard reply. After quoting the title of the Conscription Act, they pointed out that "The President is not authorized under the Act to draft men for service not connected with the military establishment."<sup>23</sup>

By December, 1917, it was clear to most Mennonites that non-

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18. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 23, 1917, p. 5; interview with Jacob F. Isaac, Meade, Kansas, March 27, 1966.

19. Letter from the office of the Provost Marshal General to J. W. Kliever, December 8, 1917 (Kliever files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 22).

20. "Form No. 174, Certificate to Person claiming exemption under subdivision (i) of Section 20 of the rules and Regulations," June 30, 1917, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 35.

21. "Form 1008, P. M. G. O., Section 280: Certificate of exemption from combatant service" December 15, 1917, *ibid.*, p. 36.

22. Letter from J. W. Kliever to Newton Baker, December 3, 1917 (Kliever files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 22).

23. Letter from office of the Provost Marshal General to J. W. Kliever, December 8, 1917, *ibid.*

combatant service could not be performed outside the military, but it was not until March 20, 1918, that the President made this official. He declared that certain military service was noncombatant: the medical corps, the quartermaster corps, and the Army engineers.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to waiting until the draftees had begun arriving at camp to inform the Mennonites that noncombatant service could not be performed outside of the military, the War Department delayed in telling the Mennonites that the ministers had no authority over the nonresistant position of the men in camp. Baker pointed this out in November, 1917: "The Government of the United States is not dealing in the matter, and cannot deal, with organized religious bodies, but must of necessity deal with individuals."<sup>25</sup>

It was undoubtedly the purpose of Baker to take the power to determine what service was acceptable away from the ministers and leave the decision to the men in the encampments. He believed that many of the nonresistants would find some type of military work acceptable.<sup>26</sup> Baker's biographer, Frederick Palmer, found additional evidence that the Secretary of War intended to make soldiers out of the nonresistants. He quoted from a letter Baker wrote to Wilson, stating why the conscientious objectors should be sent to the camps: "The effect of that I think quite certainly would be that a substantial number of them would withdraw their objection and make fairly good soldiers."<sup>27</sup>

President Wilson's attitude toward the religious objectors is difficult to determine, for he made very few remarks concerning them. He did state that, "What I am opposed to is not the feeling of the pacifists, but their stupidity. My heart is with them, but my mind has a contempt for them. I want peace, but I know how to get it, and they do not."<sup>28</sup> Wilson was either too little interested in the conscientious objectors or too busy to handle the problem himself. All Kansas Mennonites who attempted to interview him on this subject were sent to some lesser official. Correspondence to him concerning nonresistance was answered by the War Department.

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24. "Executive order," March 20, 1918, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 38.

25. Letter from Newton Baker to Silas M. Grubb of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 3, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 150).

26. *Ibid.*

27. Palmer, *Newton D. Baker*, I, 342.

28. Woodrow Wilson, "Address to the American Federation of Labor Convention at Buffalo, New York," November 12, 1917, *Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Vol. I: *War and Peace, Presidential Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers*, ed. Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1925-1927), p. 120.

With no objections from the President, the Secretary of War continued his policy of gradually working nonresistants into the military. The Mennonite leaders continually requested that their young men be assigned to work outside the military establishment, but the pleading of the Mennonite leaders led only to frustration.<sup>29</sup>

During January and February, 1918, it looked as if the government would allow no service outside of the military. At this time a few of the Mennonite leaders of Kansas began to look more favorably upon noncombatant service. Those who did were from the sects which put the least emphasis on nonconformity to the world, particularly the General Conference Mennonites. They, of course, were the ones who felt the most pressure of outsiders condemning them for not contributing enough to the American war effort. Consequently, they looked for some position that would "line them up rightfully with the government." Some felt that noncombatant military service would do this.<sup>30</sup> However, the official position on nonresistance of none of the Mennonite sects in Kansas changed at this time.

By the spring of 1918, the attitude of the War Department toward conscientious objectors gradually began to change. One reason was that Frederick P. Keppel was appointed Third Assistant Secretary of War on April 19, 1918, and was put in charge of all affairs concerning conscientious objectors. He showed a willingness to cooperate with the Mennonite leaders rather than work against them as the War Department had done in the past.<sup>31</sup> Another reason that the War Department took another look at its policy toward conscientious objectors was that it was becoming apparent that there would be a shortage of labor, especially farm labor, in the summer. Many felt that the conscientious objectors, who were contributing nothing to the military effort, might be able to help alleviate the labor shortages in agriculture.<sup>32</sup>

One of the efforts made by Congress to increase the supply of labor appurtenant to agriculture was to pass the Furlough Act on March 16, 1918. This law provided that the Secretary of War

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29. Letter from delegates at Goshen Conference to Woodrow Wilson, January 9, 1918 (Kliewer files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 24). Represented at the conference were Old Mennonites, General Conference Mennonites, Old Order Amish, Amish Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren, and Mennonite Brethren in Christ, as well as other sects not found in Kansas.

30. Letter from John Krehbiel at Moundridge to H. P. Krehbiel, January 28, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 144).

31. World War I Group, Historical Division Special Staff United States Army, *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War (1917-1919)*, Vol. III: *Zone of the Interior* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 18.

32. Release from office of Provost Marshal General, March 12, 1918 (Kliewer files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 24).

was authorized to grant furloughs to permit enlisted men to engage in civil occupations.<sup>33</sup>

All major Mennonite sects worked to get nonresistants furloughed to do farm labor. In fact, a committee of nine was created to assist the government in finding employment for those men who were furloughed. This committee represented all three major non-resistant bodies. Its membership included three Brethren, three Friends, and three Mennonites. Two of the Mennonites on the committee were Old Mennonites, the other belonged to the General Conference.<sup>34</sup> Even though there were no Kansas Mennonites on the committee, all groups from Kansas gave the furlough plan their approval. They accepted the Furlough Act in spite of the fact that technically the boys would remain in the military while they did civilian work.<sup>35</sup>

After the Judge Advocate General E. H. Clowder had advised the Secretary of War, on May 31, 1918, that it was within the law "that these conscientious objectors be furloughed to enable them to engage in civil occupations," the military began accepting the nonresistants' requests for farm furloughs.<sup>36</sup> This solved the problem of finding work acceptable to both the Kansas Mennonite leaders and the government. However, there were other proposals for employment by nonresistants which were considered later by the Kansas Mennonite church leaders.

One suggestion was the Friend's Reconstruction Unit in France. The War Department provided that some conscientious objectors could be furloughed to this in the same way that others were to be sent to the farms to work.<sup>37</sup> This work was part of the American Red Cross and was officially known as the Bureau of Friends Unit of the Department of Civil Affairs. The purpose of the Unit was to rebuild areas in France that had been destroyed by the war.<sup>38</sup> There was no conscientious objection by the Mennonite leaders of Kansas to sending boys to work in the Reconstruction Unit.

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33. "An Act to Authorize the Secretary of War to grant furloughs without pay and allowances to enlisted men of the Army of the United States," March 16, 1918, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 19.

34. Letter from Maxwell Kratz to J. W. Kliever, April 5, 1918 (Kliever files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 24).

35. Letter from J. W. Kliever to B. K. Mosiman, April 19, 1918, *ibid.*

36. "Memo from the Judge Advocate General's Office to the Secretary of War," May 31, 1918, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 19.

37. "Conscientious objectors, segregation at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas," Orders from the Adjutant General of the Army to all division and department commanders in the United States, June 1, 1918, *ibid.*, p. 41.

