

IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT:
MENNONITE RHETORIC IN WORLD WAR I
AS AN ENACTMENT OF PARADOX

by

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ABSTRACT

American involvement in World War I became an engrossing experience for all American citizens in the great crusade to make the world safe for democracy. While most Americans readily heeded the war call, the Mennonites, a Christian conservative people of German, Swiss, and Dutch heritage who practiced nonresistance and nonconformity, envisioned the war not as a righteous crusade, but as a violent storm that would disrupt their nonconformist peaceful lives. When America reached out to pull the Mennonites into the war effort, they tried diligently to remain uninvolved.

Mennonites were eventually forced to recognize, however, that they were inescapably part of a militaristic America and an angry world and that refusing to take up arms against the enemy would require an explanation to each other, the government, and a fervently patriotic public.

This study examines the limited choices that Mennonites had for rhetorical action given their religious ideology and analyzes the four prominent rhetorical postures (deliberative, confrontative, apologetic, and reaffirmative) that Mennonites adopted during World War I.

As long as the war remained in Europe, Mennonites engaged in their own form of deliberative rhetoric, assuming the role of moral authorities and political experts. When the United States entered the war,

Mennonites attempted to divert attention from themselves by confronting the government about the legitimacy of compulsory military service. Acculturated to the American way of life, however, Mennonites wanted to prove their loyalty as upright, American citizens, and thus offered apologetic statements to the greater American public via their own church papers. Finally, in the face of public pressure to join the crusade, reaffirming the righteousness of Mennonitism became a crucial rhetorical posture for the church's integrity.

Evaluations of these rhetorical postures are offered from a rational, effects, and dramatistic perspective. The thesis is advanced through the dramatistic perspective that Mennonite rhetoric in World War I is most clearly understood as an enactment of a paradoxical biblical dictum: Be ye in the world, but not of it. Further, it is proposed that Mennonites were rhetorically inventive at preserving a tragi-comic view of the world.

They are not of the world,
even as I am not of the world.
As thou hast sent me into the world,
even so have I also sent them into the world.

John 17: 16, 18

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Preface

It was perhaps only appropriate that the Mennonite history course offered during the Winter term met in the small, plain chapel on campus. Its high ceilings and old wood floors provided little buffer against the cold. We used to joke that the ascetic environment was always a vivid reminder of the hardships of the early church. This protestant denomination had had its share of trials and tribulations; Mennonites and martyrdom seemed inexorably linked.

The final unit in the course, American Mennonites and War, made an indelible impression on me. The course culminated with a film that celebrated Mennonite steadfast devotion to faith in the face of war. The only note I took that day was a statement made by its narrator, a Mennonite historian. "War is good for Mennonites," he said. "It brings out their best." Scribbled in the margin, I wrote: "What would H. F. Fast think of that?" Fast is my 80 year-old neighbor at home, a Mennonite who has served in three wars as a conscientious objector. Earlier that week he had served as the guide for our class in a field trip to Camp Funston near Fort Riley, Kansas. Fast, along with many other Mennonites during World War I who refused to pick up arms, was stationed at those barracks. His

recollection of the place was painful. Mennonites were routinely ridiculed, threatened and abused by camp officials and the wider populace during the war. Treatment of the "cowardly" C. O. at Camp Funston was no different. My thoughts had drifted back to that now desolate camp site and Fast's sobering words as the film moved to survey other wars in other places. Was war really good for Mennonites? The question was not to be answered in that term.

That was 1980. I was a sophomore at the oldest Mennonite school in North America, Bethel College. I was a Kansan. And I was a Mennonite. I had come a long way from my childhood roots. Ten years earlier, I had been a fifth grader at a school experimenting with desegregation. I was a Floridian. And I was Southern Baptist. The move turned out to be a good one. Mennonite people and principles have had a profound influence on my life. When I graduated from Bethel in 1982, I took Mennonite values with me. I also took my notebook from Mennonite history. The Mennonite experience in World War I still perplexed me.

As a budding rhetorical critic in Communication Studies at The University of Kansas, I found faculty receptive to my critical inquiry of Mennonite rhetoric in World War I. My fascination with this topic grew as I discovered that even among Mennonite scholars, Mennonite rhetoric, for the most part, has remained enigmatic. Mennonites have been viewed as a nonrhetorical people

since their religious ideology severely restricts rhetorical inventiveness.

This study attempts to correct the view that there is little rhetorical value in studying the Mennonites. Specifically, the study addresses how Mennonites used rhetoric to reconcile their loyalties to God and country in the midst of a war to make the world safe for democracy.

Perhaps it is only fitting that 1987 marks the completion of a research interest that began at my Alma Mater. Founded in 1887, Bethel College celebrates its centennial this year. The one hundred years of higher education inspired by Mennonite vision will be commemorated in a variety of ways. This project commemorates the rhetorical inventiveness of American Mennonites during eighteen months of an international crisis that threatened to destroy the very existence of their faith. It is not, however, a glowing endorsement of Mennonite rhetorical sophistication. The world war was both good and bad for members of the faith. Rhetorically, it brought out their best and their worst.

Review of Literature

The Mennonite experience in the Great War has not been overlooked by historians and Mennonite church scholars. A few of these accounts have proved insightful for the study. J. S. Hartzler's Mennonites In The World¹ War published in 1921, was the first account of the

world war from the Mennonite perspective. Hartzler highlights his own experience, but also presents a comprehensive picture of the Mennonite conflict with the greater American public. Cornelius J. Dyck's An Introduction to Mennonite History and C. Henry Smith's The Story of the Mennonites provide historical overviews² of the Mennonite experience in the war. These sources have been useful for extracting significant statistical data and capsulized analyses of Mennonite attitudes. The works of the foremost authority on this subject, James C. Juhnke, are used extensively. In his book, A People of Two Kingdoms, Juhnke includes an insightful chapter, "Crisis of Citizenship: Mennonites in the World War," in which he explains the irreconcilable conflict between Mennonitism and militarism, and provides an interesting analysis of the flaws in the Mennonite argumentative strategy.³ Two of Juhnke's works that proved helpful in reconstucting the historical context of the period examine the rhetorical themes that bound the faithful together and capture the ugliness and the intensity of American aversion to the pacifistic stance in the midst of a righteous war.⁴ Historian Allan Teichrow's intriguing analysis of government tactics designed to deal with the Mennonites isolates the distorted perceptions held by government officials, the deceptive strategies they practiced, and the orders they carried⁵ out against the Mennonites. His companion work on the Mennonite migration to Canada to avoid the draft is

equally enlightening, as it provides lucid explanations for why some Mennonites opted to flee the country while most did not, and why the press distorted and magnified⁶ their escape efforts.

While scholars have produced historical accounts of the Mennonite experience in the world war, no scholarly work exists that examines Mennonite discourse from a rhetorical perspective. This study isolates and evaluates the rhetorical postures adopted by Mennonites both before and in the course of America's involvement in World War I.

Parameters of The Study

The parameters of this study were set by determining which Mennonite groups were most influential and kept records and by sifting through Mennonite writings in search of relevant war-related material. Although there are numerous Mennonite groups in the United States, only the two largest Conferences, the General Conference and the Mennonite Church, issued formal statements to the public on the Mennonite position. Furthermore, some of the smaller groups, such as the Mennonite Brethren, Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, Holdeman, and Defenseless Mennonites, concurred, at times, with General Conference policy, while groups such as the Old Order, and the Conservative Amish tended to support the Mennonite Church position. Complete descriptions of the General Conference (GC's) and the

Mennonite Church (MC's) are given in chapter two. This study charts their rhetoric from the beginning of the European crisis which ignited in 1914, but concentrates on their rhetorical action between the years 1917-1918, during America's involvement in the war.

The primary sources of Mennonite rhetoric include official church records and yearbooks, Mennonite newspapers, selected personal correspondence, pamphlets, and tracts. Church records document the official Mennonite positions on Wilson Administration policy. Few formal gatherings of the various congregations within a conference were held between the years 1916-1918. Five of the official church newspapers, The Gospel Herald, The Mennonite, The Christian Evangel, The Christian Monitor and Der Herold were used most extensively. These sources served as the prime forum for drawing isolated Mennonite communities together. Personal correspondence between Mennonite leaders (an enormous amount of which is preserved intact at the Mennonite Library and Archives in Newton, Kansas, the Goshen College Historical Library, and Mennonite Church Archives, in Goshen, Indiana) was used where such information added insight and clarification to the arguments advanced in published material. Mennonites published a few pamphlets and tracts outlining their peace position, and defending themselves as patriotic citizens. These resources, like church records, are manageable as a whole.

The study does not include analysis of individual

sermons addressed to home-town congregations. While the sermon notes of many influential ministers have been carefully preserved at the Goshen College Historical Library (GCHL), the Archives of the Mennonite Church (AMC), and the Bethel College Library and Archives (BCLA), problems arise in drawing generalizable conclusions on Mennonite preaching style. First, the sheer mass of sermons by each minister makes these documents unmanageable for a study of this scope. Second, and most problematic, the sermon notes are usually incomplete. Mennonite theologian James H. Waltner observes that it was typical of Mennonite ministers to speak extemporaneously.⁷ Hence, reconstruction of these sermons is impossible. In order to draw accurate conclusions on Mennonite rhetoric, I referred to the five Mennonite periodicals in which sermons were reprinted with some regularity.

Critical Perspective:

By all outside accounts, Mennonite rhetoric in World War I was collectively an abject failure. Mennonites generally refused to promote themselves in print or person as patriotic citizens outside their remote communities; they failed to project a clear peace stance, and they failed to dispel the popular belief that they were pro-German, disloyal, slackers. Countless editorials from non-Mennonites, many of which will be examined in a later chapter, corroborate this

observation. Critical approaches which place great store on judging the effect a particular piece of rhetoric has on an audience would find nothing of rhetorical merit from the Mennonites of this era. Critics solely intent on documenting the efficiency of rhetorical discourse for an immediate audience would dismiss the Mennonite rhetorical efforts in the Great War as an embarrassment, an aberration, and as an abysmal rhetorical performance among an otherwise bright, articulate people.

A critical method bent on judging the response that a rhetorical act produces is riddled with internal⁸ problems. An effects standard is absorbed with phenomena dissociated from how language functions symbolically, and hence is a non-rhetorical evaluative measure. When judgments of rhetorical success or failure are made without ever scrutinizing the communicative transaction itself, such pronouncements can hardly be deemed rhetorical. Moreover, it is an imprecise tool for judgment. Effects can be immediate, delayed, or indirect. Exacerbating these problems are the nagging questions of what index will be used to measure audience response and how will communicative receptiveness be isolated, i.e., how does one know whether an audience has responded to that particular rhetorical act alone? More serious yet is the fact that an effects criterion invites a sort of ethical relativism. When critics dwell on audience response, they may well find themselves in the untenable position

of applauding the efforts of any rhetor who moves people.

In the final analysis this approach to criticism fails to acknowledge that rhetoric is more complex than measuring the effect experienced by a particular audience on a particular occasion. Fundamental to any approach to criticism that attempts to reveal the ingenuity of human symbol users is, in the words of critic John Rathbun, a candid acknowledgement that "the irreducible element in speech criticism is still the speech itself. Critical tools," Rathbun continues, "serve us not as a means for judgment, but as a means to gain a better insight into how a speech works." ⁹ Applied to Mennonite discourse, critical pronouncements of failure are based upon a fundamental misunderstanding of to whom Mennonite rhetoric was primarily directed and an inattention to rhetorical obstacles they encountered.

This study is influenced by dramatism--a critical approach to rhetoric that offers us a way to become more conscious of the structure and function of language as a social instrument. Developed by Kenneth Burke as both theory and method of the drama of human relations, a dramatistic analysis focuses on the inventional qualities of symbol users. Language analyzed from a Burkean perspective must be approached both in terms of its poetic and rhetorical uses, its function as expression and as inducement, if a critic intends to provide a full account of human motives. Burke explains

that motives are linguistic products. Therefore, an analysis of human beings through their language provides the critic with an understanding of human motives. Dramatism presumes that language and thought are modes of action because words are mediatory principles between ourselves and nature. Our reality is a product of our symbol-making behavior, which means that as rhetors we compete with others in defining our world. The way in which a person describes a situation reflects his or her perception of reality. If the critic can determine the motive of the rhetor, then he or she can determine the rhetor's view of reality. The way in which a person describes a situation also indicates what choices of action are available. Burke writes that "the same act can be defined differently depending upon the circumference of the scene or the overall situation in terms of which we choose to locate it."¹⁰ By analyzing a rhetor's discourse, the rhetorical critic may be able to reveal the pattern of a rhetor's attempts at persuasion or expression. The result should be a better understanding of the failures and successes of rhetors in their efforts to communicate with a wide variety of audiences.

Unlike the names chosen to identify other perspectives, dramatism is not just a metaphor for communicative behavior; it best describes human action. Burke writes: "If action is to be our key term, then drama is the culminative form of action."¹¹ Our symbolic

history can be viewed as a play. Humans are actors by the very fact that they use, misuse, and create symbols in constructing basic plots. But Burke wryly adds: "If Drama, then conflict. And if conflict, then victimage. Dramatism is always on the edge of this vexing problem.¹²
. . . "

The "vexing problem" to which dramatism attends is the dialectical realm of an unresolved discordancy of conflicting voices, a tension between what or who is legitimized in the social order. The clamor for definitional rights to a system that binds people together in a series of rights and obligations and establishes the relationship between the haves and the have-nots, superiors and inferiors, and insiders and outsiders is central to our communicative interactions. Dramatism is especially well suited then for the analysis of rhetoric that stems from the motive of "No." As rhetors inevitably size up situations differently, such motives as guilt, dissatisfaction, and deprivation create moral conflict in the social arena.

It is little wonder that the rhetoric of social movements has been a favorite subject for dramatistic analysis. As uninstitutionalized collectivities that are countered by the established order for attempting to bring about or to resist change in societal norms and values, movements are born when members rise up and say, "No." Movements thrive on conflict and identify victims¹³ in their demands for legitimation.

American Mennonites living in the twentieth century did not constitute a religious movement per se as did their sixteenth century forebears. In a country that granted religious freedom, they were no longer considered an illegitimate group, and hence lost an essential component of movement status. And yet with the onset of war, the Mennonite peace position fell outside that which is defined by the status quo as appropriate behavior in times of war. In essence, the presence of war magnified the "out-group" status of Mennonites. Suddenly, the legitimacy of their Christian and civic identity was questioned. A discordancy of conflicting voices arose over the relationship between religious practices and secular interests. Sociologists Irving I Zaretsky and Park P. Leone observe that "when a practice of a group challenges and threatens deeply held secular norms, a conflict ensues that is ameliorated to manageable proportions by reason of the group's own change of doctrine and religious observance or by change in secular norms of the community."¹⁴ As a case in point, Mennonitism is considered a legitimate religion in peace time and viewed as illegitimate in war time. The doctrine of nonresistance challenges militaristic patriotism, the secular norm adopted in war time, but it is non-threatening to benevolent patriotism, the norm in peace time. Mennonites' status as upright American citizens is jeopardized as their status as a "subversive group" is recognized.

I use dramatism to illumine the dialectical tension of the Mennonite-American drama in World War I. I examine that which is rhetorically inventive about Mennonite plots, explain the divergent interpretations of Mennonite rhetoric (outsiders perceived obvious omissions and inconsistencies in their rhetoric; Mennonites did not perceive such problems) and identify the divergent ways in which Mennonites and the wider American public fought for definitional rights to the Great War. My examination of Mennonite rhetoric from this approach is based upon the ground that no analysis can be adequate that does not attempt to understand discourse from the point of view of those who generated it.

If language provides the critic with a window to a rhetor's world, then viewing Mennonite rhetoric on its own terms should reveal knowledge of the frame from which they operated. Burkean scholar A. Cheree Carlson writes:

Frames are the symbolic structure by which human beings impose order upon their personal and social experiences. Frames serve as perspectives from which all interpretations of experience are made. In their broadest sense frames are applied as a chart for social action, because they constitute attitudes and motives. The frame from which a movement arises, then, determines its form of symbolic

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action.

Dramatistically, a rhetor's frame of reference can be discovered by examining how he or she expiates the guilt resulting from the violation of a particular hierarchy. In other words, when rhetors reject the established order (a system which binds people together around a set of rights and obligations based on agreed upon values or principles), or question a normative standard of the social order, they inevitably disrupt the human desire for order, security, and a cloaking of the alienation between people. Resolution of that guilt can take many forms, yet stem from two overriding frames: comedy or tragedy.

Carlson describes the tragic and comic perspectives thus: The tragic frame "usually projects evil onto a scapegoat, lays the blame at its feet, and slays it." From the tragic perspective "no social change is possible without some form of violence." The comic frame regards the social order as a human creation and respects the fact that some order must exist for humans to function. "The social order can be changed," Carlson notes, "but never at the cost of the humanity of those on the other side. In sum, conflict exists, but it is humanized by the actor's consciousness of his own foibles. . . . The comic frame identifies social ills as arising from human error, not evil, and thus uses reason to correct them."¹⁶ Carlson further observes that the orientation of a movement will profoundly affect the

methods used by the movement to achieve its goals.

There are strong parallels between Mennonite rhetoric in World War I and the strategies employed by movements of a comic and a tragic frame. Challenging the dichotomy that Carlson has posited, I shall argue that Mennonite rhetoric did not completely reflect a comic or a tragic perspective; rather, their frames of reference were peculiarly tragi-comic. Though many characteristics of the comedic frame were evident in Mennonite discourse, so, too, were elements of a tragic frame. This work seeks to show how Mennonites enacted a rhetorical paradox (being in the world but not of it) by operating from a tragi-comic perspective. Understanding that dual perspective gives the critic appropriate criteria by which to judge the success and failure of their rhetorical strategies.

In order to provide further understanding and appreciation of a people bent on enacting a paradox, I analyze Mennonite discourse from the standpoint of rhetorical posturing, an inclusive term that subsumes the following rhetorical categories: purpose, strategies, tone, role, argument, and the target audience. This conception of posturing, however, is mine. Mennonites made no distinctions between their rhetorical stances. Arguments were intermixed in periodicals, correspondence and church records. Rhetorical postures were identified in this analysis in order to highlight the diversity of arguments.

Structuring this analysis around rhetorical postures, however, should not suggest that Mennonite rhetoric moved through stages. Mennonites formulated their rhetorical postures at the outset of the war and maintained such positions until the end. This should not be surprising considering that America's involvement in the international crisis was relatively short.