38. Letter from Wilbur K. Thomas, Acting Executive Secretary of American Friends Service Committee, to B. K. Mosiman, September 4, 1918 (Kliever files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 25).

Both the Old Mennonite and the General Conference Mennonite ministers approved of this type of work and the other sects voiced no objections.<sup>39</sup>

Another way that the government provided for the nonresistant to serve his country was work in the reconstruction hospitals. This work was in the military service, but it was devoted entirely to the rehabilitation of wounded soldiers for civilian life.<sup>40</sup> Since employment in the reconstruction hospitals contributed little to the war effort, the exemption committee of the Western District Conference endorsed this type of service on August 9, 1918. It was the only Kansas Mennonite group to do so.<sup>41</sup>

Many of the ministers of the Western District Conference were concerned about having their men work in any capacity under the military establishment, even in the reconstruction hospitals. They feared that many of the Mennonite men would become confused as to the boundary line between what was in harmony with their creed and what was not.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, it was proposed that the Mennonites ask to be allowed to run and to supply the buildings to be used for a reconstruction hospital. The plan was to build the hospital near Newton, so that when their men were furloughed to work in the hospital, they would be near home.<sup>43</sup> However, the war came to an end, and the proposal for the Mennonite physical reconstruction hospital was never given serious consideration by the government.<sup>44</sup>

The position on nonresistance of the Mennonite leaders of Kansas changed little during World War I. At the beginning of the United States involvement in the conflict, each sect insisted that it was inconsistent with their creed to do any work within the military establishment. At the end of the conflict the Kansas Mennonite leaders were still insisting that their men be employed in civilian occupations. However, the Mennonite leaders did approve the plan of having their men technically remain in the service while they worked as civilians. Only the General Conference Mennonites

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39. Letter from R. A. Goertz to B. K. Mosiman, May 22, 1918, *ibid.*

40. Orders from the Adjutant General of the Army to all division and department commanders in the United States, July 30, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 146).

41. Report of the Special Committee of the Western District Conference for Freedom from Military Service, Western District Conference meeting at Bergtal church, Pawnee Rock, Kansas, November 12, 1918, Minutes Western District Conference, p. 8 (MS, BCHL).

42. Letter from P. H. Richert to William J. Ewert, September 9, 1918 (Richert files, MSS, BCHL, folder 85).

43. Letter from H. P. Krehbiel to General Ireland, Surgeon General of the Army, November 7, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 147).

44. Letter from Frank Billings, Colonel in Medical Corps of Surgeon General's Office to H. P. Krehbiel, November 13, 1918, *ibid.*

of Kansas officially approved of work in the military, and this was only in the reconstruction hospitals where the men did not contribute directly to the war effort.

There was not always complete unity on the position of all church leaders in each Mennonite sect. The sects which put the least emphasis on nonconformity to the world, particularly the General Conference Mennonites, had many of its leaders feel the pressure to get in step with the war effort. Consequently, some advised their young men that noncombatant service was acceptable. However, the degree of centralization and rigidity of the church organization also were important factors in keeping ministers in line with the official policy of the church. The Old Mennonites, with their strong church organization, had fewer problems keeping ministers in step with official policy than did sects with looser church organizations.

## Chapter V

### MENNONITE DRAFTEES AND NONRESISTANCE

The fact that the Mennonite leaders maintained the principle of nonresistance was of little importance if it was not also accepted by the Mennonite young men who were drafted. If these men did not uphold the doctrine of nonresistance, this part of their creed would become meaningless, as it had to the Mennonites who had remained in Europe.

The Mennonite young men were not well-prepared to witness for the principle of nonresistance. Since most had seldom come into contact with the outside world, they were unaccustomed to explaining their doctrines to nonbelievers. Neither were they in the habit of reasoning out the doctrine of nonresistance for themselves. Instead, they were accustomed to accepting what their ministers told them was the proper thing to believe.<sup>1</sup>

In order to help the Mennonite draftees prepare to defend the nonresistant position of the church, the various sects attempted to teach them the Scriptural basis for this doctrine. In order to accomplish this, the Western District Conference published two pamphlets containing Biblical passages supporting nonresistance. W. J. Ewert, H. W. Lohrenz, and D. E. Harder wrote one in German entitled, *An die Mannlichen Glieder der Gemeinde im Militar pflichtigen Alter* [*To the Male Members of the Church in the Age Subject to Compulsory Military Service*]. The other in English, *Scriptural Foundation for the Doctrine of Non-Resistance*, was written by H. P. Krehbiel. These pamphlets were distributed to members of many different sects. Men about to be drafted were encouraged not only to study the passages in the pamphlets but also to memorize them.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to being called into the training camps, the Mennonite men continued to follow the advice of their religious leaders. When their ministers said that registering for the draft was not in violation of their creed, they registered.<sup>3</sup> When their leaders told them to

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1. Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement," p. 64.

2. Report of the Special Committee of the Western District Conference for Freedom from Military Service, Western District Conference meeting at Hoffnungsau church at Inman, October 24-25, 1917, Minutes Western District Conference, p. 39 (MS, BCHL).

3. There is no record of any Mennonite men refusing to register. *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 6-9, 1917. See also *Hutchinson News*, June 13, 1917, p. 8.

report to the military encampments, most did as they were told.<sup>4</sup>

After the Kansas Mennonites between the ages of twenty-one and thirty reported to Camp Funston, where they were to be trained, they found that they could no longer rely upon their ministers to make decisions for them. Instead, they had to decide for themselves what contributions they could conscientiously make to the war effort. Those who arrived in camp between September, 1917, and March, 1918, had to choose between service in the regular army or doing no work at all, for President Wilson did not define noncombatant service until March 20, 1918.

It was the plan of the War Department to turn those with conscientious scruples against war into soldiers. The War Department made this clear in confidential orders issued on October 10, 1917. In these orders it was stated that, if the conscientious objectors were handled correctly, most could be expected to renounce their religious convictions against participation in warfare. All officers were instructed to report their results of their efforts so that it might be determined how successful they were in converting conscientious objectors.<sup>5</sup>

The War Department suggested one method of converting objectors—ignoring any requests for exemption from service.<sup>6</sup> This was tried on the Kansas Mennonites at Camp Funston. When a draftee who claimed to have religious scruples against war requested to be exempted, he was told to continue drilling until they had an opportunity to consider his case. If he did not refuse to drill until his plea was considered, he would remain in the regular army throughout the entire conflict.<sup>7</sup>

The War Department also made it clear as to what should be done with those who took a firm stand and refused to participate in military drill. According to the order of October 10, 1917, they were to be segregated in order to keep their ideas from spreading to the rest of the men in camp. Once they were segregated, all efforts were to be made to get them to accept military service. However, the War Department did not clarify how the officers

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4. There were only a few instances where Mennonite men refused to report. One occurred in southwestern McPherson County. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 22, 1917, p. 3. Also, the families of the men of draft age moved to Canada from the Kleine Gemeinde congregation in Meade County. Interview with Jacob Isaac, Meade, Kansas, March 27, 1966. See also Daniel J. Classen, "The Kleine Gemeinde of Meade, Kansas" (research paper, Department of Church History, Bethel College, 1949), p. 16.

5. "Confidential memo from the Adjutant General of the Army to the Commanding Generals of all National Army and National Guard division camps," October 10, 1917, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 37.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Noah H. Leatherman, *Diary Kept by Noah H. Leatherman While in Camp During World War I* (Linden, Alberta: Aaron L. Toews, 1951), p. 6.



were to persuade the conscientious objectors to change their attitude toward becoming soldiers.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, in each army encampment a different technique was used. At Camp Funston the conscientious objectors were sent to the Department of Sanitation, and the officers in charge of this department were responsible for converting those with conscientious scruples against war.<sup>9</sup>

Three basic arguments were used to convince the Mennonites and other nonresistants at Funston that they should accept military service. The chaplains and other officers acquainted with the Bible quoted Scriptures to prove that nonresistance was not according to God's will. They pointed out that God commanded the Israelites to fight for the land of Palestine and that Jesus was not always meek and mild for "he cleaned out the temple by force." These and other arguments based upon the Scriptures had little effect on the Mennonites. They had learned to quote from memory Scriptures of their own that proved to them that nonresistance was according to the will of God.<sup>10</sup>

The officers of the Sanitation Department also tried to convince the Mennonites that no one could actually be a nonresistant. They would ask, "If your mother was about to be attacked by intruders, would you not defend her?" If the Mennonite answered yes, his belief in nonresistance was questioned. If he answered no, he was denounced for caring more for his "worthless soul" than for his mother.<sup>11</sup>

They also questioned the Mennonite's loyalty to his country. The officers argued that if a man loved his country, he should be willing to fight and die for it. They often pointed out that the United States was fighting to save both Christianity and democracy and, if this country was defeated, these two institutions would be endangered. Many Mennonites felt that they should be doing something to help the country. However, they maintained that they could not aid in the war effort.<sup>12</sup>

While trying to convince the Kansas Mennonites that they should become soldiers, the officers of the Sanitation Department assigned them to carry garbage away from the kitchens. To get the Mennonites to do this work, the officers told them that they were work-

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8. "Confidential memo from the Adjutant General of the Army to the Commanding Generals of all National Army and National Guard division camps," October 10, 1917, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 37.

9. Gustav R. Gaeddert, *Diary of Gustav R. Gaeddert, 1917-1918*, p. 2-3 (MS, microfilm, roll 78, BCHL).

10. Leatherman, *Diary*, p. 11.

11. Interview with George A. Classen, Defenseless Mennonite Brethren from Meade, Kansas, March 27, 1966.

12. Leatherman, *Diary*, p. 10.

ing as civilians. At first, the Kansas Mennonites accepted this type of service.<sup>13</sup> However, when they discovered that they were actually doing military duty they refused to continue. First, the Old Mennonites, Holdeman, and Amish said they could no longer do sanitation work.<sup>14</sup> By March, 1918, most of the members of the other Kansas sects had also refused to continue hauling garbage.<sup>15</sup>

When each Mennonite took a stand and refused to do work in the Sanitation Department, his belief in nonresistance was put to a strong test. It was at this time that many were badly mistreated. The worst treatment recorded was that of eight who were beaten with fists. The officers also used such forms of torture as refusing the objectors food, making them stand at attention for long time intervals, and squirting them with fire hoses.<sup>16</sup> However, only a minority of those who quit working had to undergo such forms of punishment.<sup>17</sup> The mistreatment of the conscientious objectors was not a mere fabrication in the minds of Mennonites in camp who had developed a strong distaste for army life. The torturing of these nonresistants was serious enough to warrant orders from the War Department that it did not want these men subjected to physical violence.<sup>18</sup> In spite of the orders, physical punishment continued at Funston. Whenever the officers in charge were confronted with evidence that they had ordered the mistreatment of objectors, they either denied it or blamed it on some unidentified soldier.<sup>19</sup>

The Secretary of War's plan to make regular soldiers out of conscientious objectors in camp was not very successful when applied to the Kansas Mennonites. Neither the arguments of the officers in the Sanitation Department nor their mistreatment of objectors convinced many that they should accept regular military work. While 323 Kansas Mennonites were drafted, only twenty-three chose service in the regular army throughout the entire conflict. Most of these were volunteers or had decided to go into the regular army before they had reported to camp.<sup>20</sup>

Some of the Mennonites who would not accept military work

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13. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

14. Letter from Aaron Loucks to J. W. Kliever, January 26, 1918 (Kliever files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 24).

15. Gaeddert, Diary, pp. 18-32.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-17. Also interviews with George A. Classen, March 27, 1966, and Ferdinand Schoeder, General Conference Mennonite from Goessel, March 28, 1966.

17. Gaeddert, Diary, p. 33.

18. "Orders from the Adjutant General of the Army to the Commanders of all camps," October 20, 1917, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 37.

19. Letter from H. S. Howland, Captain, Assistant Chief of Staff, to H. P. Krehbiel, October 18, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 142).

20. See Table 1, p. 45.

also refused to wear the uniform and to take pay. The rejection of the uniform and pay were symbols for the repudiation of everything connected with the military establishment.<sup>21</sup>

Those who refused to accept regular military service and those who were drafted after March 20, 1918, were given a third choice. The government gave them an opportunity to take a compromise position between service in the regular army and refusing all work in the military. This was noncombatant service. Those who chose this type of duty worked in either the medical corps, quartermaster corps, or engineering service. They were not required to carry weapons.<sup>22</sup>

Following this order, the officers at Camp Funston encouraged the nonresistants to accept this type of service, but they no longer threatened or physically harmed those who refused. Over half of the Mennonites who refused regular military service found some type of noncombatant service acceptable, mostly in the medical or quartermaster corps.<sup>23</sup> This was in spite of the fact that no Mennonite sect officially approved of noncombatant duty.

The problem of what to do with those who had refused both regular service and noncombatant duty confronted the War Department in the spring of 1918. Since Baker believed that most conscientious objectors were mentally deficient or deranged, one way to get rid of them was to give them mental examinations and send those home who failed.<sup>24</sup> This was done in March, 1918. However, there is no record that any of the Kansas Mennonites failed to pass the exams.<sup>25</sup>

Another method of eliminating more of the conscientious objectors, especially those who were trouble-makers, was to send them to prison. In order to do this, the War Department reversed an earlier order and declared that objectors were subject to the penalties of the Articles of War. Baker ordered that any objector who was sullen or defiant, whose sincerity was questioned, or who engaged in nonresistant propaganda should be brought to

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21. Interviews with Jacob George Klassen, General Conference Mennonite from Goessel, March 28, 1966, and David Beachy, Old Mennonite from Yoder, June 1, 1967.

22. "Executive order," March 20, 1918, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, pp. 38-39.

23. See Table 1, p. 45.

24. Palmer, *Newton D. Baker*, I, 341-342.

25. "Orders from Adjutant General of Army to the Commanders of all camps," April 10, 1918, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 40. The only person that the diaries of Leatherman and Gaeddert mentioned that failed the mental test was a Hutterite from South Dakota. Gaeddert, *Diary*, p. 48. See also Mark A. May, "The Psychological Examination of Conscientious Objectors," *American Journal of Psychology*, XXXI (April, 1920), 152-165.

trial by court-martial.<sup>26</sup> Few, if any, Kansas Mennonites were found guilty of any of these crimes at this time.<sup>27</sup>

However, the War Department still was not satisfied that all the conscientious objectors who remained were both sane and sincere. Therefore, a special Board of Inquiry was created to interview each objector and determine whether he really held conscientious scruples against war. Major Richard C. Stoddard of the Judge Advocate General's Department was chairman of the Board, Julian W. Mack, Judge of the United States Court of Appeals, and Harlan Stone, Dean of Columbia University Law School, were the other members of the Board. Stoddard was called for overseas duty in August and was replaced by Major Walter Kellogg.<sup>28</sup>

The Kansas Mennonites at Camp Funston were moved to Camp Dodge, Iowa, in order to appear before the Board of Inquiry. A simple criterion was used by the Board to determine their sincerity. If the Mennonite conscientious objector had joined the church before April 6, 1917, the day the United States declared war on Germany, he was considered sincere. If not, the Board assumed he had joined the church to escape military service and was insincere.<sup>29</sup>

About twenty Kansas Mennonite men were found to be insincere by the Board of Inquiry, and they were ordered to accept noncombatant service. When they refused to do so, they were accused of disobeying orders and were court-martialed.<sup>30</sup> These men were given prison sentences averaging about twenty years in length at the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth.<sup>31</sup>

The Kansas Mennonites imprisoned at Leavenworth did not escape the problem which confronted them in the army camps. Since Leavenworth was run by military personnel, they would be

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26. "Orders from Adjutant General of Army to the Commanders of all camps," April 27, 1917, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 40.