Specifically, I argue that Mennonite rhetoric reveals the essential characteristics of apologetic, reaffirmative, deliberative, and confrontative address. Apologia, or a rhetoric of self-defense, is necessary when someone's character is attacked. The rhetor's aim is to rebuild or purify his or her character. Rhetors are motivated to engage in apologetic discourse when they feel pressure from an audience to respond to real and serious accusations.¹⁷ A rhetoric of reaffirmation identifies rhetors' attempts to revitalize a faith already held by an audience. The rhetoric that members of a group use to address each other in order to maintain their membership aims to reinforce and renew their commitment to a belief.¹⁸ Deliberative address refers to a rhetoric of counsel or advice on matters of the state. Deliberative rhetoric is concerned with the expediency and efficacy of domestic and foreign policy issues.¹⁹ A rhetoric of confrontation is comprised of exposing wrongdoing, creating guilt, yet capitalizing on shared values. Rhetors amplify the differences between themselves and others not to further alienation, but to

seek conciliation.

Each of these postures is grounded in a pivotal dramatistic term: identification. Burke writes that as individuals, we strive to form ourselves in accordance with the communicative norms of our society in order to be perceived as more influential communicators. To be persuasive, Burke argues, rhetors must establish common ground--articulate similarities they share with their audiences. By capitalizing upon shared values, traits, needs and desires, rhetors mask division and alienation and induce cooperation and unity in order to seek approval and acceptance.

Identification is a key concept because in viewing humans as actors, one is also viewing how they act together. Moreover, identification is only necessary, Burke continues, because we are divided. If people were not apart from one another, there would be no need for us to search for unifying appeals.²¹ We would not act together, induce cooperation, search for transcendent terms to resolve controversy, if it were not for the hierarchic motive that drives people to secure a more enviable stature in society.

The need to identify with the larger community explains why Mennonites engaged in apologetic discourse. When Mennonites found themselves face to face with government officials, draft board interrogators, the Board of Inquiry, and angry American citizens demanding conformance to patriotic behavior as it was defined in

times of war, they, as never before, experienced a real desire to be understood. Mennonites tried desperately to remedy the state of division by pointing to the values that they shared with the wider American citizenry. Hoping to purify a tarnished image, Mennonites "bent over backwards" to align themselves rhetorically with their patriotic neighbors. In essence, Mennonite apologia became a search for rhetorical means to repair a damaged ethos brought on by the demands of war.

Identification strategies with the wider American populace were complicated by the paradoxical biblical dictum by which Mennonites attempted to live. Devotion to Christ's tenet: "be ye in the world, but not of it," required a precarious balancing of multiple roles, acts, purposes, and strategies to adapt to multiple audiences. Mennonites understood that surviving the crisis meant a concerted effort to identify with fellow members of the faith. A rhetoric of reaffirmation, speech aimed at bolstering group identity, became essential for maintaining a 350 year old faith.

The examination of a rhetoric of reaffirmation requires a broadly-conceived notion of audience, a view that does not presume an external audience exclusively. Dramatisim provides an all-encompassing view of audience. As Burke explains:

[A] man can be his own audience, insofar as he, even in his secret thoughts, cultivates certain ideas or images for the effect he

hopes they may have upon him; he is here what Mead would call 'an I addressing its me,' and in this respect he is being rhetorical quite as though he were using pleasant imagery to influence an outside audience rather than one within.²²

Essentially, Burke gives rhetorical status to consumatory communication--a dimension of communication wherein symbolic acts function as an end in themselves; the purpose of the message is accomplished at the moment of its consumption.²³ In so doing, he calls into question the pragmatic view of rhetorical transactions. That self-directed communication fulfills a rhetorical function is an idea expounded upon by theorist Richard Gregg. The primary appeal of consumatory rhetoric, Gregg argues, is its affirming power for the rhetors who generated it. The repeated reaffirmation of one's selfhood through rhetoric serves the reflexive task of "psychologically refurbishing" oneself.²⁴

Mennonite rhetoric to a great extent served a consumatory function. Keeping the flock faithful during a crisis that threatened to weaken, if not destroy, Mennonitism was of paramount importance. If Mennonites, in articulating their position in their own newspapers, could reaffirm who they were, then such rhetorical efforts had intrinsic worth. This study identifies the ways in which Mennonite rhetoric served a consumatory function.

That apologetic discourse aims to purify an image and re-affirmative discourse aims to revitalize an image places these two rhetorical postures at odds. Mennonites struggled with how they could identify with non-Mennonites and still remain true to the tenets of their faith. Could a Mennonite and an American identity be maintained during war time? Which identity was more important? The obstacles to rhetorical effectiveness that rhetors assume when they engage in both forms of address explain why Mennonites at first resisted creating both postures and why eventual attempts at identifying with Americans and their fellow members inevitably produced contradictions.

I argue that Mennonites preferred to engage in reaffirmative rhetoric rather than apologetic rhetoric. They resisted defending themselves to outsiders, even in the face of false accusations, because defending their peace position required accounting for who they were and, ultimately, making themselves vulnerable to questions about their very existence.²⁵ And yet occasionally, Mennonite rhetors attempted to identify with Mennonites and non-Mennonites simultaneously. The results were a sometimes curious composition of apparent contradictions. One Mennonite rhetor, for instance, no doubt shocked members and nonmembers alike, when he defended the patriotic actions of his biblical, unassuming, nonconformist people in secular, aggrandizing, and conformist terms. At the risk of

forfeiting Mennonite distinctiveness, and desperate to be perceived as upright American citizens in the public's eye, Mennonite rhetors tried to find acceptance both as good Christians and good citizens.²⁶

Subsumed within these two postures one finds deliberative rhetoric and confrontative rhetoric. Deliberative address was prominent in Mennonite rhetoric prior to United States intervention. Mennonites strongly dissuaded American policy makers from being drawn into the world crisis, criticized European governments for "warmongering" and recommended the continuance of a policy of isolationism. This work examines the ways in which Mennonites became moral authorities on the international conflict and offers the conclusion that as long as the war remained in Europe Mennonites did not see any inconsistency in claiming to be apolitical people and taking an active interest in foreign policy. Confrontative address was evident in Mennonite negotiations with the government. While not abrasive or threatening, as confrontative discourse often is, Mennonites exposed the ways in which the government had violated individual conscience while graciously thanking administration officials for hearing them out. This analysis explores the ways in which, constrained by ideology, Mennonites were still able, and surprisingly adept at, confronting the government.

Precis of Chapters

What follows is organized around four rhetorical postures Mennonites adopted both before and during America's involvement in World War I. Before those postures are analyzed, however, Chapter two introduces the reader to the basic tenets and history of the Mennonite faith, giving a brief chronology of important events during America's involvement in the war, and highlighting the rhetorical role of newspapers for American Mennonites living in the twentieth century.

Chapter three focuses on how Mennonites assumed the role of moral authorities and political experts in political commentaries that appeared sporadically in Mennonite publications prior to April 6, 1917. Despite the fact that their faith prescribed an inattentiveness to the political scene, Mennonites engaged in their own form of deliberative rhetoric.

Chapter four examines the rhetorical constraints imposed by Mennonite ideology once the United States entered the international fray. Armed with an understanding of the limited choices that Mennonites had for rhetorical action, the critic can account for their reluctance to justify pacificism to outsiders and their practice of rehearsing arguments among themselves. Chapter five looks at how Mennonites attempted to divert attention from themselves by questioning the legitimacy of the government's policy of compulsory military service. In effect, rather than defend themselves to

outsiders initially, Mennonites adopted the more comfortable rhetorical position of reminding the government of its promises to the Mennonites and demanding that the government account for its "undemocratic" actions.

Chapter six examines how Mennonites defended themselves to the greater American public. Because Mennonites had become acculturated to the American way of life, they desperately wanted to rectify the negative image Americans held of them. Using several strategies of redefinition, Mennonites attempted to prove their loyalty as upright, American citizens.

The focus of chapter seven is how Mennonite rhetoric functioned to preserve the faith. In the face of public pressure to join the crusade to make the world safe for democracy, reaffirming the righteousness of Mennonitism became a crucial rhetorical posture for the church's integrity.

Chapter eight evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the rhetorical choices Mennonites made from the standpoint of the American people, the government, and the critic. From an outsiders perspective it was easy to condemn Mennonite rhetoric as grossly inappropriate in a national crisis that demanded the conformity of each citizen. From a dramatic perspective, the inventiveness of the Mennonites' rhetorical choices can be appreciated. Through an examination of the ways in which their discourse

functioned to preserve a tragi-comic view of the world,
I am able to show how their seemingly disparate
rhetorical choices cohered.

Notes

¹ J. S. Hartzler, Mennonites In The World War (Scottdale: Penn.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1921).

² Cornelius J. Dyck, An Introduction to Mennonite History (Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1967); C. Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites 3rd ed., rev. and enl. by Cornelius Krahn (Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Publication Office, 1950).

³ James C. Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1975).

⁴ Juhnke, "Victories of Nonresistance: Mennonite Oral Tradition and World War I," in Fides Et Historia, 7, No. 1 (1974); "Mob Violence and Kansas Mennonites in 1918," in Kansas Historical Quarterly 43, (1977).

⁵ Allan Teichrow, "Military Surveillance of Mennonites in World War I," in The Mennonite Quarterly Review, 53, (1979), 95-127.

⁶ Teichrow, "World War I and the Mennonite Migration to Canada to Avoid the Draft," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, 45, (1971), 219-249.

⁷ James H. Waltner, "The Authentication of Preaching in the Anabaptist-Mennonite Tradition," Diss. Claremont Univ., 1971.

⁸ An effects criterion for judging rhetorical discourse is problematic for the following reasons: 1) its extrinsic nature makes it a non-rhetorical standard, 2) it is an ambiguous term; effects can refer to

immediate response, delayed response, indirect versus direct, formal effects or effects on the rhetor. 3) it cannot deal with rhetorical acts that do not fetch results, 4) it is difficult to isolate effects, i.e., how do we know whether an audience has responded to that particular act alone? 4) it is difficult to verify effects, i.e. what index do we use? 5) As critic John Rathbun points out, it invites "ethical relativism" if applied in isolation. When we dwell on audience response, Rathbun explains, we accept the idea that the speaker in any situation is governed by pragmatic and prudential limitations imposed by the nature of his audience. In relying on an effects criterion to make critical judgments, the critic must applaud the efforts of any rhetor who moves people. See Rathbun, "The Problem of Judgment and Effect in Historical Criticism: A Proposed Solution," Western Speech, 33 (1969), 146-59.

⁹ Rathbun, p. 159, 148.

¹⁰ Kenneth Burke, Language As Symbolic Action: Essays On Life, Literature, and Method. (Berkeley, Ca.: Univ. of California Press, 1968); See also Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935); A Grammar of Motives (rpt. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969).

¹¹ Burke, Language As Symbolic Action, p. 55.

¹² Burke, Language As Symbolic Action, p. 55.

¹³ Charles Stewart, Craig Smith, Robert E. Denton, Jr., Persuasion and Social Movements (Prospect Heights,

Ill.: Waveland Press, 1984), pp. 85-101.

¹⁴ "Introduction," in Religious Movements in Contemporary America, ed. Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), p. 6.

¹⁵ A. Cheree Carlson, "Gandhi and the Comic Frame: 'Ad Bellum Purificandum,'" Quarterly Journal of Speech, 72 (1986), 447; See also Burke, Attitudes Toward History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 447.

¹⁶ Carlson, pp. 448-452.

¹⁷ That motives are conceived as social exigence (a need to meet audience expectations) as opposed to a personal exigence is an ethnomethodological approach to genre. See Carolyn Miller, "Genre as Social Action," QJS 70 (1984), 151-167. Several critics have discovered various ways to approach apologetic discourse. For example, Noreen Kruse proposed four motives based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. "Motivational Factors In Non-Denial Apologia," Central States Speech Journal, 28 (1977), 14; B. L. Ware and Wil A. Linkugel found four strategies that combine to yield four postures. "They Spoke In Defense of Themselves: On The Generic Criticism of Apologia," QJS, 59 (1973), 273-283; Kruse found five suasive plots. The Eide of Apologetic Discourse: An Aristotelian Rhetorical-Poetic Analysis, Ph.D. diss, University of Iowa, 1979; Lawrence Rosenfield discovered four content analytic schemas. "A Case Study in Speech Criticism: The Nixon-Truman Analog," Communication Monographs, Nov. 1968, 435-450; Walter Fisher proposed

several strategies of redefinition that rhetors use to purify their images. "A Motive View of Communication," QJS, April 1970, 131-139. Each of these systems of classification can prove useful, but because each apology is different, each must be treated on its own terms (explaining how it functions symbolically). In addition, the critic must take into account how the apologist was constrained rhetorically by the charges in order to analyze the genre accurately. In the final stage of criticism an appropriate classification schema may be discovered. My analysis demonstrates the accuracy of Fisher's view.

¹⁸ Fisher, p. 134 argues that reaffirmative rhetoric is characterized by a variety of "Christian life renewal themes." My analysis confirms the use of Christian life renewal themes as part of a rhetoric of reaffirmation, the rhetoric Mennonites used to address each other in order to reinforce their belief in Mennonitism.

¹⁹Aristotle, The Rhetoric trans. Lane Cooper (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1932), p. 17. Deliberative address, as defined by Aristotle, is one of three "species of rhetoric." Defined as "a speech of advise," deliberative rhetoric is characterized by the following constitutive parts: the strategy of exhortation or dissuasion, a preoccupation with the future, questions of expediency, the aim concerns advantage and injury, its subjects include ways and means, war and peace, national defense, imports and

exports, and legislation.

²⁰ See Robert L. Scott and Donald K. Smith, "The Rhetoric of Confrontation," QJS LV (1969), 1-8; Robert L. Scott and Wayne Brockreide, The Rhetoric of Black Power (New York: Harper and Row, 1969); Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Radical Black Nationalism: A Case Study in Self-Conscious Criticism," CSSJ 22 (1971), 151-160.

²¹ Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1950), pp. 21-22.

²² Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 38.

²³ David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 17-18.

²⁴ Richard B. Gregg, "The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest," Philosophy and Rhetoric 4 (1971), pp. 74-75

²⁵ Maurice Natanson, "The Claims of Immediacy," in Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Argumentation, ed. Maurice Natanson and Henry Johnstone (Univ. Park: Penn State Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 15-16. Natanson maintains that "argument is constitutive of a world," and that "genuine argument" involves risking one's interior world. Seldom do we engage in genuine argument, Natanson continues, because the risks are too great; such arguments are tied to the very meaning of the self.

²⁶ Burke, Attitudes Toward History vol. 2 (New York: The New Republic, 1937), pp. 201-202. Burke writes that

when words have a fixed meaning for people rhetors who desire to alter the association surrounding those words might resort to a strategy of creating a "perspective by incongruity"--a process of "verbal atom cracking" whereby language is used oxymoronically in order to jolt audience members out of their previous unshakable mindset. I argue that Mennonite rhetors created a "perspective by incongruity" in order to cling to two contrary identities.

CHAPTER TWO
IN THE WORLD, YET NOT OF IT:
MENNONITES AND THE STATE

Origins of The Faith:

Mennonitism has a long, rich, and troubled history. The inception of the faith can be traced to the sixteenth century in Switzerland, South Germany, Austria, and Holland. Believers were not originally called Mennonites, but "Anabaptists" (rebaptizers) by those who bitterly opposed their radical departure from infant baptism. The Anabaptist movement, as it was then conceived, believed that the church should be voluntary and composed of adult members who had entered into membership by baptism upon their confession of faith. Anabaptists dismissed infant baptism as a meaningless practice. How could infants give an intelligent life commitment based upon a knowledge of what true Christianity means, they asked. Church membership could only be based upon true conversion and commitment to holy living--a belief which stood in sharp contrast to the Reformers' church.¹

Anabaptists believed that they alone retained the original and true vision of Luther and Zwingli.² They did not agree with Luther that it was enough to believe in Christ's death and atonement to be a true Christian, nor did they believe that it was a good practice to baptize infants and support the idea of a state church.

Anabaptists also disagreed with Calvin, who attempted to Christianize the whole society and bring everyone under the authority of the church. The original founders of the Mennonites held that Christians are "called out" from the general society, mandating the separation of church and state.³ Since Anabaptists believed that the Christian must withdraw from the world to create a Christian social order within the church brotherhood, they saw little chance of converting the masses to a brotherhood with such high ideals.⁴

Specifically, Anabaptism was defined by three basic tenets. First, the essence of Christianity was discipleship. A true Christian life was patterned after the teaching and example of Christ. In fact, as Mennonite historian C. Henry Smith explains: "[T]he whole movement was an attempt to reproduce as literally as possible the primitive apostolic church in its original purity and simplicity; and restore Christianity once more to a basis of individual responsibility."⁵ Anabaptists believed staunchly that each individual must be granted the liberty of conscience to decide the Bible message for him or herself and be a witness of it. The essence of Anabaptism was individualism. The movement did not believe that Christianity could make love or holiness a matter of doctrinal belief; rather members demanded an outward expression of the inner experience. In essence, Anabaptism was not merely a set of dogmas,⁶ but a way of life.

Aside from holding in high esteem the practice of Christ-like discipleship, Anabaptists conceived of the church as a brotherhood separated from the "worldly way of life." Anabaptists realized that conflict with the world would be inevitable for the devout Christian. They envisioned the brotherhood as a "suffering church," taking literally the words of Jesus: "In the world ye shall have tribulation."⁷ In 1524, the Swiss leader of the movement, Conrad Grebel, painted a bleak picture for the life of the devoted Christian. "True Christian believers," he wrote, "are sheep among wolves, sheep for the slaughter; they must be baptized in anguish, and affliction, tribulation, persecution, suffering, and death."⁸ For most Anabaptists, at least, separation from the world and a calling out from the general society were coterminous with persecution and sometimes death. As one Mennonite theologian has observed: "Martyrdom at the hands of civil authorities constituted their identity."⁹

An important corollary to the concept of the suffering church, which comprised the third tenet of Anabaptism, was the ethic of nonresistance. Menno Simons, the Dutch leader of the movement, (from whom Anabaptists later would adopt their present name) proclaimed in 1550: "The regenerated do not go to war, nor engage in strife. . . . They are the children of peace who have beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and know of no war. . . .

¹⁰
." Eighty-two years later, Simons' statement became the foundation for the Dordrecht Confession of Faith. Adopted at Dordrecht, Holland in 1632, the eighteen articles of the Dordrecht Confession have for more than 350 years served as "a kind of brief doctrinal north star."¹¹ While the Anabaptists considered themselves a non-confessional people, fearing that confession might become normative or displace the Scriptures as the authority within the fellowship, The Dordrecht Confession of Faith remained the exception.¹²

Of the fundamental Anabaptist doctrines, it is the doctrine of nonresistance which has throughout the movement's history led to the most trouble with government authorities. In the present age of intensifying nationalism and militarism, the only trait of Mennonitism known by non-Mennonites is the "unpatriotic" rejection of military service, which is based on an "antiquated" doctrine of nonresistance.

In the four and one-half centuries of the church's history, Mennonites have had to pay an extreme price for believing in adult baptism, separation of church and state, and the righteousness of nonresistance. From its inception, state authorities in South Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland attempted to stamp out the rapidly spreading faith by invoking drastic measures. Anabaptists, wherever they could be rooted out, faced such atrocities as drowning, being burned at the stake, rotting in prison, decapitation, being broken on the

rack, or being buried alive.¹³ In the first ten years of the Anabaptist movement alone, five thousand members were killed, and of the movement's pioneer leaders, few died a natural death.¹⁴ Since religious toleration had not come of age, the organized churches of Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism gave full assistance in the brutal punishments, aiding the authorities in wiping out congregations. While zealous persecutors did succeed in driving the movement undercover and removing all possibility of its ever having a large, popular following, they never quite succeeded in snuffing out the movement completely.

To escape the relentless persecution and, ultimately, to keep the faith alive, Mennonites trekked from country to country in search of religious liberty. In the mid-1600's, the Mennonites of Switzerland were the first to look at America as a land of religious toleration that would welcome Mennonite immigrants. After a small Swiss contingent of Mennonites founded the first permanent Mennonite colony in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1683, seven much larger "waves" of Mennonites from all over Europe and Russia embarked on¹⁵ the great trek to the Sweet Land of Liberty.

American Mennonites

Separation from the world has always been the key to Mennonite identity, irrespective of time and place. For Mennonites of sixteenth and seventeenth century

Europe, separation meant persecution and suffering. For Mennonites living in early twentieth century America, separation meant something fundamentally different. It was difficult for American Mennonites to maintain a theology of suffering as a distinctive marker of Mennonitism amidst a climate of religious freedom. In a society characterized by pluralism, separatist beliefs are valued. Hence, the concept of separation underwent a major redefinition. Separation became increasingly a matter of particular cultural patterns, most notably of dress and language, rather than any major theological differentiation outside of nonresistance. Separation was defined in highly visible terms (plain coats, coverings, etc.) for some Mennonites, and by the German language¹⁶ for others. Anthropologist Elmer S. Miller argues that "Mennonite congregations were assuming a denominational identity alongside a variety of other American denominational groupings [and while] World War I could have provided a brief opportunity for a return to persecution as an essential mark of Mennonite identity. . . it would appear that most Mennonites were relieved not to return to an identity of persecution."¹⁷ Juhnke, on the other hand, notes that the whole issue of military service strengthened Mennonite identity in that it sharpened the line between church and state. Mennonites once again saw themselves as a people separated from the general society by their refusal to take up arms.¹⁸

While marking the distinctiveness of the faith became increasingly difficult for American Mennonites, as the meaning of separation was ever-changing, so, too, were their attempts to maintain differences from each other. Mennonite groups in America today are proud of their common heritage, but they are also interested in maintaining their distinctiveness from other Mennonite groups. Mennonite diversity is reflected in different names, languages, dialects, and dress, but differences among Mennonites are also doctrinal. Such practices as missionary activities, secondary education, and Sunday School are accepted by some groups and rejected by others. An explanation for the differences among Mennonite groups is that Mennonites came from various countries over long intervals of time and were anxious to preserve their distinctive cultural practices as well as their fundamental beliefs. This study will focus on the two largest of the seventeen recognized Mennonite groups in the United States, the Mennonite Church and the General Conference.

The Mennonite Church (MC's) organized in 1898 comprises the largest body of Mennonites in North America. This group of Mennonites is almost entirely Swiss in origin, but they have two ecclesiastical backgrounds: Mennonite and Amish Mennonite. While not officially unified as a Conference until 1898, many of the Mennonite congregations that eventually joined the Mennonite Church had been established centuries earlier.

The earliest wave of Mennonite immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania in 1683, and the nearly 8,000 Mennonites who settled throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, Indiana, Iowa, and Illinois between the years 1707-1756 and 1815-1860, eventually united to form the Mennonite Church.¹⁹ By 1917, there were fourteen conferences of the Mennonite Church in the United States which included the Franconia, Lancaster, Washington, Franklin Virginia, Southwestern Pennsylvania, Eastern Amish, Ohio, Indian-Michigan, Illinois, Missouri-Iowa, Western Amish, Kansas-Nebraska, and Pacific Coast conferences. The number of churches within the individual conferences²⁰ ranged from twenty to one hundred.

There are a number of factors that differentiate the MC's from the General Conference (GC's). Since members of the Mennonite Church have Swiss roots, they are the more homogeneous group. The language spoken in the Mennonite Church up until 1900 was Palatine German. Church disciplinary standards are controlled by the "bishops" (ministers) of the congregation. In short, bishops are given much authority to govern their members. The more visible and influential bishops hold other posts as well, such as editor of the church paper, or president of a conference, or head of a mission board. Given the church polity of the MC's, the more powerful bishops can eventually come to speak for, and mold the character of, the church.

Such was the case with Daniel Kauffman, a bishop of

the Mennonite Church from 1896 to 1944. At the height of his influence, he steered the Mennonite Church through the tumultuous crisis of World War I. An extremely learned and politically astute man, Kauffman secured a degree of Principal of Pedagogics at the Missouri State University, taught school in Missouri in the late 1800's, and served as county commissioner from 1887-90. Kauffman's rise to prominence in the Mennonite Church was meteoric. He did not join the Mennonite Church until 1890, and yet two years later he was an ordained minister and four years later named a bishop. His natural gifts as speaker, teacher, writer, mediator, and conciliator made him the outstanding leader of the MC's for over forty years. A visionary in many respects, Kauffman was instrumental in getting three Mennonite-affiliated colleges started: Hesston College in Kansas, Eastern Mennonite College in Ohio, and Goshen College in Indiana. A prolific writer, Kauffman authored 20 books on church matters. But his greatest work as a writer came as editor of the official MC paper, The Gospel Herald.²¹

Kauffman's influence is still felt today. Mennonite scholar Chester K. Lehman writes: "Daniel Kauffman may very properly be called the interpreter of the Mennonite faith to the Mennonite Church. For nearly fifty years he was the spokesman of the church in matters of doctrine and practice."²² Mennonite theologian Harold Bender concurs: "In a real sense he molded the thought of the

church of his time."²³

Kauffman's influence on the Mennonite Church has contributed to its enduring conservative image. The MC's uphold many of the traditional religious and social practices of an earlier era. For example, women are required to wear prayer head coverings, while men are typically clean shaven and wear plain coats.²⁴ A final distinction that is particularly relevant to this study is that by the early 1900's, English had gradually replaced Palatine German as the standard language at home and in the church. Up to two centuries had passed since these Mennonites had left their Swiss homeland; hence, the cultural influences of their homeland had diminished considerably. By the time the European crisis erupted in 1914, members of the Mennonite Church had little or no sympathy for the German cause.

The General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America (more commonly called the General Conference or GC's) was organized in 1860 and remains the second largest body of Mennonites in North America. Unlike the more homogeneous background of the Mennonite Church, the GC's do not have a single national origin. Cultural backgrounds include Swiss, Polish-German, Prussian, and, above all, Russo-German.²⁵ Initially, the General Conference was composed of two groups: American Mennonites who had become dissatisfied with the traditional and conservative patterns of their Swiss immigrant fathers and Mennonites who came from South

Germany in 1865. The Conference did not become a major force among the Mennonites until 1870, when large groups of Mennonites from Russia emigrated to the United States. From 1873-1884, some 18,000 Mennonites, largely of Dutch origin, left Russia for America because it appeared that Russia was backing out on its promise to grant Mennonites permanent military exemption. These Mennonites settled in Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Kansas, and soon joined the General Conference, bolstering its membership considerably.²⁶ By the turn of the century, the General Conference had established five districts in the United States: Eastern, Middle-Central, Northern, Western, and Pacific.²⁷

Unlike the rigid constitution of the Mennonite Church, which gives bishops authority to prescribe rules for how to conduct worship services and how to dress and act appropriately, the General Conference is loosely structured to accommodate the diverse cultural backgrounds of its churches. Each congregation and each district is autonomous. The General Conference assumes only an advisory, not a legislative, relationship to the congregations and district conferences.²⁸ In fact, H. P. Krehbiel, a leader in the General Conference in the early 1900's, explained that: "The churches constituting the General Conference have by their union not become something different from what they were before. Each church remains just what it was, and retains all the

peculiarities she had if she chooses." ²⁹ The founding statement of the General Conference reflected the independence of GC polity. "Unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, and love in all things," was its simple message. ³⁰

Although the General Conference aims to be merely an advisory board and is a means to further common religious efforts, it has a constitution that prescribes as a test of membership that congregations support baptism on confession of faith, avoid oaths, believe in and practice nonresistance, practice scriptural church discipline, and bar those members who are addicted to drink and who belong to secret societies. ³¹ Unlike the Mennonite Church, ministers of the General Conference are not given the special title of "bishop" nor their range of authority. Rather, the General Conference believes that the entire congregation should decide all major issues in the church. As a result, the GC's had no one individual to personify their mission, as did the MC's in the person of Daniel Kauffman.

The large number of General Conference Mennonites who emigrated from Russia just before the turn of the century still retained fond memories of their homeland. Even by 1914, many of these Mennonites preferred their German mother tongue both at home and church. When the European crisis broke out, it was only natural that these Mennonites would sympathize with and support the efforts of the homeland. For them, cultural ties had not

yet been severed.

Whether they eventually became members of the Mennonite Church, the General Conference, or some other Mennonite group, Mennonites who immigrated to America between 1600 and 1900 came for the same reasons: cultural autonomy, exemption from military service, freedom of conscience, and the promise of rich farmland. Though Mennonite communities thrived prior to the outbreak of World War I, increasing their population to 79,363 members,³² in all the years of rapid immigration no guarantees of isolation or exemption from national military conscription were ever granted. Yet many Mennonites assumed, nonetheless, that state laws passed to exempt them from military service were binding ever after.³³ Mennonites were unaware that national conscription legislation could supersede state legislation in a national emergency--a political reality they would shortly confront. Moreover, political naivete and cultural isolation became most evident when Mennonites refused to acknowledge the inevitability of U. S. intervention in the European crisis. Consequently, Mennonites were ill-prepared to speak out in a unified front against the war.

Portents of Conflict

When the war broke out in Europe in 1914, the average American reacted to it as something far away, mildly interesting, yet frightening and evil. Most

Americans, including the Mennonites, wanted nothing more than to be left in peace, believing in the "goodness" of isolation and neutrality.³⁴

The anti-war tenor of the country had not changed by 1916. President Woodrow Wilson was re-elected on the popular campaign slogan: "He kept us out of war."³⁵

Mennonites, too, perceived the importance of electing a candidate who espoused peace in these troubled times.

Until 1917, Mennonites appeared to echo American sentiments. However, beneath the apparent similarities lay deep-seated, irreconcilable differences. During America's involvement in the Great War, those differences would be made public, and Mennonites would be forced to respond to bitter physical and verbal abuse from their fellow citizens. With little advance planning Mennonites would begin to question the meaningfulness of freedom of conscience in America. Ultimately, they would face a crisis of how to articulate to non-Mennonites their religious beliefs, traditions, origins, and rationale for coming to North America.

America's entrance into the Great War began with President Wilson's pronouncement: "The supreme test of the nation has come. We must all speak, act and serve together."³⁶ These words were warmly received by the American public. But by 1917, Americans had changed their minds about the international crisis. As historian James Juhnke notes: "Across the nation, pacifists became militarists, isolationists became interventionists, and

Socialists became patriots."³⁷ America was ready for the test of sacrifice, courage, and patriotism that a total war would demand. When, early in 1917, Germany began practicing unrestricted submarine warfare, and the telegram from Arthur Zimmermann, Germany's secretary of state, was intercepted--a coded message that instructed Mexico to become Germany's ally with a view to recovering Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona from the United States--the European crisis threatened to escalate dangerously out of control. Americans acknowledged along with President Wilson that "For us³⁸ there is but one choice--fight!"

American involvement in the World War from April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, did indeed become a "supreme test"--an engrossing experience for all American citizens. With the mobilization efforts, including increased taxes, warbond campaigns, and military conscription, America reached out to involve all its citizens in a great crusade to make the world safe for democracy. Wilson began the mobilization efforts by stating: "[T]he manhood of the country shall step forward in one solid rank in defense of the ideals to which this Nation is consecrated."³⁹ The response to Wilson's command was overwhelming. The Selective Service Act, which provided for a national draft, was implemented on May 18, 1917, and drew twenty-six million⁴⁰ young men.

While most Americans readily heeded the war call,

the Mennonites envisioned the war not as a righteous crusade, but as a violent storm that would disrupt their nonconformist peaceful lifestyle. When America reached out to pull the Mennonites into the war effort, diligent efforts were made by Mennonites to remain uninvolved. Mennonites refused to concede that fighting was America's only choice. When the Selective Service Act instituted compulsory military service, Mennonites were stunned and felt betrayed. They sincerely believed that the war could not change their status as nonresisters. After receiving word that a National Defense Act had been passed in 1916, an act that would make significant changes regarding permanent military exemption for religious groups, one prominent Mennonite leader, C. E. Krehbiel said: "We did not believe that that was⁴¹ possible in the United States."

Mennonites were eventually forced to recognize that they were inescapably part of a militaristic America and an angry world. Recognizing that the world crisis would force Mennonite involvement, Mennonite leader H. P. Krehbiel expressed his fear of the impending confrontation between the Mennonites and the rest of the world: "The Mennonites will now be purified by fire," he wrote, "what will become of us in the heat?"⁴² Mennonites would face a supreme test of a different nature--a test that would have far-reaching implications for their small, tranquil communities.

A Chronology of War-Related Events

From Germany's declaration of war in August of 1914, to its surrender in June of 1919, American Mennonites were caught up in "worldly concerns" to varying degrees. Their attitudes vacillated in the intervening years on who should be supported as long as the war remained in Europe, on who would be the best candidate in the presidential election of 1916, on how they could support their country upon America's involvement, and on how they would explain themselves to the government and the American people.

The sinking of the Lusitania in May of 1915 marked the beginning of their political involvement in an unprecedented way. Heretofore, Mennonites had remained neutral observers in their own church circulars, albeit vigorously opposing both sides. But with that dastardly act, even many German Mennonites grudgingly sided with the Allied forces.

As the European crisis erupted closer to home, Mennonites began to tune in to the presidential elections of 1916 as never before. For the most part, Mennonites were attracted to Wilson's idealistic peace rhetoric. Like many Americans in 1916, they saw the importance of electing a peace candidate, and yet many Mennonites were not convinced that a vote for Wilson would ensure peace. But then they did not see the Republican candidate, Charles Evans Hughes, as an acceptable candidate either. Mennonites were generally

indifferent to the election results.⁴³ Since they could not express their religious beliefs through the ballot, Mennonites began to question the meaning of the freedom to vote when there was no real choice. This would not be the first time, writes Juhnke, that Mennonites would have "reasons for questioning the meaningfulness of American freedoms."⁴⁴

Though seemingly disillusioned with the electoral process, Mennonites remained politically naive about legislative maneuvering in 1916. The National Defense Act passed in that year seriously threatened the military exemptions granted to Mennonites by President Grant in 1873. Under the new law the religious belief of the individual, not that of a religious group, was the decisive criterion for determining eligibility for exemption. Moreover, the law allowed the president to set regulations on who actually was nonresistent, and even such persons were required to serve in noncombatant capacities. In essence, there would be no exemption from military duty. Hence, when the Selective Service Act was implemented shortly after the United States declared war on Germany, Mennonites were taken unawares by a national draft that was compulsory.

Nonetheless, when draft boards opened across the country on June 5, 1917, Mennonite men complied. Approximately 2000 Mennonites received draft notices, an overwhelming number of whom went to camp when such training facilities opened up in August.⁴⁵ However, a

small percentage of Mennonites, numbering around 500, feared serious repercussions from the government and their patriotic neighbors for registering as conscientious objectors, and fled to Canada. President Wilson soon thwarted such drastic action, by ordering a years imprisonment for anyone caught leaving the country.⁴⁶ Realizing that escaping the crisis would hamper negotiations with the government and make camp life all the more difficult for Mennonite draftees, most members of the faith remained decidedly optimistic that the government would respect a 350 year old faith that rested upon freedom of conscience, and allow Mennonites to work in civilian, not military, capacities. Mennonites furnished the largest number of conscientious objectors of any other religious group and for this stance they expected legal protection.⁴⁷

While Mennonites waited for Wilson to define noncombatant duty, they formed lobbying committees to go to Washington and meet with the Secretary of War, Newton Baker, and they published official statements outlining their peace position. The three prominent committees included: the Committee of Seven created on April 11, 1917, and led by J. W. Kliever, P. H. Unruh, and H. P. Krehbiel; the Citizenship Committee, formed on April 29th, and composed of D. J. Brand, Jacob Snyder, N. B. Grubb, H. A. Alderfer, and U. S. Stauffer; and the War Problems Committee spearheaded by Aaron Loucks, on August 29th. Despite the fact that the Committee of

Seven was able to secure a meeting with Baker in mid-June to present alternatives to military duty, Wilson's statement defining noncombatant service did not come until March 20th of the following year-- a full eight months after the first draftees had reported to camp. And to their disappointment, the long-awaited order failed to make provision for service outside the military for conscientious objectors. The order listed service in the medical corps, the quartermaster corps, and the engineer service as noncombatant. Some Mennonite men found these terms agreeable, but most did not.

For those whose religious scruples would not allow any form of military service, combatant or noncombatant, Wilson arranged for his Secretary of War to devise an equitable plan. That plan, announced on May 30, 1918, provided for conscientious objectors who refused noncombatant service on religious grounds to be interrogated personally by a Board of Inquiry. This Board, headed by Major Richard C. Stoddard, a Federal Judge, and a Columbia Law Professor, did not get under way until June 1, 1918--five and one-half months before the war ended. It was their duty to judge the sincerity of the conscientious objector's attitude. If found sincere, special provisions were made by which the objectors could be furloughed without pay from the Government for agricultural service. Any man who was not recommended for furlough by this Board would be compelled to serve in noncombatant capacities, and in

the event of disobedience would be tried by court-martial, and if found guilty, sentenced to confinement at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. A goodly number of Mennonites who refused noncombatant duty and went before the Board of Inquiry, were found sincere and relocated on farms. But of the 360 conscientious objectors who were courtmartialed and found guilty, 138 were⁴⁸ Mennonites.

With few exceptions, Mennonite dealings with the War Department went smoothly. Such was not the case with the Justice Department or the American public. Long before the Board of Inquiry went into operation helping Mennonites, the Espionage Act went into effect hampering them. As of June 15, 1917, Mennonite publications came under immediate scrutiny for undermining or threatening national security in times of war. Three Mennonite tracts were cited for violating the Espionage Act, and, as founder of the Mennonite Publishing House, Aaron Loucks was held responsible. The mass trial of the Mennonites which began on August 20, 1918, never succeeded, however, because President Wilson halted the proceedings due to adverse publicity.