27. Neither the diaries of Leatherman or Gaeddert nor any of the men whom the author has interviewed mentioned any Mennonites at Funston being court-martialed at this time. However, at Fort Travis, Texas, many Mennonites from Oklahoma and Texas were court-martialed and sent to Leavenworth to prison. Letter from J. W. Kliever to the Members of the Exemption Committee of the Mennonite General Conference, June 26, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 145).

28. Major Walter Guest Kellogg, *The Conscientious Objector* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), p. 25.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

30. "Record of trial by general court martial of Noah Leatherman, October 1, 1918," *Diary Kept by Noah H. Leatherman While in Camp During World War I*, p. 53.

31. J. D. Mininger, *Religious c. o.'s Imprisoned at the U. S. Disciplinary Barracks Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas* (Kansas City, Ks.: published by the author, 1919). See also statistics of court-martial cases of conscientious objectors, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 51.

employed by the military if they accepted work in prison. At Leavenworth those who refused to work were put in solitary confinement where they alternated between bread and water for fourteen days and regular meals for fourteen days. They were also chained to the bars in a standing position for nine hours a day. All Kansas Mennonites eventually found some work that they could conscientiously do.<sup>32</sup>

The Kansas Mennonites were not required to serve out their entire sentences in prison. After the war, their cases were reviewed and the Secretary of War ordered them released and discharged from the army. This occurred in January, 1919.<sup>33</sup>

The conscientious objectors who were found to be sincere by the Board of Inquiry were granted furloughs to do civilian work. All Kansas Mennonites found this work acceptable, even though they were technically in the army while doing civilian work. Many were sent to farms in Iowa, where there was a shortage of labor during the harvesting season. Others were furloughed to farms in South Dakota and Kansas. However, no one was allowed to go back to his own community to work. These Kansas Mennonites remained employed on the farms until after the war.<sup>34</sup>

In some instances conscientious objectors who were found to be sincere were granted furloughs to work in the Friend's Reconstruction Unit in France,<sup>35</sup> but only three Kansas Mennonites did this type of work. One reason so few served in the Reconstruction Unit was that they were not trusted by the government because of their German names and their ability to speak the German language. Another reason was that many Kansas Mennonites did not want to work so far from home. Those who did join the Reconstruction Unit did not get an opportunity to serve until the war was over.<sup>36</sup>

This examination of the War Department's policy concerning conscientious objectors shows that it attempted to work as many as possible into the military machine. Furthermore, it was not

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32. Leatherman, *Diary*, p. 38. See also *Topeka Daily Capital*, December 2, 1918, p. 3. Many of the political objectors and Hutterites refused to work in prison and underwent this type of torture. Two of the Hutterites died as a result of mistreatment in solitary confinement. For an account of the objectors in prison see Norman Thomas, *The Conscientious Objector in America* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1923).

33. These objectors, as well as those on farm furloughs, were given neither honorable nor dishonorable discharges. A special discharge was designed for conscientious objectors that showed they did no work while in the army. "Memorandum from the Adjutant General," Jan. 17, 1918, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 31.

34. Interview with Ferdinand Schroeder, March 28, 1966. Four Kansas Mennonites were allowed to work in civilian hospitals, Gaeddert, *Diary*, p. 54.

35. "Orders from Adjutant General of Army to the Commanders of all camps," July 30, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 146).

36. For an account of work in the Reconstruction Units, see Elmer H. Jantz, *My Experience as a Member of the Reconstruction Unit of the Friends in Europe* (MS, microfilm, roll 79, BCHL).

averse to any method, short of physical violence, that would successfully make soldiers out of nonresistants.<sup>37</sup> Part of the reason that the War Department was determined to convert objectors was that it was being pressured to do so by some of the more militant elements in the United States, especially by newspapers such as the *Kansas City Star*.<sup>38</sup>

However, it was not just the military that put pressure on the young men in camp. Each major Mennonite sect in Kansas tried to convince their men that they should not accept any service in the military. The Krimmer Mennonites, General Conference Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren, and Holdeman Mennonites utilized the same representatives of their sects that had worked for exemption to advise their men in the camps. The Western District of the Amish Mennonites and the Missouri-Iowa and Kansas-Nebraska Conferences of the Old Mennonites formed a committee to look after their brethren in the military. The representatives of the major Kansas Mennonite sects often cooperated in their efforts.<sup>39</sup>

There were several ways in which the leaders of the various sects could make their influence felt by the men in the service. The ministers who represented the Mennonite bodies often preached at Camp Funston. After the services, they were usually allowed time to talk to their men. At this time they made it clear how they felt about the various kinds of service. They also sent church literature and personal letters to the draftees, which contained articles on nonresistance.<sup>40</sup>

Another method which the Mennonite leaders could use was the threat of excommunication of those who accepted work in the regular army. Even though there is no record of anyone's being excommunicated, there is evidence that the draftees were aware of the threat of the ban. Even the General Conference Men-

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37. Ruth Sterry, "War Objectors Made Fighters at Kearny," *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, July 22, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, clippings 1917-1920). The War Department even wrote to Krehbiel after the war and asked if he knew of any Mennonites that had been converted to regular service by the army and had then become a war hero. Letter from F. P. Keppel, Third Assistant Secretary of War to H. P. Krehbiel, June 5, 1919 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 145).

38. Third Assistant Secretary of War Frederick P. Keppel was criticized by many newspapers for his conciliatory policy toward conscientious objectors. *Kansas City Star*, December 23, 1918 (Voth files, MSS, BCHL, folder 87-88).

39. The committee appointed by the Old Mennonites and Amish-Mennonites consisted of D. H. Bender, President, Hesston, Kansas; S. C. Yoder, Vice President, Kalona, Iowa; L. O. King, Secretary-Treasurer, Hesston, Kansas; Joe C. Driver, Garden City, Missouri; I. S. Mast, Minot, North Dakota; J. M. Kreider, Palmyra, Missouri; Peter Kennel, Strang, Nebraska; I. G. Hartzler, East Lyne, Missouri; D. G. Lapp, Roseland, Nebraska; and J. A. Heatwole, La Junta, Colorado. "Western Mennonite Welfare Commission," *Gospel Herald*, X (December 8, 1917), 775.

40. Report of the Special Committee of the Western District Conference for Freedom from Military Service, Western District Conference meeting at Hoffnugsau Church at Inman, October 24-25, 1917, Minutes Western District Conference, pp. 45-47 (MS, BCHL). See also Gaeddert, Diary, pp. 2-3, 5, 24, 29-30, 31, 32, 50, 52, 54.

nonites, who placed the least emphasis upon excommunication, considered using it to punish those men who accepted combatant service.<sup>41</sup>

In order to limit the influence of the church leaders over the men in camp, the military took several steps. It censored the mail of all conscientious objectors. It began to watch closely the visits of clergymen in order to prevent them from encouraging the draftees to refuse service in the military establishment.<sup>42</sup> The army also searched the personal belongings of Mennonites and destroyed any letters, books, or religious papers which were believed to contain information advising the maintenance of the conscientious objector position.<sup>43</sup>

The government also kept the Mennonite leaders from encouraging their brethren to refuse military service by threatening them with punishment under the Espionage Act of June 15, 1917. Indictments were prepared against some one hundred Mennonite leaders—seven from Kansas—but no one was prosecuted.<sup>44</sup> After the ministers were threatened with prosecution, they no longer advised the men in camp on what position to take but merely suggested what alternatives were open and what the official position of the church was concerning military service.<sup>45</sup>

The Mennonite draftees from Kansas were caught between two diametrically opposed positions. On the one hand, attempts were being made by the army to force them to take some service within the military establishment, preferably regular service. At the same time, they were being pressured by their religious leaders to refuse all work within the military. In this situation, the position taken by the Mennonite draftees varied. Twenty-three accepted service in the regular army. A total of 151 accepted noncombatant duty in either the medical corps, quartermaster corps, or army engineers. Another 141 remained conscientious objectors and were either furloughed to do civilian work or were sent to prison.<sup>46</sup>

It is difficult to determine why one person accepted military

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41. One reason that no one who had served in the regular army was excommunicated was because of the bad feeling that this would cause between Mennonites and non-Mennonites. The Kansas Mennonites were given a warning of what could happen by an incident in Ohio. A Mennonite had joined the Marine Corps and was wounded in Service. When he came home, perhaps to die, his church excommunicated him. This caused bad feelings between Mennonites and their neighbors. Letter from S. K. Mosiman to J. W. Kliever, December 12, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 147).

42. "Confidential order from the Adjutant General to the Commanders of all camps," June 14, 1918, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army*, p. 43.

43. Leatherman, *Diary*, p. 26.

44. Letter from John Lord O'Brien, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, to E. C. Moon, Assistant United States Attorney, May 2, 1918, Selected Correspondence, General Records of the Department of Justice (MSS, microfilm, roll 208, BCHL).

45. Henry Peter Krehbiel, *Status of Mennonites as to Military Service* (n. p.: n. p., 1918).

46. See Table 1, p. 45.

service and another did not. However, each individual's choice was related to the position that his sect took on nonconformity to the world. Those men who came from the sects which placed the most emphasis on nonconformity had the largest percentage of conscientious objectors. Those who belonged to sects which placed the least emphasis on this principle had the smallest percentage of conscientious objectors.<sup>47</sup>

47. *Ibid.*

TABLE 1  
MILITARY SERVICE ACCEPTED BY KANSAS MENNONITE  
DRAFTEES \*

	Regular army	Non combatant	Conscientious objector	Did not report
Kleine Gemeinde.....	0	0	0	5
Old Order Amish.....	0	0	8	0
Church of God in Christ.....	1	0	9	1
Defenseless Menno- nite Brethren.....	0	0	5	0
Amish Mennonite.....	3	0	2	0
Old Mennonite.....	0	3	9	0
Krimmer Mennonite Brethren.....	0	1	14	0
Defenseless Menno- nite.....	0	3	0	0
Mennonite Brethren... General Conference	0	20	20	0
Mennonite.....	18	124	74	2
Mennonite Brethren in Christ.....	1	0	0	0
Total.....	23	151	141	8

NOTE: Sects are grouped in table according to stress placed on nonconformity to the world with those which emphasized nonconformity placed at the top of the table.

\* Table was prepared by the author from the following source material: Ewert files, folder 37, BCHL; Krehbiel files, folders 142-150, BCHL; Unruh files, folder 4, BCHL; "Statistics of the General Conference of Mennonite of North America, 1917-1920," General Conference Minutes, pp. 194-199, BCHL; "Appendix," Minute Book of the Committee on Exemptions of the Western District Conference, 1917-1922, BCHL; Records of Quarterly Meetings Held at Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church at Harper, 1918, United Missionary Church at Harper; Gaeddert, Diary, microfilm, roll 78, BCHL; Ura A. Hostetler, Diary of Ura Hostetler, author's copy, Harper; Ferdinand Schroeder, Diary, author's copy, Goessel; Leatherman, *Diary; Hutchinson News*, 1917-1918; Miniger, *Religious c. o.'s Imprisoned at the U. S. Disciplinary Barracks Ft. Leavenworth*; Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement," pp. 66-67; David V. Weibe, *Scriptural Basis of the Principle of Nonresistance and Christian Love* (Salem: Salem Publishing House, 1940), p. 7; Ura H. Hostetler, *Draftees, Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church*; and interviews with Harvey Yoder, Crystal Springs, Kansas, May 31, 1967, Henry B. Koehn, Montezuma, Kansas, August 17, 1966, William Schweizer, Sterling, Kansas, March 28, 1967, George A. Classen, Meade, Kansas, March 27, 1966, Henry S. Stucky, Pretty Prairie, Kansas, Manassa Yoder and David Beachy, Yoder, Kansas, June 1, 1967, Jacob George Klassen, Goessel, Kansas, Jacob C. Hodel, and Jacob Epp Dalke, Hillsboro, Kansas, and Harry Weaver, Hesston, Kansas, March 28, 1966.



## Chapter VI

### NONRESISTANCE AND THE MENNONITE COMMUNITIES

The men who were called into the military encampments were not the only Mennonites who had to decide in what way they could conscientiously take part in the war effort. Those Mennonites who remained at home also had to take a stand on many issues concerning nonresistance.

The ancestors of the Kansas Mennonites had reacted to the threat of being forced into military service by migrating. However, most Mennonites did not think that emigration would be necessary when the United States first became involved in World War I, for they had been led to believe that their doctrine of nonresistance would be respected by the War Department. Therefore, only a few families left the United States prior to the time draftees were called into the military encampments. The families who did emigrate belonged to the Kleine Gemeinde Church in Meade County.<sup>1</sup>

When it became apparent that the War Department intended for nonresistants to serve in the military, many Mennonite sects began to consider migration to other countries. Such action was discussed at the Western District Conference meeting held at the Hoffnungsau Church near Inman on October 24-25, 1917, which representatives of many Kansas Mennonite sects attended. At that time the Mennonites were hesitant about moving. Some hoped that the President would make a provision for work outside of the military establishment when he defined noncombatant service. Others felt it was too late to emigrate since many of their men had already been called. Consequently, no action was taken on the matter at that time.<sup>2</sup>

As the war continued, the Kansas Mennonites did not discard all thought about moving to another country. In July, 1918, J. W. Kliewer, H. P. Krehbiel, and P. H. Unruh traveled to Washington to discuss exemptions with officials of the War Department. While there, they interviewed the ministers of Canada and Argentina to

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1. Interview with Jacob Isaac, Meade, Kansas, March 27, 1966. See also Classen, "The Kleine Gemeinde of Meade, Kansas," p. 16.