Wilson was less effective in halting mob violence against the Mennonites. Despite his repeated pleas to the contrary, Mennonites became choice targets for slander, vandalism, tar and feathering, and other unpleasantries in the hands of local American Protective Leagues for failing to participate in Red Cross and

Liberty Loan Drives. The uneasy relationship with the wider American citizenry never changed. Testament to that was a brutal near-lynching incident that occurred in Burrton, Kansas on Armistice day.

The Rhetorical Role of Church Papers

One can only surmise what might have happened to Mennonites of the untroubled generation had the church press folded during the Great War. Without the guidance of the church paper, Mennonites would not have been able to articulate a consistent position to outsiders, establish contacts and maintain ties with other congregations, receive instruction as to how to survive the "test" of war, prioritize concerns, resist public humiliation, and ultimately preserve their identities as patriotic citizens and disciples of Christ. In short, the influence of the church paper was incalculable. In a period in which newspapers were still the primary source of information and entertainment, the church paper took on added significance. Mennonites of both Conferences understood the power of the printed word, publishing some twenty-eight church-affiliated papers. Five of the most influential and official church papers are analyzed here. The Gospel Herald, a weekly periodical edited by Daniel Kauffman, was the official organ of the Mennonite Church with a circulation of 10,500. The central voice of the General Conference was The Mennonite edited by

S. M. Grubb. This publication found itself in approximately 950 Mennonite homes each week. For all German-speaking Mennonites, C. E. Krehbiel edited the weekly Der Herold. Although its readership was primarily confined to the Western District churches, it had a circulation of approximately 2,000. The Christian Evangel, a monthly paper with 800 subscribers, was edited by Benjamin Esch. This paper served the Central conference which was soon to become a district of the General Conference. Another monthly, The Christian Monitor, edited by H. Frank Reist, served the Mennonite Church with 3,300 readers.⁴⁹

The weekly periodicals deserve special attention because they were the most influential forums for Mennonite news. More than the monthly papers, they attempted to be a complete information source for church members. The Gospel Herald began publication in 1908 under the editorship of Daniel Kauffman--a post the influential bishop of the MC held for thirty-nine years. Kauffman essentially used his post to mold the life and thought of the MC's.⁵⁰ The first editorial in the first issue of The Gospel Herald expressed its editor's high expectations:

It shall be the aim of the Gospel Herald to defend and promulgate the doctrines of the Bible and of the Mennonite Church; to labor for the promotion of love, unity, peace, piety, and purity in the home and in the

church; to encourage the spreading of the Gospel by means of pure literature, mission work and evangelistic efforts; to serve as a medium through which the whole brotherhood may keep informed as to the condition, work, and progress of the church; to stand by and encourage all efforts put forth for the upbuilding of the cause and the salvation of the lost, whether such efforts are by
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individuals or institutions.

Eight years later as the European crisis proliferated, Kauffman again saw fit to articulate the paper's mission. Keenly aware that the war was a disturbing, and seemingly overwhelming, concern, Kauffman emphasized the paper's ability to solidify group identity and provide strength for individuals:

The object of a church paper ought to be not only to defend and to promulgate the principles and doctrines for which the Church stands but also to strengthen every individual, every congregation every institution, and every conference in the church. . . . The way to strengthen is not only to enlighten and support but also to influence for truth and
52
righteousness.

Under Kauffman's direction, the Gospel Herald was, as one Mennonite scholar has observed: "always sane, constructive, unifying, never factional, sensational, or

destructive. What it may have lost thereby in color and interest, it gained in dignity and respect."⁵³

Specifically, the Gospel Herald provided news and promotional matter of special interest to Mennonites, including editorials, mission reports, church school updates, church music, peace material, church history, conference reports, Christian education, a family circle page, a devotional column, a guide to the Sunday-school lesson, book reviews, poems, prayers, and comments on the world religious scene. Its only form of advertising was for the Mennonite Publishing House.⁵⁴

The official English language organ of the GC's, The Mennonite was first conceived by N. B. Grubb in 1885 for the purpose of uniting "the younger generation [of GC's] who did not read German."⁵⁵ In 1915, Silas (S. M.) Grubb, a son of the first editor, took over its editorship, holding that post for the next twenty-one years. Since its inception, The Mennonite had carried the motto: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," using the Corinthian passage to remind readers of Menno Simons' efforts to found the Mennonite faith on this very principle.⁵⁶ Like Kauffman, Grubb saw the need to call attention to the paper's ability to provide security and group cohesion during the European crisis. He wrote in late 1916:

The purpose of The Mennonite is to provide a paper for the Mennonite people which represents their interests and brings to them information

concerning the various activities of the brotherhood It is not too much to expect that everyone be interested in building up and supporting so important an institution as the church paper. The Mennonite is not conducted for profit. . . . If subscriptions to be what they should be, every subscriber must be a 'booster.'⁵⁷

The Mennonite was more liberal than its MC counterpart. In addition to including devotional articles, GC activities, mission and relief work, and news of GC congregations and schools, it made room for a full-page "News of the Week" wherein secular concerns were highlighted. Characteristic of its progressive tendencies were advertisements for various and sundry products reserved for the last page. Recognizing the ethnic diversity and perhaps a greater degree of progressivism among General Conference Mennonites, Grubb intended for his publication to accurately reflect its readership. The synthesis of sacred and secular materials was just one indication.

The German companion to The Mennonite was even more of a journalistic experiment for Mennonites. Described as "a pioneer in Mennonite journalism" by some scholars,⁵⁸ Der Herold was devoted to combining religious and secular interests in a far more equitable way than even The Mennonite. Moreover, the weekly was dotted liberally with advertisements. One is struck by

the seeming irony of a German language newspaper appearing more American than its English language counterparts. Presumably, the existence of a German church paper was attributed to the desire on the part of General Conference Mennonites to preserve their cultural heritage. This certainly was one of its functions as envisioned by its editor, C. E. Krehbiel. But a more accurate assessment of Der Herold's mission was that it truly aimed to appeal to the hyphenated Mennonite. General Conference members were German-Americans and Der Herold was, "a barometer of the vitality of sectarian⁵⁹ distinctiveness" and of the successfulness of the great melting pot experiment. Mennonites of the central plains were products of their homeland who were slowly, and sometimes grudgingly, becoming tempered by their new home. Der Herold functioned to preserve cultural identity but not at the expense of insulating Mennonite communities from all American influences.

As its editor from 1909-1920, Krehbiel personified German Mennonite distinctiveness tempered by an ecumenical and worldly outlook. Krehbiel was born in the Palatinate in Germany. He received his schooling at the Mennonite Preparatory School at Halstead, Kansas and at the Kansas State Normal at Emporia. He entered Presbyterian Theological Seminary in New Jersey, and attended the University of Berlin, Germany before taking⁶⁰ over the editorship of Der Herold. Krehbiel brought to the rural paper a rich German background, a sharp mind,

and a "worldly" education. Given Krehbiel's background, it was not incongruous for this rural church paper to feature secular news on the front page. As the war progressed, Krehbiel gave his readers brief factual updates on the war front from all corners of the globe. Mennonites who did not subscribe to Der Herold had to read about such worldly events in their city, not church, paper.

The three weekly and two monthly church papers served an extremely important rhetorical role. Mennonites of both conferences obeyed the command found in I Tim. 4:13: to give attendance to reading. In his book The Conservative Viewpoint published in 1918, Daniel Kauffman espoused the belief that reading good works would preserve Mennonitism. "Reading maketh a full man--and it depends upon the character of our reading matter as to what the nature and effect of our fullness is," he began. "The literature of a church should cover a wide range," Kauffman continued, because "this world is flooded with literature of all kinds of types. We are in a reading age [and] the best antidote to poisonous literature is to keep the homes well supplied with literature that is wholesome, pure, instructive, edifying, and exerting a positive influence for truth and righteousness." Kauffman concluded by observing that: "As a rule, the loyalty of any membership may be accurately gauged by its loyalty to the literature of the church."⁶¹ In essence, subscribing to church

literature better insured both the MC's and the GC's that Mennonitism would not only survive but flourish in twentieth century America.

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⁴ Bender, pp. 34-5.

⁵ C. Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites 4th ed. rev. and enl. by Cornelius Krahn (Newton, Ks.: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957), p. 21.

⁶ Smith, p. 24.

⁷ Bender, p. 28.

⁸ Bender, p. 28.

⁹ Elmer S. Miller, "Marking Mennonite Identity," Conrad Grebel Review, 3 no. 3 (1985), p. 257.

¹⁰ Bender. p. 32.

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¹² Studer, p. 503.

¹³ Smith, p. 13.

¹⁴ Hostetler, p. 9.

¹⁵ Cornelius J. Dyck, An Introduction to Mennonite History (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1967), pp. 145-47.

¹⁶ Miller, pp. 259, 253.

¹⁷ Miller, pp. 259-261.

- ¹⁸ James C. Juhnke, "Mennonite Benevolence and Revitalization In The Wake of World War I," Mennonite Quarterly Review, 60 no. 1 (1986), p. 17.
- ¹⁹ Smith, p. 621, and Dyck, p. 163, and Mennonite Encyclopedia, p. 611.
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- ²⁴ Smith, p. 626.
- ²⁵ Smith, pp. 670-71.
- ²⁶ Dyck, pp. 198-99, 146-47.
- ²⁷ Mennonite Encyclopedia, p. 467.
- ²⁸ Mennonite Encyclopedia, p. 467.
- ²⁹ Smith, p. 685.
- ³⁰ Mennonite Encyclopedia, p. 467.
- ³¹ Smith, p. 686.
- ³² Walter Guest Kellogg, The Conscientious Objector (New York: Boni and Liberright, 1919), p. 37.
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CHAPTER THREE
MORAL AUTHORITIES FROM AFAR:
MENNONITES PASS JUDGMENT ON THE EUROPEAN CRISIS

The Untroubled Generation

Mennonites were not untouched by the social optimism, economic success and religious vitality of the Progressive era (1900-1917). Their farms prospered, their ideal of peace was espoused by non-Mennonites, their churches grew, mission activity soared, and their leaders were growing politically conscious as never before. Prominent scholars, like C. Henry Smith, began to identify Mennonitism with American democracy, claiming that both were overlapping movements of the common people.¹ Mennonites living in America in the early years of the twentieth century were, as historian James Juhnke has aptly identified, members of "the untroubled generation."² Unlike the tortured history of their Anabaptist forefathers, and unlike the nomadic existence of their immigrant ancestors, Mennonite communities prior to World War I were stable, comfortable, even tranquil. Juhnke portrays the Mennonites of this generation as "not greatly troubled by the problems of being Mennonite, German, and American," and as having "an unquestioning confidence that it was both possible and right to enjoy the fruits of American citizenship while preserving the German-³ Mennonite culture and religious heritage."

Such confidence and optimism in the Mennonite community carried over to their attitudes on the European crisis. As one country after the other became drawn into the powder keg that Germany had ignited, Mennonites continued to harbor the belief that the United States could not possibly become involved. When Daniel Kauffman, editor of the Gospel Herald, posed the question to his readers in early 1915: "Will the United States be dragged into the desperate struggle in Europe before it is all over?" He answered almost apologetically: "[I]t is not that we feel any special alarm that these lines are penned. We are glad for the widespread conviction in favor of peace, and our prayers ascend to God that this awful carnage may never reach the shores of America."⁴ Even after the sinking of the Lusitania, Mennonites remained convinced that their country would not abandon neutrality. Shortly after the incident, S. M. Grubb consoled readers of The Mennonite with the encouraging remark: "We prefer, even at this time, to be optimistic. Matters have not yet gone so far that they cannot be amicably settled if there remains a sincere desire on the part of those in whose hands Providence has placed the destiny of nations. . . ."⁵

Not only did Mennonites think that the United States would continue in their role as interested observers of the European conflict, but they wanted to believe that it would end quickly. Mennonites were prepared to give their own quick fix solution. Kauffman

proposed: "If all people professing to be followers of the Prince of Peace would live true to their profession it would so deplete the armies of Europe that the rest would in all probability stop fighting."⁶

As the crisis proliferated in the early months of 1917, Mennonites watched with unparalleled interest the debate over compulsory military service in their own country. Eight weeks before America entered the war, Mennonites predicted the defeat of the Chamberlain bill that would make military service compulsory for all able-bodied young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one. "We are glad to note that there is still a healthy public sentiment against such a law," wrote Kauffman, adding for good measure: "There is a clause in the U. S. Constitution prohibiting Congress from passing any law abridging the freedom of religion on the part of any of its subjects."⁷ In short, Mennonite rhetoric between the years 1914 and early 1917 showed little evidence of an impending crisis prior to Wilson's declaration of war.

With such certainty that their boys would not be called to fight for their country, Mennonites remained silent on how the church should prepare for war. Specifically, they paid scant attention to the war in their English language church newspapers, worried little about articulating that which was distinctive about the Mennonite peace position, and made no efforts to establish a lobbying voice with other peace churches.

Had Mennonites even contemplated United States intervention, their spokespersons might have addressed these three concerns rather carefully.

In the three years before U. S. involvement, The Mennonite published only ten editorials relating to the European crisis, four in 1915 and six between the years 1916 and April of 1917. The Gospel Herald did only slightly better, reporting on the war eight times in 1915 and five times thereafter. The Christian Monitor , more than the other two newspapers, downplayed the significance of the war, printing only two editorials in all of 1916. It would seem that the editorial policy of each of these periodicals was to minimize the war. The political world had very little relevance when more pressing church matters were at hand. Besides, Mennonites were nonconformists. Their faith dictated a devotion to sacred, not secular, concerns.

Peace issues dominated Mennonite newspapers as they had for centuries in times of peace and war. What is striking, however, about much of the peace literature that appeared prior to 1917, was that it was drawn from that of other religious groups, and secular newspapers. A few of the articles were from other branches of Mennonites, but many were from other denominations. This practice was evident no less than twenty-five times in the three years that preceded the United States⁸ entanglement in the war.

A good example was the March 16, 1916 edition of

the Gospel Herald. The entire Doctrinal Section--a section which occupied the premiere position in the paper--was devoted to an article that appeared in the North American Review entitled: "Was Jesus A Militarist?"⁹ No analysis or application to Mennonitism followed. Apparently, Mennonites felt that their own peace position was clear enough. Nonetheless, that Mennonites so frequently consulted outside sources to support a peace stance was curious. As Mennonite scholar Karl Kreider states: "It is almost paradoxical that a Mennonite paper should seek teachings on a subject such as nonresistance in papers that are not Mennonite."¹⁰ That this practice stopped so abruptly after the declaration of war was a result of other religious bodies dropping their peace positions and the exigencies of war making a more distinctly Mennonite teaching¹¹ necessary.

Despite borrowing heavily from other denominations to document the viability of nonresistance, Mennonites did not establish formal ties with any other peace churches before the war. No ties were drawn with the Quakers or Brethren in anticipation of defending themselves to interventionists. Their faith was secure, or so they believed. Forming ties with other peace churches in order to build an effective lobbying voice in Washington seemed pointless at the time. After war was declared, this was one of the first regrets that Mennonites voiced.¹²

Political Editorializing

Though Mennonites doubted that America would go to war and generally downplayed the events of war in their English language newspapers, they did not dismiss the European skirmish as merely signs of sin in the world. Between 1915 and early 1917, editors of Mennonite papers adopted three disparate roles. True to Mennonite principles, they often became apolitical moral authorities, indicting the actions of all warring parties as morally reprehensible. Yet, at times, they abandoned their apolitical position. Editors occasionally joined the fray over national preparedness and voiced intense opposition to United States foreign policy. Finally, Mennonite editors sometimes dropped all pretense of neutrality and Mennonite unity by offering tacit support to either the Allied or the Central Powers. These roles did not unfold chronologically; rather, they are analyzed here in a descending order of faithfulness to Mennonite ideals in order to illumine Mennonite rhetorical choices and to foreshadow the eventual problems that Mennonites would encounter in preserving Mennonite identity and unity.

The editors of Mennonite newspapers did not hesitate to protest the warring nations and their leaders. Such moral reprehension was entirely consistent with Mennonitism as long as the attacks applied to all parties involved. Mennonite writers portrayed themselves

as authorities in the moral sphere. From the safe distance of American shores, Mennonites felt comfortable invoking epithets to describe the European scene. "What a horrid thing this is," preached Kauffman in 1915, "men and nations drunk with commercialism, grasping after this world's wealth and glory, maddened that some rival dared to oppose them in their selfish ambitions, sacrificing thousands of innocent boys upon the altar of greed though many of them had to be forced to go to war."¹³ Such a passage was representative of the dramatic flair with which the Gospel Herald exposed the moral bereftness of warring people and the immeasurable damage they reaped. A year later the Gospel Herald described in detail the savagery of the soldier:

Think of the soldier on the field, with gun in hand or revolver and sword at his side, his heart is filled with excitement and hatred, fired to a still greater pitch by seeing that his best friend is falling, killed by a bullet from the enemy's guns, his conscience seared, his heart hardening, his moral qualities dying. He is determined to kill as many as possible to save his own life. The brute nature is developing as the moral nature is receding.¹⁴

The moral lesson was all too clear. War is ugly, terrifying, and dehumanizing. The graphic detail and sweeping claims appealed to readers on an emotional

level. Moreover, in discussing the European crisis in an ahistorical context, Mennonites could reaffirm their belief that all war was the same; this war like every war that had preceded it was sinful. As good Christians Mennonites could only "[p]ray for the deluded monarchs and others responsible for the war" in the hope that "their eyes may be opened to the monumental folly they are perpetuating. . . ."¹⁵

Joining Kauffman in passing judgment on the "awfulness of war" was S. M. Grubb of The Mennonite. But rather than denounce the war in abstract biblical teachings, Grubb offered a sophisticated critique of the shallowness of this particular war. "The apologists for the present great war, now in its third year of horrors, pretend to see some good things in it and insist that in the end it shall be a great blessing, [but] are valor and patriotism best illustrated on the battle field where the individuals are nothing but so many senseless pawns in the hands of those who play the game?" Grubb inquired. Then, using a series of rhetorical questions to refute any meritorious points about the present war and to expose the racist and classist attitudes of its warring leaders, Grubb charged: "[F]or whose country are the black men on the French battle fields dying? For whom have the Poles been shedding their blood? Whose country's fate is at stake when negroes in Africa under Boor officials fight other negroes in Africa under German officials?" Grubb's keen scrutiny of the affairs

in Europe led him to boldly conclude: "It is nothing but murder."¹⁶

Strong talk from a quiet people was perfectly acceptable when their primary purpose in life was to be moral exemplars of Christ's teachings. But when moral reprimand turned to political debate, Mennonites tread outside their own prescribed sphere of authority. In several instances, Mennonite writings wandered into specific policy attacks on national preparedness, compulsory military service, and the idea of peace with honor. In opposing military preparedness, for instance, The Mennonite carried the caustic remark: "It seems that our politicians (we will refrain from dignifying them with the name of statesmen) have been so blind that they could not see the fallacy of the doctrine, 'The way to insure peace is to prepare for war'. . . . We protest.¹⁷ The only way to insure peace is to prepare for peace." A year later the same paper was more aggressive in protesting the folly of preparedness:

'To insure peace we must prepare for war' now proves itself to have been a mere handful of dust thrown into the eyes of the people to blind them to awful results of a military program prepared and carried out by the 'jingoese' of nearly every nation. The policy of holding the nation ready to defend its rights or even its life, has now resolved itself into a policy of 'Be ready so that you

can take your neighbor unawares and rob him
of his possessions, kill his soldiers, starve¹⁸
his little ones and ravish his women.