2. Report of the Special Committee of the Western District Conference for Freedom from Military Service, Western District Conference meeting at Hoffnungsau Church at Inman, October 24-25, 1917, Minutes Western District Conference, p. 37 (MS, BCHL).

see if there were opportunities to immigrate to these countries and to find out if their conscientious scruples against war would be respected if they did immigrate.<sup>3</sup>

This interview inspired interest in Argentina. Several Kansas Mennonite families employed C. B. Schmidt to visit Buenos Aires to investigate further the possibilities of moving to that country. He found the government representatives eager to have colonists but hesitant about promising military exemption. Since they were not promised exemption, the Mennonites lost interest in the venture, and Schmidt was recalled.<sup>4</sup>

The United States government watched closely the Mennonites' activities, and as a result knew about many of their plans to migrate. On September 9, 1918, a United States attorney reported that the Mennonites around Hillsboro were considering moving to Canada. He even stated that agents of the Canadian government were in Hillsboro trying to induce them to move.<sup>5</sup> The reply from the Attorney General's office was that the government would not interfere.<sup>6</sup>

In spite of the fact that the Kansas Mennonites were not prevented from leaving the United States, few moved. The most important reason why only a few Kansas Mennonite families left this country was that the government led the Mennonites to believe that their conscientious scruples against war would be respected. When it became apparent that the government did not intend to make provisions for their nonresistant beliefs, it was too late to emigrate because many of the Mennonite men were already in the military encampments. Another reason for not moving was that many of the Mennonites owned large amounts of land and other property, and they would have suffered a considerable financial loss if they would have hastily moved to some foreign country.

Since the Mennonites did not leave the United States, they had to do everything possible to display their loyalty to the government.

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3. Letter from J. W. Kliewer to Maxwell Kratz, July 6, 1918 (Kliewer files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 24).

4. C. B. Schmidt was the immigration agent for the Santa Fe Railroad who had brought thousands of the Russian Mennonites to Kansas during the 1870's and 1880's. For the only account of Schmidt's trip to Argentina see Sanford Calvin Yoder, *For Conscience Sake. A Study of Mennonite Migrations Resulting from the World War* (2d ed.; Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1945), pp. 92-93.

5. Telegram from Robertson, United States Attorney, Kansas City, Kansas, to Attorney General's Office, September 9, 1918, Selected Correspondence, General Records of the Department of Justice (MSS, microfilm, roll 208, BCHL).

6. Telegram from Gregory of the Attorney General's Office to Robertson, September 10, 1918, *ibid.* The largest Anabaptist group to move from the United States were the Hutterites. The government never prevented them from moving to Canada, but it did prevent them from returning after the war. Some of the Kansas Mennonite men who were on farm furloughs worked the Hutterite lands in South Dakota for the government. Interview with George A. Classen, March 27, 1966.

This was essential in order to survive, for they were distrusted by their fellow citizens because of their belief in nonresistance and their German background.<sup>7</sup>

The Mennonites took advantage of every opportunity to express their loyalty. They explained to the Kansas newspaper reporters that, even though they did not believe in participation in warfare, they wished to help the nation in every way possible.<sup>8</sup> The Kansas Mennonites also sent petitions to the President and their congressmen, explaining that they were loyal citizens. The Holdeman went so far as to declare that those who were not loyal would be expelled from the church.<sup>9</sup> The Mennonites also attended and sometimes spoke at local patriotic meetings which were held in many Kansas towns after the United States declared war on Germany.<sup>10</sup>

One thing the Mennonites found they could conscientiously do to help win the war was to grow and save foodstuffs. When the government asked for this type of assistance, the Mennonites always replied in the affirmative.<sup>11</sup> The Holdeman, who were hesitant to admit that they were going to produce more and consume less in order to aid the war effort, rationalized that they were pledging themselves to live economically because Christ commanded, "Gather up the fragments," John 6:12.<sup>12</sup>

Knitting socks, sweaters, and other apparel for soldiers and sailors was another way many General Conference Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren congregations found that they could show their loyalty. Other sects felt they could not conscientiously do this for it too directly aided in the war effort.<sup>13</sup>

The Mennonite sects also disagreed upon whether or not it was consistent with their nonresistant doctrine to give financial support to the American Red Cross. Since many General Conference Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren had contributed to the German Red Cross prior to the United States involvement in the war, they

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7. *A Statement of Our Position on Military Service as Adopted by the Mennonite General Conference, Representing Sixteen Conferences in the United States, Canada, and India* (Goshen, Ind.: n. p., 1917).

8. *Topeka Daily Capital*, July 1, 1917, p. 2B; July 15, 1917, p. 5B.

9. Petition from F. C. Fricke, Ithica, Michigan, Daniel B. Holdeman, Hesston, and Jacob Dirks, Halstead, to the President of the United States Woodrow Wilson, June 17, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 145).

10. *Newton Evening Kansan-Republican*, April 26, 1917 (Voth files, MSS, BCHL, folder 87-88).

11. Letter from Herbert Hoover to H. P. Krehbiel, June 18, 1917 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 142). See also Aaron Loucks, "The Church and the War," *Gospel Herald*, X (July 28, 1917), 314; and *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 21, 1917, p. 3.

12. "General Conference at the Lone Tree Church, Galva, Kansas, October 29-November 3, 1917," *Conference Reports, 1896-1962, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite*, p. 20.

13. *Hutchinson News*, June 9, 1917, p. 13. See also *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 4, 1917, p. 2.

could voice little conscientious objection to contributing to the American Red Cross. Consequently, the members of these two sects willingly donated.<sup>14</sup>

Not all Mennonite sects felt that they could contribute to the Red Cross. The Holdeman Mennonite declared that they could not because the Red Cross was "too much involved in the war."<sup>15</sup> The Mennonites whose ancestors came to Kansas from eastern United States also expressed opposition to making donations, not only because it aided in the war effort but also because it was not a Christian organization.<sup>16</sup> In spite of the fact that the leaders of these Mennonite sects felt that it was wrong to contribute to the Red Cross, very few Kansas Mennonites actually refused. Some gave because of threats of punishment. Others contributed because they wished to show their loyalty, and it was not as objectionable a way of doing so as buying Liberty Bonds. They also made donations to the Young Men's Christian Association and the Salvation Army which aided the war effort.<sup>17</sup>

All Kansas Mennonite sects agreed that one way the Mennonites could not conscientiously show their loyalty was to buy Liberty Bonds. The reason was that it was the primary purpose of these bonds to bring the war to a successful conclusion, and by buying them one would be aiding directly in the war effort.<sup>18</sup>

During the First Liberty Loan Drive in the summer of 1917 and the Second in the fall of 1917, there was little pressure on the Mennonites to participate. The government did make an appeal for all ministers to encourage their laymen to buy bonds, but this appeal was ignored and very few Mennonites invested in Liberty Bonds.<sup>19</sup>

The Third Liberty Loan Drive, which began in the spring of 1918, and the Fourth in the fall of the same year were different from the two earlier bond drives. The government made a stronger emotional appeal to all ministers to encourage the individuals in

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14. H. W. Lohrenz of the Mennonite Brethren church organized an auxiliary of the American Red Cross at Hillsboro. *Hutchinson News*, August 2, 1917, p. 9. The General Conference Mennonite church at Pretty Prairie donated \$1,000 to the Red Cross. *Hutchinson News*, June 23, 1917, p. 1. These General Conference Mennonite churches made the following contributions: Alexanderwohl, \$900; Bruderthal, \$600; Hillsboro, \$1,500. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 16, 1917, p. 8B.

15. "General Conference at the Lone Tree Church, Galva, Kansas, October 29-November 3, 1917," *Conference Reports, 1896-1962, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite*, p. 22.

16. J. C. Schwartz, "Little Points of Vital Importance," *Gospel Herald*, XI (April 4, 1918), 11. Schwartz was an Old Mennonite from Marion, Kansas.

17. *Hutchinson News*, November 13, 1917, p. 1; April 19, 1918, p. 4. See also *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 13, 1918, p. 6B.