So opposed were Mennonites to national preparedness that one church took the unprecedented step of writing the President to register their disapproval.

Demonstrating rhetorical sensitivity, Mennonites in Ohio adopted a calm, cerebral approach. Their letter began:

"Knowing that there are differences of opinion concerning military preparedness for the maintenance of peace and knowing the desire of his excellency to execute the wishes of the people, we hereby voice our disapproval of greater military preparedness."¹⁹ Still unfamiliar with American protocol in addressing the president of the United States, it was not atypical for some Mennonites to rely on titles like "his excellency," or "your highness," titles their European ancestors had used for the monarchy in power. Mennonites did not fully understand, nor feel comfortable in taking part in democratic procedures, like the right to petition, because active attempts to influence national public policy were shunned by the tenets of their faith. An occasional protest of greater military preparedness, they must have reasoned, would not make them political activists.

But objections to United States foreign policy continued, though sporadically. Cornelius C. Wedel, pastor of a large church in Goessel, Kansas and leader

of many General Conference activities, appealed to readers of Der Herold to write letters to President Wilson to keep the United States out of war. "Use the right of petition," Wedel urged, "Tell the president to use the power given him by Congress to stop the export of war materials from our country."²⁰ Such an unusual command to become active in the affairs of state was, no doubt, shocking to some.

Mennonites showed an unprecedented awareness of politics between the years 1914-1916, in part, because prior to the national elections they had confidence in Woodrow Wilson and had supported his idea of strict neutrality. Writing on the front page of the Gospel Herald, in May of 1915, Kauffman commended Wilson's efforts:

Just now the President of the United States is setting a worthy example to the rules of other countries by declaring himself for peace, although the United States has suffered greater provocation than some other nations that allowed themselves to become involved in war. We would be glad to see President Wilson go farther and declare himself against war under any circumstances, but we are grateful²¹ for his resolute stand for peace. . . .

After the Lusitania affair when Wilson issued an ultimatum to Germany, C. E. Krehbiel, writing in Der Herold, judged it to be "the most significant document

written since the outset of the war because it stood so clearly for justice and humanity."²² Grubb, too, championed Wilson's diplomatic handling of Germany: "[W]ere it not for the sane deliberation of our President, [we] would have by this time been fanned into a fury that could have only one end, or rather beginning--the plunging of the American people into the awful nightmare of bloodshed now possessing half of the earth's population."²³ Grubb remained a solid supporter of Wilson through 1917. When other Mennonites had grown dissatisfied with Wilson's peace position, Grubb defended him. "The president, Mr. Wilson, did more than any ruler before him ever did to bring about peace and in so doing he risked the contempt and ridicule of most of his countrymen, to say nothing of that of the rest of the world."²⁴

Although Mennonites took the unusual step of politicizing their concerns, supporting Wilson in his stance of neutrality, and disapproving of military preparedness and the sending of arms to fan the crisis, these were measures that only reflected a genuine yearning on the part of an increasingly acculturated people who still believed in unconditional nonresistance that their country not go to war.

What is more difficult to understand is why a nonresistant people abandoned their neutral position on the combatants in Europe. It is difficult to imagine a peace-loving people in sympathy with one side of the

conflict or the other. C. E. E. Krehbiel strained to retain a position of neutrality when he wrote: "If we believe in nonresistance, we will not prescribe for the good Lord to whom He must give the victory in order to be 'neutral.'" ²⁵ But German-Mennonites, including Krehbiel, had difficulty repressing their pride in the German nation. Though Krehbiel attempted to transcend his identity as a hyphenated American with such diplomatic remarks as: "All parties in the Lusitania tragedy were guilty--the English for transporting munitions on a passenger ship, the Americans for traveling on such a ship, and the Germans for having done the destructive deed," ²⁶ Der Herold's sympathy for Germany was usually thinly veiled. Juhnke notes that "Until the United States' entry into the war, Der Herold . . . provided Mennonite readers with a weekly fare of apologies for the fatherland from German correspondents and from the German-American press." ²⁷ While American newspaper headlines screamed of atrocities by German barbarians, Mennonites were reading in their newspaper, Der Herold that: "The treatment of the Germans in France and Belgium is flatly horrible," and "The causes of the present war are the expansionism and lust of [sic] power of barbaric and despotic Russia, the desire for revenge of France, and the economic jealousy of England." ²⁸ Krehbiel made it a policy to print letters from friends in Germany, many of whom were still moved by the defensive reassurance of Heinrich Heine's famous line:

"Lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein. Fest stecht und treu
die Wacht am Rhein!"²⁹

Even the advertisement section of Der Herold was affected by a pro-German bias. In late 1914, an advertisement appeared for the book Germany and the Next War by German General Friederich von Bernhardi. The book, available for thirty-five cents from the Herold Book Store, was a glorification of war as a political, biological, and moral necessity.³⁰ Though it is unknown how many German-Mennonites supported their fatherland with the purchase of books like these, it is known that between the years 1914 and 1916, Mennonites contributed sizable sums of money to the German Red Cross. Der Herold served as a collecting center for contributions for the German Red Cross and regularly published names of contributors. Such lists indicated that support for Germany was not isolated, but a community enterprise because the greatest contributions came through collective church donations.³¹

Though German patriotism flowed freely in the Mennonite press, it did not receive immediate attention from the larger public. This is not surprising since Der Herold was printed in German, it did not circulate beyond isolated Mennonite communities, and since only the German Mennonites who most recently immigrated to the United States championed the German war efforts.

But still the question remains as to why a nonresistant people supported any country at war. Juhnke

explains that in addition to their cultural ties with Germany, many Mennonites assumed that the war would remain in Europe. Thus, "they saw no contradiction between their religious belief in the gospel of peace and their cultural commitment to the advance of the German nation through war."³² Perhaps it was just as true that German-Mennonites opposed United States intervention for ethnic, more than religious convictions.

Mennonites of the Mennonite Church stood in sharp opposition to their General Conference German-Mennonite counter-parts. MC Mennonites of Swiss ethnicity wanted nothing to do with supporting Germany, even through humanitarian means. But like the GC's of German descent, Mennonites of the MC conference had difficulty retaining a neutral stance. Their sympathy was with the Allied,³³ not Central, powers. Even GC Mennonites who spoke English as their first language resented the German patriotism of Der Herold, one of their official conference papers for German-speaking Mennonites. They, too, found the German war machine indefensible and tended to sympathize with those countries Germany had attacked. The Mennonite had only harsh words for Germany in the fall of 1916:

The teutons struck the first blow, they invaded and made a desert of little Belgium, they plowed through Servia with swords, they annihilated Montenegro and they seized a large

portion of France before these nations had a chance to realize that the war was on. Yet, the German press and people assume an injured air whenever the suggestion is made that theirs is not strictly a war of defense.³⁴

Even the hyphenated Americans of German descent did not escape the ire of The Mennonite. "The hyphenated Americans," Grubb began, "are showing an inclination to spell America with a little a, insisting at the same time, that they get their so-called right to demand particular partiality from the American public for the country they preferred to abandon when they made the United States their home."³⁵ Calling their demands "confusing" and "unsettling," Grubb's dissatisfaction with German-Americans could have applied to German-Mennonites within his own conference, even though he was more than likely referring to supporters of the German American Alliance.

No doubt, Grubb and other anti-German Mennonites were relieved that the Mennonite stance of pro-Germanism evident in Der Herold was little known prior to America's entrance in the war. Unfortunately, it was not a stance that Mennonites could dismiss or downplay once America declared war and Mennonites came under public scrutiny. It was a position for which all Mennonites, whether they had embraced German patriotism or not, would have to pay a stiff price. Had Mennonites envisioned that America would be drawn into the

international crisis, they might have avoided this fateful blunder by speaking in a unified voice. Mennonites did not register any real forboding of danger until shortly before the declaration of war. The early February edition of The Mennonite ventured so far as to say: "Should events progress, as they threaten to do, the American Mennonites are sure to get their fiery trial of persecution."³⁶ That very scenario was soon to unfold. But as part of their last-ditch efforts to inform the government of their "historic peace position" just days before United States intervention, Mennonites of the untroubled generation continued to cling to an optimistic outlook that their future would be bright. Even were their country to be drawn into the war, they reasoned, their placid existence would remain uninterrupted and their peace principle understood. Testament to that was the letter drawn up by MC bishops in Pennsylvania to their Congressman on March 29, 1917: "You are familiar with the position which the Mennonites take with reference to carnal warfare," they began, "our attitude is usually called 'nonresistance.' We might explain this attitude at greater length, but we believe that you are fully acquainted with our position and need no further explanation."³⁷ Mennonites of this generation had truly forgotten what it was like to live in a country at war. Americans were not fully acquainted with their faith, and their position was going to need much explanation.

Notes

¹ James C. Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms (Newton: Ks.: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 17.

² Juhnke, p. 81.

³ Juhnke, p. 67.

⁴ [Daniel Kauffman, ed.], "In Times of Peace Prepare For War," Gospel Herald, 21 Jan. 1915, p. 681. Daniel Kauffman's name appears in brackets because one cannot be absolutely certain that he is the author of the anonymous articles in the Gospel Herald. The uncertainty of authorship also holds true for other unsigned articles in other Mennonite periodicals, including S. M. Grubb editor of The Mennonite, C. E. Krehbiel editor of Der Herold, H. F. Reist editor of the Christian Monitor, and Benjamin Esch editor of the Christian Evangel. Historian James Juhnke notes that nearly always these anonymous articles were written by the editors who simply neglected to sign.

⁵ [S. M. Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite, 20 May 1915, p. 4.

⁶ [Kauffman, ed.], "Editorial," Gospel Herald, Dec. 21, 1916, p. 689.

⁷ [Kauffman, ed.], "Compulsory Military Service," Gospel Herald, 1 Feb. 1917, p. 793.

⁸ Carl Kreider, "Peace Thought In The Mennonite Church From The Beginning of The World War In Europe, August, 1914, To The Establishment of The War Sufferer's

Relief Commission December, 1917," Term Paper, Goshen College, Dept. of History, 1936, Goshen College Historical Library. (Hereafter GCHL), p. 12.

⁹ "Was Jesus A Militarist," Gospel Herald, 16 March 1916, p. 818.

¹⁰ Kreider, p. 13.

¹¹ Kreider, p. 13.

¹² See "Report of the Special Committee for Freedom from Military Service of The Western District Conference to the 26th Conference," Minutes of the Western District Conference 1906-1917 (BCLA), Unpublished.

¹³ [Kauffman, ed.], "One Pitiful Phase of War," Gospel Herald 29 July 1915, p. 289.

¹⁴ [Kauffman, ed.], "The Awfulness of War," Gospel Herald, 25 May 1916, p. 129.

¹⁵ [Kauffman, ed.], "Editorial," Gospel Herald, 15 July 1915, p. 257.

¹⁶ [Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite 10 Aug. 1916, p. 4.

¹⁷ [Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite 4 March 1915, p. 4.

¹⁸ [Grubb, ed.], "Our Church and Preparedness," The Mennonite, 14 Sept. 1916, p. 4.

¹⁹ Eastern District Conference assembled at West Liberty, Ohio, Letter to "The Honorable Woodrow Wilson," 1 June 1916, rpt. in Grant M. Stoltzfus, The Ohio and Eastern Conference (Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1969), p. 173.

- ²⁰ C. C. Wedel, "Wo ist dein Bruder Abel?" Der Herold, 8 April 1915, p. 4.
- ²¹ [C. E. Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorial," Gospel Herald, 20 May 1915, p. 113.
- ²² [Krehbiel, ed.], "Wer ist Verantwortlich?" Der Herold, 21 Oct. 1915, p. 1.
- ²³ [Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite, 20 May 1915, p. 4.
- ²⁴ [Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite 8 Feb. 1917, p. 4.
- ²⁵ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Die Waffenlieferung," Der Herold, 15 July 1915, p. 4.
- ²⁶ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Veber Tausend Tote Die 'Lusitania' war erst der 'erste Streich,' sagt Dr. Dernburg," Der Herold 13 May 1915, p. 1.
- ²⁷ Juhnke, p. 90.
- ²⁸ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielle," Der Herold 12 Nov. 1914, p. 1; John Epp, "Der Krieg," 10 Dec. 1914, pp. 5-6.
- ²⁹ Juhnke, "Political Acculturation of Kansas Mennonites," diss., Indiana University, 1966, p. 133.
- ³⁰ Juhnke, diss., p. 134.
- ³¹ Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms, p. 88.
- ³² Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms, p. 89.
- ³³ See especially the attitude expressed after the Lusitania incident in "The Lusitania Affair," Gospel Herald, 20 May 1915, pp. 113, 117.
- ³⁴ [Grubb, ed.], "Our Church and Preparedness," The

Mennonite, 14 Sept. 1916, p. 4.

³⁵
[Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite, 4 March 1915, p. 4.

³⁶
[Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite, 8 Feb. 1917, p. 4.

³⁷
Mennonite Church Lancaster County Board of Bishops, Letter to Hon. W. W. Griest of Lancaster Pa., 29 March 1917 rpt. in Mennonite Statements on Peace and Social Concerns ed. Urbane Peachey (Akron, Ohio: MCC U. S. Peace Section, 1980), p. 88.

CHAPTER FOUR
A MYRIAD OF RHETORICAL OBSTACLES
IN THE WAKE OF UNITED STATES INTERVENTION

When war officially came in early April, Mennonites were ill-prepared. Having harbored an unrealistic, but comforting, hope that the war in Europe would end before the United States had to fire a single shot, Mennonites created an unfortunate situation for themselves. Their deliberative rhetoric and naive optimism prior to United States intervention made the rhetorical challenges they would confront during the war all the more difficult. How would they present themselves as loyal American citizens and a quiet, apolitical people when they had vigorously debated American foreign policy and even sympathized with Germany prior to the war? More specifically, how would they combat the accusations of pro-Germanism when many of them spoke German and read only their German church paper? How would they defend their historic peace position after failing to emphasize it before the war began?

News of America's intervention sent shock waves through tranquil, isolated Mennonite communities. Mennonites were completely unprepared for the war mentality that transformed the country overnight. Shortly after April 6, a special meeting of the Western District church leaders of the General Conference was hurriedly arranged to discuss how Mennonites should

respond to the inevitable demands from their country. In an attempt to subtly retract their earlier political interest in the war, the meeting was advertised in Der Herold as a gathering whose purpose "naturally is not political, or to decide who is right in this war that is going on. The intention of this meeting is to look at the Biblical stance."¹ The minutes of that meeting, however, reflect the failure of all Mennonites to keep abreast of the escalating international crisis, and to publicize their peace position. One spokesman at the meeting expressed the collective concern of the Mennonite community: "No one would have thought, at least would have expected, that everything would change so suddenly, blow upon blow. Yes, it is like a dream what has happened."² C.E. Krehbiel's early report on the meeting's proceedings accurately gauged the lack of preparedness in articulating basic tenets of the faith. "[T]his week we just happened to come up on some notes, a referendum of defenselessness, which Dr. S. S. Haury wrote in the year 1894, and presented it at a Sunday School Convention, and we are going to print a part of that" at the meeting, Krehbiel told readers of Der Herold.³

The manner in which news of America's entrance in the war was reported in Mennonite newspapers reflected the same surprise reaction. Members of the Mennonite Church read in the April 12, edition of the Gospel Herald an article by the editor that continued to foster

the hope of a quick return to peace: "We are still praying that, even though war has actually been declared, something may happen that will bring to an end the awful world conflict of the past few years before it can spread much farther. . . ."⁴

While the Gospel Herald gave front page coverage to the news of United States intervention, articles on this subject are conspicuously absent from the front page of the April 12 issue of The Mennonite. In giving the biggest news of the century no more than two columns on the fourth page, the editor of The Mennonite was perpetuating an historic Mennonite position concerning war: We should not devote attention to, nor become involved in, the sinful practice of carnal warfare. The General Conference companion for German-speaking Mennonites had only slightly more foresight on U. S. intervention. "War will be declared," Der Herold reported almost matter-of-factly on April 5th, adding "The United States of America in a war against Germany," as if the reality of the previous statement had not quite registered. Consistent with the editorial policies of other Mennonite papers, Der Herold did not break the news of war with screaming headlines or lengthy analysis. But perhaps more so than the other church papers, Der Herold recognized the difficult rhetorical burdens of justifying Mennonitism in a country at war, especially if one were also a German-Mennonite. Resigned from the beginning at the prospect of dealing with the

war, Krehbiel wrote: "We wished they would have done things differently. It's all past. . . . How thousands of us feel will never be known. . . . We see so much tragedy coming."⁵

Mennonites saw "so much tragedy coming" because they were constrained in publicizing their position to outsiders by their religious principles. Their rhetorical problems can be viewed from a psycho-sociological, historical, and ideological perspective.

Psycho-Sociological Constraints

Philosopher Maurice Natanson writes that in argument we rarely abandon the comfortable posture of uninvolvedness because we do not like to take the risks necessary to explore our convictions. We would rather win or lose an argument without putting our selves at issue. In impersonal argument anyone can take the place of one of the participants, just as any bridge player can take over the hand of another player and make use of certain bidding possibilities.⁶ As long as the war remained on distant soil, Mennonites could enjoy the comfortable posture of editorializing about the disputants. Mennonites were not, after all, being forced by their fellow citizens to stand up for their own convictions. However, when, as Natanson continues, our core beliefs are at issue, and the argumentative situation demands the confrontation of both parties, then argument is intensely personal. It becomes what

Natanson terms "genuine argument."⁷ Genuine argument "is immanently directed to the risking of privacy itself" because it means that we open ourselves to the possibility that our interlocutor will make us see something of the structure of our world that we have never seen before.⁸ Metaphorically, Natanson suggests that "risking the self in argument is inviting a stranger to the interior familiarity of our home, not merely the living room of the floor plan but the living space of a private sphere."⁹

Natanson's theory provides an insightful psychological perspective on the initial reluctance of Mennonites to engage in genuine argument once America entered the war. Mennonites chose to live in isolated communities in order to preserve their distinctive world view and to avoid any confrontative situation with outsiders that might invite existential risk.