18. "General Conference at the Lone Tree Church, Galva, Kansas, October 29-November 3, 1917," *Conference Reports, 1896-1962, Church of God in Christ, Mennonite*, p. 21.

19. *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 19, 1917, p. 2. There was no mention in the *Hutchinson News* from September 24 to October 24, 1917, of the fact that any Mennonite group bought bonds during the Second Liberty Loan Drive.

their congregations to buy so that "we all dedicate anew to the great task to which God has called us."<sup>20</sup> It also set up a system whereby each community was encouraged to contribute a quota. A committee was established in each community to make sure that everyone bought his share so that the town could meet its quota. At first each person was merely asked to buy bonds. If an individual failed to give a satisfactory reason for not buying and was financially able to do so, a "flying squadron" called on him. If this committee was turned down, the name was put on a "slacker list," where it could be seen by all. This made anyone who refused to invest fair game for any local patriot who wished to apply further economic or physical pressure.<sup>21</sup>

The Kansas Mennonites asked that they might be allowed to donate to some other agency as an alternative to buying Liberty Bonds, but the federal government refused to make provisions for them to do so. The position taken by the Treasury officials was: "Since there is no law compelling any one to contribute to such war measures as Liberty Bonds . . . there is no ground for any agreement, officially, whereby certain classes may be excused from such contributions."<sup>22</sup>

Since the Mennonites were being pressured to invest in Liberty Bonds and the government would not allow any other type of contributions to serve as an alternative, practically all Kansas Mennonites bought a few bonds.<sup>23</sup> The Old Order Amish and the Holdeman Mennonites, who felt they could not conscientiously loan money to the government for the war effort, bought bonds and then gave the bonds to the Red Cross or some other agency. By doing this, they could look upon buying bonds as a form of taxation, and there was nothing in their creed against paying taxes.<sup>24</sup>

Of the few Mennonites who stood firm and refused to purchase any Liberty Bonds, most came from the sects which placed the greatest emphasis on nonconformity to the world. Most were merely threatened and did not have to undergo any kind of economic or physical punishment.<sup>25</sup> Others were not so fortunate.

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20. Printed letter from Office of Secretary of Treasury to J. W. Kliever, April 10, 1918 (Kliever files, MSS, BCHL, box 4, folder 24).

21. "How the System Works," *Hutchinson News*, April 20, 1918, p. 15.

22. "War Measures and Nonresistant People," *Gospel Herald*, XI (August 29, 1918), 377. See also record of interview between Chas. L. Davidson, Chairman of the Kansas Loan Drive, and three Kansas Holdeman ministers: H. A. Koehn, Cimarron; A. G. Ensz, Inman; and Jacob Dirks, Halstead, April 21, 1918 (Voth files, MSS, BCHL, folder 87-88).

23. *Hutchinson News*, April 15, 1918, p. 13; April 18, 1918, p. 1; April 19, 1918, p. 4; and April 25, 1918, p. 8. See also *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 9, 1918, p. 7.

24. Record of interview between Chas. L. Davidson and three Kansas Holdeman ministers, April 21, 1918 (Voth files, MSS, BCHL, folder 87-88). For information on the Amish see *Hutchinson News*, May 2, 1918, p. 1.

25. Letter from Harvey County War Council, C. A. Seaman, Chairman, and F. L. Geer, Secretary, to H. P. Krehbiel, December 7, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, folder 147).

In Montezuma two Holdeman Mennonites were shaved for refusing to buy bonds.<sup>26</sup> In McPherson County two Old Mennonites were beaten and then tarred and feathered for the same reason.<sup>27</sup>

In order to dispel the accusations made by their neighbors that they were not buying many bonds because they were disloyal or stingy, the Mennonites tried to find other agencies to which they could conscientiously contribute. The Kansas Mennonites gave large sums of money to the Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief and the Friend's Reconstruction Unit.<sup>28</sup> They also contributed to their own organizations which were used to aid war victims. Much of the Russian Mennonites' financial assistance was directed toward the relief of their brethren in Russia. All Kansas Mennonite sects noted a considerable increase in donations to the church for foreign missionary work during and immediately after the war.<sup>29</sup>

Another problem which confronted the Kansas Mennonites was their German background. Since many had openly supported Germany while this country was still neutral, it was not easy to dispel all doubts that they still felt a strong loyalty to their ancestral homeland. In spite of numerous declarations that they were loyal American citizens, rumors of their being in league with the Kaiser persisted. The Kleine Gemeinde had the most difficulty in proving their loyalty because their creed forbade them to salute the flag.<sup>30</sup>

This feeling of distrust for the Mennonites seldom took the form of open hostility. At times when it did, a few Mennonites were required to kiss the flag. If they refused, yellow paint and tar and feathers were sometimes used. Since being disloyal and German was often associated with not buying bonds, it is difficult to determine which was the primary cause for the mistreatment of some individuals.<sup>31</sup>

The people of Kansas and the rest of the United States gradually generalized their hatred for anyone who supported the German war effort to include all things which were German. Anything that could be associated with Germany came under the attack of

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26. Interview with Henry B. Koehn, Holdeman Mennonite from Montezuma, August 17, 1966. See also *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 13, 1918, p. 6B.

27. Letter from D. A. Diener to J. S. Hartzler, cited in Gideon G. Yoder, "The Oldest Living American Mennonite Congregations of Central Kansas" (unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of Church History, Phillips University, 1948), pp. 390-391.

28. Letter from Phil Eastman, Executive Secretary of American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, to P. H. Richert, June 27, 1918 (Richert files, MSS, BCHL, folder 84); *Topeka Daily Capital*, December 16, 1918, p. 4.

29. Edmund G. Kaufman, *Development of the Missionary and Philanthropic Interest Among the Mennonites of North America* (Berne, Ind.: The Mennonite Book Concern, 1931), pp. 173, 176, 239, 255, 265. See also John Howard Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro, Ks.: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1950), p. 98.

30. Interview with Jacob Isaac, Meade, Kansas, March 27, 1966.

31. *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 24, 1918, p. 7. See also *Newton Evening Kansan-Republican*, November 14, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, clippings 1917-1920).

the American patriots. This included the philosophy of George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, foods associated with Germany such as sauerkraut, and the German language.<sup>32</sup>

What hurt the Mennonites most was the hostility toward the German language. The Mennonites were warned by local citizens that they should no longer use German. In Barton and Pawnee counties, where many General Conference and a few Old Mennonites lived, an organization known as the Night Riders was formed to let the Mennonites and other German groups know that the other residents in the area disapproved of speaking German. They would appear at night, scattering threatening hand bills and firing shots in the air from revolvers to show their hatred for the language.<sup>33</sup>

Toward the end of the war the German language was prohibited in many places of business. Signs like this one in Newton, "GERMANS: SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF A CIVILIZED NATION. THE HUN LANGUAGE WILL BE BARRED EVEN IN HELL," were put up in many Kansas towns where the Mennonites did business.<sup>34</sup> The feeling against the language became so strong that many of the older Mennonite men who usually did the trading for the family allowed their sons to do it, since they spoke better English.<sup>35</sup>

Other means of communication in the German language were also limited. In Hillsboro the telephone company directed that the operators should "cut off any person, or persons, whom you know can converse in the English language and will not do so but insist upon using the German language for conversation."<sup>36</sup> The citizens of Newton tried but failed to stop the printing and circulation of all publications in the German language.<sup>37</sup>

The loyal neighbors of the Mennonites also attempted to keep them from worshipping in the German language. The Halstead Loyalty League tried to forbid all Mennonite churches near Halstead from using German.<sup>38</sup> Non-Mennonite veterans returning home and the Ministerial Union in Newton used threats against those who insisted in conducting their religious observances in a

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32. *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 20, 1918, p. 1; September 29, 1918, p. 3B; and June 21, 1918, p. 1.