Several statements from Mennonite periodicals illustrate the Mennonites' unwillingness to become personally involved in their justification of nonresistance. On August 29, 1917, the MC's adopted an official statement of their position on military service. In this document, the bishops, deacons, and delegates of various congregations recommended that Mennonites "avoid heated controversy with those who do not agree with us on points of doctrine. . . ."¹⁰ This recommendation reflected the unwanted risk of antagonizing their fellow Americans with peace

arguments. A similar attitude was expressed in The Christian Evangel, the official organ of the Central Conference of Mennonites. When the Secretary of War, Newton Baker, issued instructions to nonresisters in September of 1917, editor Benjamin Esch cautioned Mennonite ministers on publicizing such information outside the church. "Let ministers give out this information to their people in a quiet and unassuming manner, so as not to create any unnecessary local prejudices or uprisings," he urged.¹¹ Yet perhaps the most candid statement on the futility of explaining the Mennonite position to outsiders was made by editor S. M. Grubb of The Mennonite. "I cannot see how we can impress this feeling upon our countrymen now when they are angry and smarting under unprovoked injuries imposed upon them by a devilish foe." Grubb continued to express his pessimism about dealing with outsiders by stating: "Getting into peace arguments just now may mean getting into jail with nothing accomplished."¹²

Mennonites voiced reluctance at defending their way of life to a patriotic public throughout the course of the war, but they eventually realized that ignoring the situation was untenable in light of the passage of the Selective Service Act on May 18, 1917, and the numerous Red Cross and Liberty Loan campaigns that attempted to gain the support of every American citizen. Jonas S. Hartzler, a prominent leader in the Mennonite Church, reluctantly voiced what all Mennonites were forced to

acknowledge: "To say that we will not do anything that in any way is connected with the war is folly. We can not get away from it."¹³ Nor could Mennonites get away with constructing justifications of nonresistance based on superficial argument. Since Mennonitism is a way of life, any attempt to explain their rejection of military service to outsiders necessarily entailed explicating a world view, and, ultimately, exposing the very meaning of their lives. Mennonites grudgingly acknowledged that they had no choice but to become personally involved in their arguments. Mennonites realized, however, that by exposing the meaning of their lives, they put themselves in a position of extreme vulnerability. If counter-arguments by their fellow citizens proved unanswerable, then, in Natanson's words, an "existential disruption" of their "affective worlds could result";¹⁴ Mennonites could find themselves re-examining their whole way of life.

Although Mennonites gradually felt that they had to explain their world view, they predicted that their beliefs would be judged unacceptable by the greater American public. Viewed from a second psycho-sociological angle, Mennonites would experience the same problems that all movements encounter when they try to explain their practices to outsiders. Members of movements typically act in accordance with a reality that is distinct from the reality of the larger social order. As a result, sociologist Joseph Gusfield

explains: "The beliefs of any social movement. . . amount to a paradigm of experience by which the ideology and program of the movement appear right, just, and proper only to a particular segment of society, because it alone has undergone the experiences which could make the ideology seem both relevant and valid."¹⁵ Gusfield's statement capsulizes the problem that Mennonites faced in communicating to the public. The central beliefs of the Mennonite faith are "right, just, and proper" to individuals who are witnesses to the ideology. How could Mennonitism be made relevant to those who had not been exposed to their "paradigm of experience"? Complementing Gusfield's view, is the sociological explanation that Americans simply did not want to understand a conflicting ideology in the throes of war. Americans had made a total commitment to supporting the war by giving their time, their money, and their lives in order to preserve freedom throughout the world. No matter how sound the arguments were in support of nonresistance, the Mennonite position could not hold up against a fever pitch of militaristic patriotism. With Americans preoccupied with winning the war as quickly as possible, Mennonites recognized that their patriotic neighbors were hardly inclined to be sympathetic, patient listeners. Yet they also knew that an accurate explanation for their belief in unconditional nonresistance would take time--time on their part to explain why nonresistance was a central Mennonite tenet

and how it is consistent with other Mennonite tenets, and time on the part of the American public to listen, read, and absorb their arguments.

Not only did the emotionalism generated by the war prevent Americans from listening to the Mennonites' self-defense, but it created a backlash of anger which was often released at those who balked at supporting the war. Americans had little tolerance for "un-American" beliefs when the President was urging unanimous support for a righteous, flag-waving cause. As a religious group removed from the mainstream of protestantism, the Mennonite church has always fluctuated between legitimacy and non-legitimacy--a status that Sociologists Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone claim is entirely dependent upon whether the church challenges deeply held secular norms. With the doctrine of nonresistance, Mennonites violated the secular norm adopted in war times for championing militaristic patriotism. Therefore, their status became illegitimate. Zaretsky and Leone further note that the only way such groups can regain their legitimacy is to change their doctrines or to wait for some change in the secular norms in society.¹⁶ Given their limited choices, Mennonites could not convince non-members of the "rightness" in their position as long as the war continued. In short, while some Mennonite arguments were convincing per se, most Americans had already committed themselves to the war, and, thus, any attempt by

Mennonites to explain biblical nonresistance fell on deaf ears.

Historical Constraints

The historical situation in which American Mennonites found themselves sheds light on yet another rhetorical problem. Mennonites were, to some degree, sympathetic to their fellow citizens' demands of sacrifice for the war. When Mennonites came under public scrutiny for their "un-American" resistance to war, they showed signs of discomfort and embarrassment. For the first time in the church's history, American Mennonites were concerned that claiming exemption from military service would place their citizenship in jeopardy. The founders of the Mennonite faith, and their followers for centuries after, had always refused to address war questions, preferring instead to flee the country, or to remain and endure punishment, even if it be death, rather than look for non-military ways to remain faithful citizens of their warring countries. But American Mennonites of the twentieth century were strikingly different from their European ancestors in this regard. American Mennonites had become acculturated, to some degree, to the American way of life and saw themselves as American citizens. Juhnke writes that Mennonites had absorbed the belief that it was natural and right for the country to expect sacrifices from its citizens in wartime.¹⁷

Mennonites wanted the best of both worlds; they wanted to convince their fellow citizens that they were patriotic Americans even though they could not support the war militarily. Yet rhetorical efforts at appeasing a country at war had never been attempted by their forefathers. American Mennonites were the first to express patriotic ties to their homeland. If Mennonites in the United States could make the American public understand their position without diluting the integrity of their faith, they would set a precedent in the church's history.

While American Mennonites of the twentieth century expressed national loyalties unprecedented in their church history, the world war placed unique and extraordinary pressures on anyone who resisted its demands. After all, America was engaged in its first world war. The crusading spirit that swept the country had never been evidenced by so many Americans, nor had previous wars demanded the total commitment of this war. America had just issued its first Selective Service Act. Mennonites, like all conscientious objectors, did not know how to respond. In the last war that Mennonites could remember, the Spanish-American war of 1898, Mennonites were spared from having to deal with a national conscription law. America had just discovered the power of propaganda, and Mennonites were forced to compete with this daunting new threat. Americans were subject to a barrage of anti-German material which

heightened emotionalism about the war. In short, the war created an intense, unifying militaristic patriotism in America for which there was no comparison in American history.

Ideological Constraints

From an ideological perspective, the particular constraints placed on Mennonite rhetorical choices can be identified and accounted for. The church's adherence to a biblical paradox and four central religious principles created rhetorical obstacles that prevented Mennonites from developing a strong justification. Throughout the war, Mennonites insisted on enacting, not just affirming in some abstract sense, a biblical dictum that required disciples of Christ "to be in the world but not of it." Such a precarious enactment of this tenet of their faith produced rhetorical strategies that ostensibly were contradictory, inconsistent, even nonsensical to most Americans. Living in the secular world, but for the sacred world, meant that Mennonites believed that it was entirely possible to remain loyal to God and country, to be Good Samaritans, but not good soldiers. Convincing non-members that a biblical paradox should be interpreted literally, and in such a way that explains seemingly disparate rhetorical choices, however, proved to be an insurmountable task.

The daunting task that Mennonites faced in publicly enacting a biblical paradox beyond the confines of their

isolated communities can be understood more clearly by examining the specific religious principles of Mennonitism. First, the doctrine of nonresistance is an unconditional belief in biblical pacifism. In times of peace, the belief that Christians do not kill but are the children of peace is espoused by most believers of the Bible. An absolutist stance, however, is deemed unrealistic because it fails to discriminate between "moral and "immoral," "defensive" and "offensive" wars. A literalist account of Matt. 5: 21: "Thou shalt not kill" is untenable, and must be abandoned in extreme circumstances. With such fundamental differences of how to interpret Scripture, Mennonites were faced with an overwhelming problem: How could they hope to persuade militaristic Americans that a doctrine of nonresistance was not un-American in war time?

Second, the doctrine of nonconformity, to Mennonites of the early twentieth century, referred to outward appearance--dressing so as not to be noticed. Writing in his book, The Conservative Viewpoint, Kauffman explained that modesty and simplicity in dress should be the rule among people who are separated from, and not subject to, the vanities and follies of the world. "No gaudy apparel, no flashy colors, no superfluities, no sudden changes so as to advertise certain parts of the physical form, and no jewelry,"¹⁸ Kauffman reminded his followers. In essence, anything that smacked of popularity was renounced in Mennonite

circles as dangerous; anything peculiar was championed as godly. As Kauffman explained: "There is nothing that upsets a man or a church so quickly and so completely as a taste of popularity. That church is safe so long as it succeeds in keeping both itself and the body of its members out of the popular current of this world. And elsewhere: "Peculiarity is a natural consequence of refusing to follow the world."¹⁹ An adherence to the principle of nonconformity has meant that Mennonites have had few ties with the secular world. Because the Mennonite faith is an exclusive one, in which members are "called out" from the larger social order to practice Christ-like discipleship amid a brotherhood of believers, Mennonites have never felt it important to gain a large popular following. Thus, Mennonites were not in the habit of communicating the righteousness of their ideology to outsiders. Moreover, one of the reasons that Mennonites immigrated to America was the hope that they could maintain cultural autonomy. This, of course, involved maintaining only minimal ties with their neighbors.

Nonresistance and nonconformity were difficult to explain to militaristic Americans on a theological level, but they were unattractive tenets dramatically conceived as well. In a society that can only celebrate the power of the positive, being made to see the goodness in the negative becomes a difficult task indeed. As Kenneth Burke puts it: "In an advertising

world that is so strong on the glorification of the
 positive, how make the negative enticing?"²⁰ Juhnke
 captures the the problem Mennonites faced in making
 nonresistance appealing. "Nonresistance and service were
 as related as two sides of one coin--one side negatively
 charged and the other side positively charged."²¹ The
 negative is difficult to conceptualize or "make
 enticing" because as Burke continues, it is an idea, not
 an image; it is a principle, not a name for a thing.²²
 Thus, whereas the tenets of nonresistance and
 nonconformity are understandable enough as negative
 ideas, they also have about their edges the positive
 images of resistance and conformity. Moreover, because
 the negative does not describe a real condition, it is
 more aptly conceived as a function of desire, or
 unfulfilled expectations.²³ Mennonites wanted to live
 in peace separated from worldly concerns. When the war
 erupted, their expectations did not occur. They were not
 separated from the world and they were not in a world at
 peace. Yet there is no such thing as simply not wanting
 to resist and not wanting to conform. Hence, these terms
 are incomplete as principles by themselves. Theologian
 Paul Mininger elaborates on this problem: "The ideal or
 principle of nonconformity to the world is entirely
 negative in its meaning. . . . The principle says 'do
 not' but gives no suggestion as to the direction in
 which one ought to go. The Christian life is more than a
 series of negations and refusals. . . . The principle by

itself is, therefore, incomplete."²⁴

That the negatively-charged associations of nonresistance and nonconformity failed to label real conditions, or create positive images, prompted a public mindset associating such principles with passivity. J. S. Hartzler, a leader among the MC Mennonites complained that while many efforts were made by newspapers and public speakers to define the position of the nonresisters, their attempts failed because they equated the term with "passive resistance" and even "cowardice."²⁵ In the public's mind, wherein good deeds were associated with action, the Mennonite position of a meek and quiet presence while "turning the other cheek" projected the image of a do-nothing people. Reflecting on his experience as a conscientious objector in the world war, S. E. Allgyer recalled: "The Mennonites were better known for what they did not do then for what they did do."²⁶ Mennonites were sensitive to the disparaging perceptions of their "do-nothing" status, and struggled with how to present a positive image of who they were and remain true to negativistic principles of their faith. The tension between enacting the negative commands of their faith and acting out the patriotic demands of their government was evident in an exchange of opinion recorded in Der Herold. "Mennonites ought to behave like the Quiet in the Land that we have always been," voiced one member of the faith. "We should really be do nothing people. . . ."²⁷ Mennonite minister H. D.

Penner disagreed: "We have to get more active toward our government rather than lambasting it all the time," Penner urged. "If we want to improve things we cannot remain passive."²⁸

Contributing to the difficulty in upholding negatively-charged faith principles was the issue of how to present their morally superior position to the government and public without appearing self-righteous. To say one believes in nonresistance is to say: Thou shalt not kill. But the moral overtones of these tenets have unfortunate consequences. As Mininger notes, "The practice of nonconformity among us has too often resulted in a negative type of goodness. We do not go to war, we do not steal, we do not get divorces, we do not gamble." As a result, Mininger continues, "One of the most serious limitations in our practice of nonconformity is the tendency toward perfectionism and its resulting self-righteousness."²⁹ Though Mennonites projected themselves as moral authorities on the war in Europe, condemning the warring nations as "unChristian," such a posture was inappropriate once their own nation was involved. For to insist on the goodness of nonresistance and nonconformity while rejecting service in the military was, consciously or not, to position oneself as a moral perfectionist. And communicating to the public as a moral superior ultimately inhibited efforts at identification. Nonresistance and nonconformity emphasized differences between Mennonites

and other American citizens. Even on a semantic level, albeit a latent one, these terms captured an antagonistic aspect of the relationship (resist/nonresist, conform/nonconform) that existed between Mennonites and non-Mennonites.

Besides the principles of nonconformity and nonresistance, a third religious principle that created an obstacle for Mennonites in constructing persuasive arguments was that the Bible is considered the source of all truth. The early Dutch leader of the faith, Menno Simons, emphasized the belief in the centrality of the Bible as evidence when he wrote: "Christ commanded all true messengers and preachers to . . . preach the gospel. He does not say, preach the doctrines and commands of men, preach councils and customs, preach glosses and opinions of the learned."³⁰ Four centuries later, Daniel Kauffman upheld Simon's admonition: "Preach the word," Kauffman commanded, "leaving the matter of popular lectures on glittering generalities to others. The true Gospel minister finds no time for the preaching of the things of this world."³¹

Inherent problems are associated with arguing from Scripture. First the Bible has limited relevance for addressing a twentieth century political issue. Stated simply, the war created a situation in which Mennonites were rhetorically irrelevant; they were forced to give doctrinal answers to political questions. Second, while many passages in the Bible can be used to support one's

beliefs, many other passages can be used by opponents to refute those beliefs. Finally, just as with the morally narrow-minded overtones implicit in the nonresistant and nonconformist principles, a Bible-centeredness necessarily labels opposing views as un-biblical. As Americans sent their sons off to sacrifice their lives for their country, Mennonites were arguing from the comfortable confines of their homes that the Bible says carnal warfare is wrong. By wrapping themselves in the Word of God, Mennonites asserted their Christian ways and frowned upon the sinful ways of their fellow citizens. From an outsider's standpoint, this argument was audacious and infuriating. If Mennonites wanted to avoid giving the impression that they were holier than others, they could not argue from the biblical standpoint that was the basis of their faith.

A fourth principle that made it difficult for Mennonites to address the wider public in a unified persuasive manner was their disavowal of charismatic leadership. Attempts to call attention to one's superiority as a commanding, energetic, and outspoken individual had no place in a brotherhood of believers. Mennonite historian John Hostetler explains that, for Mennonites, a brotherhood means that there is no distinction among members. Pastors are looked upon as instructors rather than professional leaders. Contrary to leadership in most churches, Mennonite leaders were not accustomed to playing the role of church spokesmen

to outsiders. This was especially true of General Conference leaders, as they had far less authority in their churches than the bishops of the Mennonite Church. When C. E. Krehbiel responded to the charge from Quakers that Mennonites did not protest the war more forcefully, he lamely replied: "People just don't have gifts toward this type of thing."³² A GC minister, H. D. Penner, also told readers of Der Herold that: "I myself am not a man who likes to appear in public too prominently."³³ Yet even though Mennonite leaders of both conferences struggled to adopt more visible and authoritative roles in order to explain their beliefs to non-members, they found it difficult to convey their beliefs in a forceful, public way. Because the Bible itself was granted such high authority, pastors did not see fit to call attention to themselves when they were delivering a message. Rather, they believed that it was important to "Make your message plain," as Kauffman put it.³⁴ Mennonite ministers were not, as Kauffman added, "to make a display of their wit or oratory, or entertain the audience."³⁵ Since Mennonite leaders were most comfortable in an unassuming role, it would prove difficult for them to impress the wider American citizenry.

The Mennonites, then, began their defense facing a myriad of rhetorical obstacles. They were attempting to justify their stance of nonresistance, yet were living in a country at war. They were attempting to maintain

their status as upright American citizens, yet practiced separateness from the world. They were attempting to remain faithful to both these principles, yet encountered a host of negatively-charged attitudes surrounding these terms. They were attempting to address a political issue, yet the founders of their faith pointed to the Bible as the source of all evidence. Finally, they were attempting to make a unified, persuasive presentation to outsiders, yet their leaders were not accustomed to assuming conventional leadership roles.

With these problems, and those they created for themselves prior to U. S. intervention, Mennonites faced a formidable, if not impossible, task of gaining a favorable response from the public. Thus, it is not surprising that they engaged in a practice not atypical of movements when they are challenged by outsiders. They "rehearsed" their defense among themselves. Rather than flooding newspapers with letters explaining their position or appearing at public forums to defend their integrity, Mennonites retreated to the safe confines of their own communities to construct their arguments for the outside world. In choosing to print justificatory arguments in their own publications they guaranteed that their arguments would not be distorted, and they could prepare themselves for any potential face-to-face confrontation with the public without calling attention to themselves any more than they had to.

Though Mennonites foresaw the dangers of dealing directly with a hostile public, they reserved respect for the government. Mennonites were willing to deal directly with the government, believing that the Wilson Administration would be more inclined to listen to their rationale for military exemption and respond in an appropriate and fair manner.

Notes

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CHAPTER FIVE
TAKING A CAUTIOUS OFFENSIVE:
MENNONITES CONFRONT THE GOVERNMENT

A Mennonite Lobby

When Mennonites came under scrutiny by the public and the Wilson administration for their refusal to participate in any war-related activities, it appeared that they had only two choices: defend their "odd" practices to an unsympathetic audience, or forfeit the essentials of Mennonitism by being coerced into the line of duty. Throughout the course of the war Mennonites chose to defend themselves, but this was not their only recourse. They elected to confront what they considered to be a "rational" government and ignore an "irrational," hostile public as long as possible.

Confrontational rhetoric generated by a group of quiet, unassuming Christians was bound to violate the norms of how discontented groups confront the power elite. An unconditional commitment to pacifism prevented rhetors of the faith from achieving visibility by engaging in radical, disruptive, or threatening forms of communication. Yet feeling that the war threatened to weaken their faith and that government policy impinged upon their religious freedom, Mennonites recognized that they must make their grievances known. With no rhetorical models for facing government officials, Mennonites struggled to establish a new form of

confrontational rhetoric suitable to faith principles. No consistent form emerged, but three arguments recurred with some regularity. First, mild reprimands were issued to the government for failing to live up to its historic promise of granting Mennonites liberty of conscience. Second, ingratiating statements that expressed gratitude for past governmental favors and voiced empathy for the government's thankless task of pacifying all its citizens were offered in exchange for official interviews and correspondence. Third, pointed rebuffs were shot at the Wilson administration exposing the shams of a democratic form of government, though such stiff accusations were heard and read only by church members.

In addition to making these persuasive arguments, Mennonite communication with government officials served a crucial information-gathering function. Mennonites needed administration officials to clarify, interpret, and apply war-related rulings to the Mennonite nonresistant status if they hoped to become knowledgeable about what choices, if any, they had in responding to war demands. It wasn't long before Mennonites realized that lobbies were needed on Capital Hill if they hoped to sufficiently instruct apolitical members, especially draftees, on what actions under the law were in their best interests.

The decision to approach the government with their demands was predicated on key legislative changes the

previous year and ongoing debate over the wording of the Selective Service Act. With the passage of the National Defense Act in 1916, Mennonite exemption status was threatened. No longer was the adherence to a nonresistant group the decisive criterion for determining eligibility for exemption. The religious belief of the individual became the acid test. Despite Mennonite pleas that exemption from military service was a constitutional right, the simple fact was that exemption was a legislative concession, and Congress could veto exemption without violating the First Amendment.¹ This legal decision, while mildly disconcerting to Mennonites before United States intervention, threatened to undermine their faith once the country was at war. This legislative change coupled with the debate on Capital Hill over the parameters of the Selective Service Act--a debate which commenced in late April and was not resolved until mid-May-- thrust Mennonites into the role of lobbyist. Mennonites were poignantly reminded that there was no permanence to their status in the political sphere and acutely aware that if they wanted to preserve what legislative protection still existed for them their presence should be felt in Washington.

During the debate in Congress on the Selective Service Law, Mennonites "beseiged Washington with letters and petitions pleading for the legal acknowledgment of conscientious objection."² Committees

were formed hastily. The Citizenship Committee, an MC-based lobbying group, was headed by J. S. Hartzler and Aaron Loucks. The Committee on Information, representing both the GC's and the MC's, consisted of S. K. Mosiman, P. H. Richert, and Aaron Loucks. The Committee of Seven, a GC-based consortium, was led by J. W. Kliwer and H. P. Krehbiel. The War Problems Committee, another GC-affiliated lobby, was spearheaded by Maxwell Kratz, Peter Jansen, and P. H. Richert. All of these committees constituted official liasons between the Mennonite community and government officials.

GC Mennonites were much more aggressive in formulating official statements regarding the Mennonite position and war than were MC Mennonites.³ J. W. Kliwer, leader of the GC based Committee of Seven, drafted a "Petition to Congress" within two weeks of the state of war. An inventive arguer, Kliwer wrote: "Our hope that this petition [of exemption from all compulsory military training and service] will be granted is based on the fact . . . that in Canada our brethren have been assured by the government that the exemption which we pray is granted them."⁴ By contrasting the military service policies of the United States and its closest ally, Canada, Kliwer, no doubt, hoped to demonstrate to government officials that they would not be setting an unusual or undemocratic precedent by exempting non-combatant Christians from military duty. Furthermore, this line of reasoning

informed the government that Mennonites in Canada were getting more sympathetic treatment than were U. S. Mennonites.

In addition to Kliwer's efforts, The General Conference sent representatives to Washington almost immediately after the declaration of war. Maxwell Kratz, a lawyer from Philadelphia, Peter Jansen, a Mennonite from Nebraska, and P. H. Richert, a Mennonite from Kansas left for Washington to interview senators and congressmen with the intent of gaining their support for a provision in the law which would safeguard Mennonite beliefs. They lobbied strenuously to make their position known. Back home, Mennonites remained cautiously optimistic that their lobbying efforts would be successful. Writing in the April 26th issue of Der Herold, C. E. Krehbiel reported that P.H. Richert was going to stay in Washington "until this whole thing is through in Congress." Adding that "We newspapers think⁵ that this will happen just any day now, perhaps today."

Though the Selective Service Law did not pass until May 18th, Mennonites were generally relieved to discover the clause:

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 organization.⁶

But they were concerned by the uncertainty of the clause immediately following that read: "But no person so exempted shall be exempted from service in any capacity⁷ that the President shall declare to be non-combatant." Mennonites could only wait and hope that Wilson's ruling would satisfy their conscientious scruples. In the meantime, Mennonites relished a small victory concerning the wording in this passage. Through the efforts of the lobbying team in Washington, the word "military" was struck preceding "service." With this key omission, Mennonites assumed that civilian alternatives⁸ to military service would be found. When in late July the President had still not specified what constituted noncombatant service, C. E. Krehbiel went so far as to predict that "nonresistants will probably not be called⁹ upon for service until after such declaration."

While nonresistants waited patiently for ruling on noncombatant service, they were faced with immediate decisions in regard to registration. On June 5th, all men within the ages of eighteen and twenty-five were required to register at their respective voting places. MC leader J. S. Hartzler reflected that "This was the

first real test on the nonresistant principle. A stand had to be taken--but where? Some thought that the place to take a stand was in the very beginning; that nonresistant people should not register at all. Others thought that since there was no infringement upon the doctrine in so doing, every one should register." ¹⁰ With so little discussion of the subject before being forced to take a stand, it is remarkable that virtually all Mennonites complied with the law. But to be sure that their youth would be prepared for intense questioning at local draft boards on their request for exemption, Mennonite newspapers advised: "Read carefully before you go to the Registration table. Study the questions. Prepare the answers in your mind. Questions are set out below with detailed information to help you answer ¹¹ them."

What youth and elders alike were not prepared for was that those registering as conscientious objectors were given an older draft of the Selective Service Law, the draft which still included the phrase: "but no person so exempted shall be exempted from military service in any capacity that the President shall declare noncombatant." Fearing that Mennonite boys would be forced to render service in the military establishment, J. W. Kliever shot off a letter to the Secretary of War explaining the "oversight" at local boards and registering his concern. "We are inclined to think that this word must have been inserted inadvertently [sic],

but we fear that it may jeopardize our case and we therefore beg that the local boards may be given orders to cross out the word "military" between the words "such" and "service."¹² General Crowder, responding for Newton Baker, made it clear that Mennonites had falsely assumed that without the word "military," they would be allowed to serve in civilian capacities. Consistent with Wilson's eventual ruling on noncombatant service, Crowder explained:

The President is not authorized under the Act to draft men for service not connected with the military establishment, and he is only authorized by it to assign certain persons entitled to preferential treatment, among whom members of your organization seem to be included, to service in that portion of the military establishment which he shall declare to be noncombatant. It is nevertheless service within the military establishment. It is therefore military, although it is not combatant service. . . . The noncombatant is not obliged to meet the enemy upon the field of battle, whereas the person obliged to¹³ render combatant service must.

By spelling out the implications of the Selective Service Law in such simple terms, Crowder's message was painfully clear to Mennonites: they would be serving under the military arm of the government. That Crowder

interpreted the clause in question as granting "preferential treatment," that Mennonites only "seemed to be included" under this provision, and that noncombatant service was essentially a failure "to meet the enemy upon the field of battle," signaled failure for Mennonite negotiating efforts and spelled disaster for Mennonite draftees.

Exacerbating the disappointment over the Crowder ruling was the fact that the long-awaited Executive Order defining noncombatant service did not come until March 20, 1918, eight months after the first draftees had reported to camp. In the interim, draftees were subjected to the idiosyncratic policies of individual camp drill sergeants on what they considered noncombatant service.

Despite the covert intentions of the Secretary of War to "make good soldiers out of Mennonites" before the Executive ruling on noncombatant service went into effect,¹⁴ leaders in both conferences doggedly pressured government officials to arrive at an equitable ruling, and used this time to voice their dissatisfaction. Almost as a last ditch effort, Mennonite negotiators threatened to leave the country in the face of such an uncertain relationship with their government. In a personal interview with the Secretary of War, H. P. Krehbiel, a leader of the Committee of Seven, was asked by Baker: "What would you do if your young men would be drafted into military service?" Krehbiel replied: "Many

would do what they had done in former years, leave the country for religious liberty, as our people have already done." To which Baker responded: "That would be a sad, sad affair and it shall never happen."¹⁵

Krehbiel's response was strategic for several reasons. It showed the government just how dissatisfied Mennonites were for being held off on their demands for specific policy for nonresistants. It was a serious threat because Mennonites had often fled a country as a result of religious persecution. And although it is difficult to determine the sincerity of Baker's response, Krehbiel's threat of emigration might have been an attempt to evoke sympathy for his people. Would the government want to be responsible for families leaving their homes because of its failure to uphold liberty of conscience? No doubt, Krehbiel hoped that this argument would cause Baker to re-examine the government's policy toward non-combatant Christians.

In point of fact, a few Mennonites did emigrate to Canada, though neither conference advocated it as an official policy option. Accounts of the pilgrimage are scarce. Canadian newspapers carried exaggerated claims that 35,000 Mennonites had crossed the border. Speakers in the Canadian House of Commons stretched the figures to 60,000. A more accurate figure is approximately¹⁶ 500. Those Mennonites who chose to flee rather than face an uncertain future in the United States found Canada attractive because of its freedom from

conscription, close proximity, and because a large¹⁷ number of the faith already lived in that country. Russian Mennonites constituted the largest emigration numbers. Because these Mennonites were rather recent newcomers in America, they were less acculturated and more anxious to resist it. More telling of their decision to leave, however, was their vivid memory of the spirit of European militarism. Living in the midwest, "the hotbed of spread eagle fanaticism" as one historian described this region during the war, only reinforced their belief that like European despots, the American military complex would coerce them into the line of duty or torture them for failing to comply.¹⁸ Pulling up roots and stealthily departing in the middle of the night was an extremist solution for most Mennonites.

On the whole, Mennonites rejected emigration, arguing that it was an impractical action in a world almost totally at war, it would seriously handicap negotiations with the Wilson Administration, and many believed that Wilson's definition of noncombatant¹⁹ service might be amicable. Interestingly, President Wilson acted almost immediately to approve legislation that would require a jail sentence for anyone caught leaving the country to escape conscription, while he was content to act belatedly in defining noncombatant²⁰ duty. From the perspective of the conscientious objector, such action was aggravating and insulting.

The migration to Canada was not seen positively by most members. It was far more common for Mennonites to propose alternative ways in which they could help the government during the war. With the government still deciding what duties fell under the rubric of noncombatant, Mennonites sought to provide administration officials with a weekly fare of ideas for civilian services that they could conscientiously perform. P. H. Richert and Aaron Loucks, for example, both suggested to President Wilson that "our young men could render a greater service to the maintenance of national interests and to humanity by being producers of food-stuffs. . . ."²¹

J. S. Hartzler had grander plans. He went so far as to devise a scheme wherein Mennonites could show- case their great skills as cultivators of the soil in undeveloped land in Arizona. In the spirit of expansionist rhetoric, Hartzler boasted that Mennonites could take the tract of land in Arizona given to the Pima Indians and develop it into a thriving farming community, while teaching the Indians agricultural skills. Hartzler inquired: "Would government consider letting the Mennonite Church, or a number of responsible men have this land, or a part of it with the equipment, for the period of the war and as much longer as will be necessary to gather the crops then in the ground on the conditions that we would take 150 or 200 C. O. boys onto the land, clean it up and farm it to the best possible

advantage for government?" Hartzler explained his motive for wanting to take charge of land granted to the Indians with the remark: "The idea was to have the Indians develop this into a farming community, but they did nothing. It is lying idle."²² Why an individual who cherished a nonconformist lifestyle and resisted outside influence himself would propose to intrude upon another close-knit community is puzzling. But Hartzler's solution to the C. O. problem was indicative of Mennonite political naivete, a heartfelt desire to be perceived as hard-working, patriotic citizens, and was arguably a barometer of their acculturation into a society caught up in imperialist, nativist, and Puritan ideals.

Mennonites lobbied vociferously for favorable legislation concerning their religious heritage and attempted to make up for the lack of initiative on the administration's part in regard to noncombatant service by proposing, and in some cases acting upon, reactionary and idealistic solutions. Their labored, but persistent, correspondence efforts failed more often than not. But Mennonites were learning quickly how to gain the offensive in negotiations.

Muted Accusations

Lobbying, petitioning, and interviewing government officials did not entirely take the form of a detached business engagement for Mennonites. The informational

dimension of their transactions was certainly essential for both sides in gaining a better working knowledge of each other. But as observed in chapter four, Mennonites did not easily separate themselves from the issue of freedom of conscience. They were the issue. The political legitimacy of their core beliefs was being debated and voted upon. In their correspondence with the government, Mennonites could not simply voice a cerebral attachment to their concerns. Yet they also recognized that an unbridled emotional appeal or hot indignation were inappropriate in making pleas to statesmen in Washington. When addressing the government, Mennonites adopted the posture of a people who had been wronged and they looked for ways to attack the government and force the government to account for its actions.

The reasons that Mennonites began to take the offensive were simple. First, this was a "safe" strategy. From an argumentative standpoint, it is always more comfortable to attack than to defend. Mennonites could remove themselves from the center of inquiry and focus their criticism on the government--the perpetrators of their unpleasant situation. Of course, due to ideological constraints, Mennonites could not use invective in such a rhetorical posture. Rather, they would present historical facts in a restrained, polite manner that would imply government inconsistency and provide a pretext for subtly blaming the present administration. In pointing out the inconsistent actions

of the government, Mennonites could re-affirm their consistency among themselves. If Mennonites could discredit the government's "righteous" and "patriotic" attempts to force total commitment to the war, then the Mennonites' attempts to remain uninvolved would look all the more justifiable to members. Questioning the government's policies, which in turn reflected favorably on Mennonite practices, was an important strategy in maintaining high self-esteem among church members. In asking the government to justify its actions, Mennonites also could maintain the fantastic hope that the Wilson Administration would acknowledge its inconsistent behavior and apologize to them.

One of the three major arguments addressed to the government was that Mennonites had suffered persecution everywhere throughout the history of the movement and had come to America to escape persecution. In addition, they argued, not only had Mennonites immigrated to America to find religious toleration, but they had been invited to come by the government.

Shortly after war was declared, leaders of the Western District churches of the General Conference reprinted portions of the minutes of the church meeting to send to the War Department. Among other things, the letter stated: "[O]ur people, after having for centuries suffered persecution in various countries because of their adherence to the Christ-taught doctrine of non-resistance, have at last taken refuge in this our

beloved country, which granted liberty of conscience to all."²³ Conference leaders hoped that by portraying themselves as weary, homeless wanderers who had finally discovered a "beloved" country, they would receive sympathetic treatment from the government. Yet there was also a subtle assigning of guilt in the last line. Mennonites reminded the Wilson administration that this country had, without exception, honored liberty of conscience.

J. W. Kliever, in his "Petition to Congress" reminded representatives of their historical obligations: "The Mennonites of this country are either immigrants or the descendants of immigrants from various countries in Europe which they left to avoid compulsory military service. Assurance was given them by high officials of the United States, including President Grant in 1873, that they need fear no compulsory conscription here."²⁴ If Wilson overrode this policy, Kliever intimates, he would have demonstrated no respect for his predecessor--hardly a just action. Though a Mennonite himself, Kliever depersonalizes his petition by referring to Mennonites in the third person. Recognizing the need for formality in addressing Congress, Kliever might have also reasoned that by dissociating himself from the group in question, his petition would receive more serious attention.

The Committee on Information wrote to the President in early 1918 reminding him of the importance of his

yet-to-be-announced decision concerning noncombatant service. The committee intimated that if Mennonites could not be accommodated under the law, liberty of conscience would be a sham in America, Mennonites would attract much attention by becoming martyrs, and the U. S. government would be weakening a 400 year faith. With firm , yet somber, resolve they wrote:

Having held this position for four hundred years, instructing our children from generation to generation in this principle, which has been a distinctive tenet of our creed, we could not consistently yield this position in the stress of war, even though such a position should bring persecution upon us as it has in the past in other countries from which our forefathers have fled and taken refuge in this our beloved country which offers a guarantee of liberty of conscience to
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all.

That Mennonites had suffered persecution throughout their troubled history and had come to America to escape persecution was an argument so framed as to accuse the government of dishonor and inconsistency.

The same argument, however, when addressed solely to members of the faith was less muted in accusing the government of wrong doing. More pointed than the official correspondence with the government, Daniel Kauffman expressed indignation toward the government to

his readers of the Gospel Herald: "We are in America because our fathers were invited here and promised liberty of conscience, and with the full knowledge and understanding that this conscience forbade them taking part in any form of carnal strife. This is not a question of gratitude but of conscience."²⁶ Kauffman absolved Mennonites of any responsibility to the government. As a bishop in the Mennonite Church, Kauffman also had the authority to speak with such firm resolve and confront the government outright.