33. *Hutchinson News*, April 19, 1918, p. 14.

34. *Topeka Daily Capital*, October 16, 1918, p. 2.

35. Interview with Jacob Epp Dalke, Mennonite Brethren from Hillsboro, March 28, 1968.

36. *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 24, 1918, p. 6.

37. *Newton Evening Kansan-Republican*, September 16, 1918 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, clippings 1917-1920).

38. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 13, 1918, p. 3.

foreign tongue.<sup>39</sup> However, there was little done which actually forced the Mennonite churches to quit, and most churches continued to use German.<sup>40</sup>

The German schools of the Mennonites also came under attack during World War I. At the beginning of the United States involvement in the war there was not very much concern about the use of this language in the Kansas schools. However, as the war progressed, many school districts in the state began to announce that German would no longer be taught. It soon became unpatriotic to teach the language of the Kaiser, and practically all schools substituted other courses for German.<sup>41</sup>

The Mennonite schools were criticized not only for teaching German but also for cutting English school short by two months so that four to ten weeks could be devoted to teaching the Bible in German. As a result, they were not meeting the minimum seven months requirement for elementary school. This was particularly true in Marion County where the county superintendent was adept at overlooking the state's minimum requirements.<sup>42</sup>

Gradually public pressure forced the Mennonites to discontinue teaching the language of their ancestors. The effect of public pressure was demonstrated in the Minutes Western District Conference. In October, 1916, it was reported that, in the nearby school districts of nineteen out of thirty-two churches, German and religion were being taught. In October, 1917, it was noted that thirty percent of the Mennonite schools had German Bible school. In November, 1918, it was recorded that all German schools had been discontinued.<sup>43</sup> The same thing occurred in schools in the communities where other Mennonite sects were located.<sup>44</sup>

The language question was not confined to the elementary schools. The preparatory schools were also hurt by the anti-German feeling,

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39. *Newton Evening Kansan-Republican*, January 21, 1920 (Krehbiel files, MSS, BCHL, clippings 1917-1920).

40. Between the years 1914-1917 it was recorded that sixteen Kansas General Conference Mennonite congregations used German, four used both German and English, and none used English. During the years 1917-1920 it was noted that thirteen congregations used German, fourteen used both languages, and two used English. General Conference Minutes, XXI, 75; XXII, 194-199 (MS, BCHL).

41. "American Students Boycotting German," *Literary Digest*, LVI (March, 1918), 29, 44, 46-50, 52, 54-55, 58, 61-64, 66, 70, 72-74. See also *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 23, 1918, p. 3.

42. *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 7, 1917, p. 1. This county superintendent was very popular with the Mennonites. In 1922, when he was in danger of being defeated in the Republican primary, very large numbers of Marion County Mennonites turned out to vote for him. Janzen, "A Social Study of the Mennonite Settlement," p. 55.

43. Minutes Western District Conference, October 4-5, 1916, p. 28; October 24-25, 1917, p. 59; and November 12, 1918, pp. 40-41 (MS, BCHL).

44. Classen, "The Kleine Gemeinde of Meade, Kansas," p. 16. See also Smucker, "History of the Sterling Mennonite Church," p. 5.



and as a result most Mennonite preparatory schools had to discontinue all instruction in the language.<sup>45</sup>

Bethel College also came under the attack of local patriots. A Loyalty League was organized in Newton which demanded that all German classes be discontinued at the college. Feelings became so intense that at times students stayed overnight at the college for fear of being attacked by some patriotic mob. In order to keep peace, President J. W. Kliever discontinued all German classes. Bethel College had the distinction of being the first college in Kansas to drop the language from its curriculum.<sup>46</sup> The other Mennonite colleges did not have a similar problem. Hesston had taught very little foreign language before the war, and Tabor was located in Hillsboro, where the German people were in the majority.

The feeling of hostility toward the Mennonites of Kansas because of their doctrine of nonresistance and their German background tended to separate them from other religious groups. The Mennonite Brethren had worked closely with Baptist groups prior to World War I on account of their common belief in baptism by immersion. However, during the war ties between these two groups were severed. The General Conference Mennonites, who had belonged to the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America before the war, broke all connections with this organization in 1917. The primary reason for this division was the difference of opinion concerning nonresistance.<sup>47</sup>

The same forces which tended to separate the Mennonites from other religious organizations caused the various Mennonite sects to work more closely together. As mentioned above, various cooperative efforts were made by the Mennonite sects to lobby in Washington, to preach to the men in the encampments, and to do war relief work. This growing feeling of cooperation was expressed by the secretary of the Western District Conference when he wrote, "Although the various divisions of the Mennonite Church may differ sharply concerning some other points of doctrine, here common concern, common difficulty, drives them all closer together."<sup>48</sup>

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45. Western District Conference meeting held at Bergtal Church at Pawnee Rock, November 12, 1918, Minutes Western District Conference, p. 42 (MS, BCHL).

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47. See also Peter J. Wedel, *The Story of Bethel College*, ed. Edmund G. Kaufman (North Newton, Ks.: The Mennonite Press, 1954), p. 236.

47. Other reasons given for leaving the Federal Council were its attitude toward modernism in theology, membership of leaders in secret fraternal societies, meddling in the affairs of the state. However, these had been causes for differences of opinion before but had not caused separation. Krebbiel, *History of the General Conference*, II, 282.

48. Western District Conference meeting at Hoffnungsau Church at Inman, October 24-25, 1917, Minutes Western District Conference, p. 40 (MS, BCHL).

## Chapter VII

### CONCLUSION

All Kansas Mennonite sects had maintained the nonresistant doctrine of their ancestors up to the time of the United States involvement in World War I. They had managed to preserve this doctrine by migrating to countries where provisions were made that enabled them to avoid military service. However, when their belief in nonresistance was tested in 1917, most did not choose to migrate again. Neither did they decide to stand firm and refuse to cooperate in the war effort. Instead, most sought to find some compromise between their belief in nonresistance and their loyalty to the United States.

The Kansas Mennonites who were drafted accepted some type of work under the military establishment. Even the men who refused both combatant and noncombatant service were not absolutists in their stand against military service. Those who took farm furloughs were technically in the army while they did civilian work. Those who were sent to Leavenworth worked as military personnel while in prison.

Most Mennonites who remained at home during the war also failed to practice nonresistance. Practically all who said they could not conscientiously contribute to the Red Cross at the beginning of the war donated large sums of money before the conflict was over. Also, nearly all Mennonites bought Liberty Bonds in spite of the fact that they knew the money loaned contributed directly to the war effort.

The Kansas Mennonites failed to uphold rigidly the doctrine of nonresistance for the same reason that the European Mennonites had given up this tenet of their faith in the nineteenth century. That was because they had become integrated into the affairs of the world. By making economic, social, and political ties with the outside world they also developed strong loyalties to various institutions outside of their religious communities. When these loyalties came into conflict with the ideals of their religious sect, it was not always the ties to the world which were destroyed.

The Mennonite sects which felt the most pressure to modify their belief in nonresistance were the ones which allowed members

the most contact with outsiders. The sects which emphasized nonconformity and separation from the affairs of the world better maintained the nonresistant doctrine of their ancestors. In fact, the degree of separation from the world was directly related to the rigidity of each sect's stand on nonresistance.

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