Gerald Dahlke, a General Conference Mennonite, prepared a pamphlet for members of the faith that corroborates the view that Mennonites used the suffered-persecution-everywhere argument in varying degrees of directness depending on the audience addressed. Dahlke began by painting a sympathetic picture of the Mennonites: "This very class of people, the Mennonites [have] always been in quest of a land, where they could exercise without hindrance their religious scruples, acting on the dictates of their conscience. [Mennonites] came here not alone by their choice but [upon] the urgent invitation of the United States and State governments. . . ."²⁷

Taking a view similar to that of Kauffman, Dahlke implied that Mennonites need not be overly thankful because they were "urgently" asked to come. In effect, Dahlke was saying that if any group had to defend itself, it was the government. Dahlke strengthened the

argument by adding: "So anxious was this government to induce the Mennonites to locate in its domains, that it even translated the constitution into the German language and sent copies of it to them in Russia. Soon they were overwhelmed with invitations to come to the United States and to Canada."²⁸ From a somewhat exaggerated account of history, Dahlke was attempting to remind Mennonites that it was just a century ago that the United States actually lured them to America by granting them many favors. In light of this treatment, Dahlke and others demanded to know, without actually addressing the government, just how the Wilson administration could deny what had been so faithfully promised to the Mennonites by other Presidents.

The Art of Ingratiation

Despite their lack of rhetorical training, Mennonites understood all too clearly that government officials would not be inclined to entertain their demands unless they were couched in inoffensive tones and unless Mennonites conveyed a sense of understanding the government's position regarding military service. Adopting the posture of a people wronged was a strategic way to diffuse heated accusations toward the government, and a diplomatic way to assign guilt without closing down lines of communication, but it hardly created communicative bonds between each party. Mennonites were sensitive to the need to ingratiate public officials

before making their requests.

Identification is an essential strategy in all acts of persuasion. Rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke explains that: "A speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications."²⁹ He means that a speaker draws on the interests of the audience to induce cooperation between himself and his audience. One strategy designed to create identification is that of talking the language of your audience.³⁰ Mennonites attempted to gain the favor of the government by speaking the language of government officials.

When MC leaders convened on August 29, 1917, to adopt an official statement to the government on their position regarding military service, they expressed gratitude for past government favors. In a reserved and gracious style, one segment of the Conference record reads: "It is with grateful hearts that we recount the favors and considerations accorded our people in the past. . . . We rejoice that freedom of conscience is thus recognized by the laws of our land."³¹ When J. W. Kliewer registered his concern to General Crowder concerning the reinserted word "military" in front of service in pamphlets at local draft boards, he appealed to Crowder to grant "sympathetic consideration of our request."³² Before unveiling his grand scheme to the war department, J. S. Hartzler demurred: "We are indeed sorry that our position is causing so much trouble, and we greatly appreciate the effort which officials are

making to solve the problems connected with the
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C.O.s."

Mennonites went so far as to place themselves in the position of government officials and try to understand the military service issue from the administration's point of view. With this strategy, Mennonites hoped to convince administration personnel, including the President himself, that they were considerate, respectful, and genuinely understanding people, who recognized the magnitude and the political fallout of their demands. The Committee on Information prefaced their own solution to the C. O. problem by first identifying with the goals of the administration in the present world crisis ("[W]e agree with the government in its desire for universal peace."), and then going so far as to imagine how difficult it must be for the government to deal with nonresistants like themselves ("We further realize the embarrassing situation into which the military authorities are put regarding discipline by the presence of non-combatants in the camps. . . ."³⁴) J. S. Hartzler bent over backwards in taking sides with the government:

It is a self evident fact that President Wilson and the Congress of the United States have been unwisely criticized by some of the C. O.'s and their friends (more from the political than the religious objectors) because Government did not meet their

situation better from the standpoint of the objector. As representatives of the people they were obliged to consider the wishes of their constituency; also the conscientious objectors constituted such a small per cent of the whole that to make them an exception might
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have proven a misfortune.

Viewing the conscientious objector's stance from the government's perspective, and acknowledging that it must be "difficult" and "embarrassing" to deal with the Mennonites, was an argument that carried a great deal of risk. Government officials could have become amused and self-righteous knowing that even the Mennonites provided the government with justification for treating them as a nuisance and for ignoring their demand for complete military exemption.

Yet defending the administration's policy on nonresistants, was an argument that not only secured smooth relations between Mennonites and the government, but reflected favorably on the rhetor; Mennonite spokesmen, like Hartzler, understood the political realities and the limitations of defending minority rights. As an apolitical people thrown into the role of political lobbyists, Mennonites were learning-- learning to absorb appropriate argumentative strategies, and learning to mask their bitter disappointment and resentment remarkably well.

Stiff Challenges to Democracy

A third, prevalent argument advanced by Mennonites in addressing the Wilson administration was that it is an essential principle of a democracy to grant freedom of conscience unconditionally. Mennonites became deeply concerned and resentful when they saw this coveted human right challenged by compulsory military service. The extreme importance of freedom of conscience to all people is expressed well by philosopher Susanne Langer: "[I]nterference with acts that have ritual value . . . is always felt as the most intolerable injury one man, or group of men, can do to another. . . . To constrain a man against his principles--make a pacifist bear arms . . . -- is to endanger his attitude toward the world, his personal strength and single-mindedness."³⁶ During the world war, American philosophers reinforced the importance of freedom of conscience especially in a democracy. "It is indeed only by a frank recognition of the moral autonomy of the individual that we can establish any kind of moral order in the world," wrote one noted philosopher of the day. Adding that "Even more so do the stability and growth of democracy depend upon its recognition."³⁷ . . .

Mennonites, too, wanted to celebrate this cherished democratic principle and challenge the constitutionality of forcing individuals to violate their most prized personal freedom, but they feared repercussions from the government and the public. Questioning the democratic

nature of Wilson's policies might be construed as "un-American,"-- an attempt to undermine the credibility of the government, which in times of war is not only seditious, but dangerous. For many Americans, war means a temporary suspension of some democratic freedoms, and such abstract principles as freedom of conscience is reconceptualized as a collective conscience of the society, a uniformity of conduct no less complete than that demanded by an autocracy. In a state of war, respecting individual conscience is an irritation, or phrased more eloquently by a philosopher of the world war Richard Roberts:

Conscientious objection is chiefly irritating because it appears so palpably futile, and indeed so vexatiously obstructive of the business in hand. Not only does it not work, it actually hinders the work in which the multitude is engaged. It puts the machine out of gear; in a supreme emergency when all hands should be at the pumps, the conscientious objector puts us to the trouble of putting him³⁸ in irons.

Defending a pure notion of freedom of conscience was extremely unpopular during war time, and exposing the hypocrisy of democratic principles might get Mennonites jailed. Consequently, while the government comprised their ideal audience, they settled upon making this argument in their own church newspapers.

That freedom of conscience is an unconditional democratic principle is an argument found most frequently in the MC church newspaper, the Gospel Herald. The tone of these articles is serious and the style is terse. Kauffman expressed his deep concern for the government's violation of his religious scruples by writing: "Take away the sacredness of conscience, and you strike at the foundation of liberty. Conscience is a sacred gift from God that must be held sacred and inviolable if we are to remain free." Kauffman used the same absolutist language in protesting the Espionage Act recently passed on June 15, 1917, which made it a crime to "willfully cause . . . refusal of duty." He contended:

If this law did take away our liberty to believe the Bible as we understand its teaching, and also to tell what we believe, it would be unconstitutional; for both nation and state Constitutions state expressly that Congress (or state legislatures) shall pass no laws abridging the freedom of religion or of
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speech.

Unadorned prose, characteristic of Kauffman's rhetoric, created a simple message starkly stated: if liberty of conscience were not respected by the government, it would commit a serious, irreparable offense. With equal resolve, Jacob C Meyers, a GC spokesman and drafted man proclaimed: "The right of the

individual to stand by his conscience against any power on earth--ecclesiastical or political--is the cornerstone of liberty."⁴⁰ More candid was John Horsch, a leading MC spokesman, who remarked: "The government of the United States is committed to the principle of liberty of conscience. This means liberty not only for the Roman Catholic and Lutheran conscience, but also for the Mennonite conscience."⁴¹ Horsch reminded the government of the real meaning of freedom of conscience because he sensed that this had been overlooked. Consistency in upholding this right was of utmost importance. For as Langer tells us: "No matter how fantastic may be the dogmas he holds sacred, how much his living rites conflict with the will or convenience of society, it is never a light matter to demand their violation."⁴²

These arguments for freedom of conscience demonstrate two things: it is a crime to force people to do that which is abhorrent to their innermost convictions, and it is a serious inconsistency to deny freedom of conscience in a country which is a symbol of such high ideals as religious tolerance.

Although Mennonites generally argued on philosophical grounds for the importance of freedom of conscience, they, occasionally, took a practical perspective on the issue. In a less serious manner and from a more reflective standpoint, Kauffman speculated: "[W]ould it not be the part of wisdom to use

conscientious people in a way in which their conscience would be a help rather than a hindrance to their usefulness?" He continued: "Even if it were possible to force every nonresistant draftee into noncombatant military service and compel every nonresistant man out of camp to support war measures . . . it would be a waste of effort because it would be forcing abnormal conditions, since man is never at his best when compelled to live in violation of his own conscience."⁴³

Whether Mennonites treated the freedom of conscience argument philosophically or practically, this stance adopted within the confines of the Mennonite community, proved to be a penetrating way to criticize the Wilson administration and make the government in an idealized sense feel the necessity to account for its action without offending them directly. Yet this line of reasoning could have been more sophisticated and, ultimately, more persuasive had Mennonites seized the opportunity to "turn the tables" and question the "American Crusade" mentality. Mennonites might have taken Wilson's popular slogan: "This is a war to make the world safe for democracy," and asked some very disconcerting questions. For example, they could have implored: How can we make the world safe for democracy by wounding democracy at home? or Do we not mock democracy in denying freedom of conscience? and Do we know what we are fighting for if we are repudiating American traditions by forcing men to violate their

principles? Rarely was this attitude expressed. C. E. Krehbiel of Der Herold and H. Frank Reist of The Christian Monitor provided the fascinating exceptions.

Vehemently objecting to the way in which the United States had conveniently decided to set aside fundamental principles like freedom of conscience, the editor of the small, unaffiliated church paper, The Christian Monitor, rejected democracy as a legitimate form of government:

After six thousand years, more or less, of experimenting man has not yet found a truly successful form of government. Democracy has not been thoroughly tested. But even now some of its weaknesses are evident. It is significant that since the beginning of the war the most democratic nations involved have set aside some of its fundamental principles and delegated to a few men autocratic powers. Our own nation is an example . . . if it is the ideal form of government, should it become necessary under any circumstances to temporarily set aside any of its fundamental principles . . . We do not believe that the present evil world can ever be made safe for democracy, nor that democracy will make the world of corruption safe.

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Such a blanket statement protesting a democratic form of government was tantamount to treason, if not in violation of the Espionage Act. One can only wonder how

it escaped scathing criticism from the governmental propaganda agencies when Mennonite tracts of much milder content were cited for such unlawful activity. One also wonders if Mennonites in Illinois, readers of this circular, were alarmed by their editors' bold comments, especially since the Monitor rarely diverted from its monthly fare of strictly church news. This editorial did not send shock waves through the community, nor stimulate editorial response. Reist went out on a limb in exposing government inconsistency in regard to freedom of conscience, but his argument is admirable in the sense that it is one of the few probing and sophisticated critiques of the shortcomings of the Wilson administration from a Mennonite.

Another midwesterner, C. E. Krehbiel of Kansas, joined Reist's undermining of government policy by providing German Mennonite readers of Der Herold with more than an occasional attack against the government, especially in regard to freedom of conscience. Beginning in April of 1917, Krehbiel attacked compulsory military service as a denial of freedom--possibly a form of "involuntary servitude outlawed by the thirteenth amendment."⁴⁵ In early May, Krehbiel wrote sarcastically: "Isn't it noteworthy that our country entered this war right after the new president had been elected for a second time." And setting up the government for further scrutiny by commenting on the compulsory service law, Krehbiel made the flippant

remark: "[I]t seems to be the fate of mankind since the fall of man that hardly one ridiculous idea has passed when another one comes up."⁴⁶ Then, showing his political acumen and rhetorical expertise, Krehbiel denounced compulsory military service in a democratic form of government by using the words of Daniel Webster. Substantiating the Mennonite position of unconditional freedom of conscience with the words of a revered American statesman gave readers confidence in their objections and a history lesson as well. Krehbiel began:

Daniel Webster gave a talk to Congress over 100 years ago and it was against conscription. That speech is as fresh and as applicable today as it was then. At that time our country was at war with England and many wanted to put in the forced conscription, but they were not successful. We would like to put the whole speech here in German but I don't know if we will find the space for it. It was sent to us from the American Union against Militarism. Mr Webster says: `Honorable Chairman, After studying the bill that is before you for passage, I have come to the conclusion after much consideration that in no way is there any provision in our constitution for that kind of thing. It is right wing by nature and supports the military which this session of Congress has tried so hard to bring about. . . . It is

an attempt to repeat the Napoleonic way of getting the upper hand, to build up an army of free men and force them to participate in war under the pretext of 'mere' military service.'

Krehbiel, no doubt, was taken by the courageous stance and strong words delivered by a politician to government officials. Because it was Webster and not the Mennonites calling compulsory military service "Napoleonic," "right wing," and "unconstitutional," Krehbiel safeguarded this editorial from potential indictment of "willfully causing refusal of duty." That it was a German newspaper further concealed its contents from public scrutiny, though this factor made it more of a target for governmental perusal. More politically-minded than most of his contemporaries in the journalistic field, Krehbiel sometimes used the GC-based church paper to espouse his political views. Occasionally, subscribers protested,⁴⁸ but by and large Krehbiel echoed the sentiments of German Mennonites in Kansas.

Seriously challenging democracy as a viable form of government and exposing the hypocrisy of America's compulsory military service law was a final and daring extension to arguing for unconditional freedom of conscience, but it was atypical Mennonite fare. And perhaps this was fortunate for such subversive arguments threatened to undermine the careful ground work layed by other church officials who saw the necessity of a

Mennonite lobby and the importance of finding ways to identify with government policy.

Mennonites were in many ways unprepared to present a unified rhetorical front against the Wilson administration's "sudden" and "drastic" measure of compulsory military conscription. Though Mennonites recognized the need for committees to lobby, petition, and negotiate with Washington officials, there was no central organizing body to prevent the propagation of disparate proposals. The Wilson Administration received both a reactionary plan, a mass exodus to Canada, and an idealistic plan, a sanctioned move to Indian reservations. How was the government to know what Mennonites really wanted? A central agency might have also coordinated petitioning efforts more strategically. Painful evidence of the often poorly-timed efforts to influence governmental policy was a petition against war tardily presented to Congress in 1919 after the war was over. Impressive though it was, having collected 20,400⁴⁹ Mennonite signatures from thirty-one states, its impact at that late date was inconsequential.

Yet Mennonites were able to form their own church lobbies with remarkable efficiency. Moreover, they formulated three major arguments to respond to administration policy--arguments that demonstrated rhetorical sensitivity. The subtle accusations designed to evoke sympathy for themselves and the ingratiating arguments found their way into the hands of government

officials, while the bold, even subversive, arguments against democracy did not circulate outside the confines of Mennonite communities. By cautiously opposing the government's actions while searching for points of agreement, Mennonites maintained open, albeit strained, communication with the government and diverted attention away from themselves at least temporarily.

Notes

¹ James C. Juhnke, "Mennonites and The Great
Comprise," The Mennonite, 84 (1969), p. 562.

² Allan Teichroew, "World War I and the Mennonite
Migration to Canada to Avoid the Draft," The Mennonite
Quarterly Review 45, 1971), p. 244.

³ Teichroew, p. 266.

⁴ J. W. Kliever, "A Petition To Congress," 21 April
1917, rpt. in H. P. Krehbiel Collection, Exemption
Committee and Government 1918, Folder PM-18, (BCLA).

⁵ [C. E. Krehbiel, ed], "Editorielles," Der Herold
26 April 1917, p. 2.

⁶ "Report of the General Conference Committee on
Exemptions," Der Herold 6 Dec. 1917, p. 2.

⁷ "Report of the General Conference Committee on
Exemptions," p. 2.

⁸ Teichroew, p. 224.

⁹ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Information for men drafted for
military service under Act of May 18, 1917, but who wish
to be exempted from such service," Der Herold 26 July
1917, p. 5.

¹⁰ J. S. Hartzler, Mennonites In The World War
(Scottdale: Penn.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1921),
p. 86.

¹¹ "How To Answer Questions on Registration Cards,"
Der Herold 31 May 1918, p. 3.

- ¹² J. W. Kliever, "Editorielles," 27 Dec. 1917, p. 2.
- ¹³ General Crowder, "War Department Memo," rpt. in Der Herold 27 Dec. 1917, p. 2.
- ¹⁴ See James C. Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms (Newton Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 100. Juhnke argues that: "The dealings of Secretary of War Baker and the War Department with the Mennonites were a triumph of deceptive public relations." Baker was not convinced that Mennonites would remain firm in their refusal of military service.
- ¹⁵ A copy of the interview was preserved in The Minute Book of the Committee on Exemption of the Western District Conference 1917-1922 (BCLA), Unpublished, p. 26.
- ¹⁶ Teichroew, p. 245.
- ¹⁷ Teichroew, p. 222.
- ¹⁸ Teichroew, p. 246.
- ¹⁹ Teichroew, p. 228.
- ²⁰ Frederick Palmer, Newton D. Baker: America at War, I (New York: Dodd, Mead Co., 1931), p. 217.
- ²¹ S. K. Mosiman, P. H. Richert, Aaron Loucks, "Letter to the President," rpt. Der Herold 28 Feb. 1918, p. 2.
- ²² J. S. Hartzler, "Letter to Hon. R. C. McCrea," rpt. Mennonite Historical Bulletin 33 No. 3 (1972), p. 10.

- 23 "Report of the Special Committee for Freedom from Military Service of The Western District Conference to the 26th Conference," in Minutes Western District Conference 1906-1917 (BCLA), Unpublished, p. 42.
- 24 J. W. Kliever, "A Petition To Congress."
- 25 S. K. Mosiman, P. H. Richert, Aaron Loucks, "Letter to the President," p. 2.
- 26 [Daniel Kauffman, ed.], "War Problems For Non-Resistant People," Gospel Herald 17 May 1917, p. 114.
- 27 Gerald Dahlke, A Defense of the Mennonites Against Recent Attacks Made Upon Them (n.p.: n.p., [1917]), p. 8.
- 28 Dahlke, p. 6.
- 29 Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (rpt. Berkeley, Ca.: Univ. of California Press, 1969), p. 46.
- 30 Burke, p. 55.
- 31 "A Statement of Our Position on Military Service as Adopted by The Mennonite Church," Gospel Herald 6 Sept. 1917, p. 420.
- 32 J. W. Kliever, "Editorielles," p. 2.
- 33 J. S. Hartzler, "Letter to Hon. R. C. McCrear," p. 10.
- 34 S. K. Mosiman, P. H. Richert, Aaron Loucks, "Letter to the President," p. 2.
- 35 J. S. Hartzler, Mennonites In The World War, p. 174.
- 36 Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy In A New Key (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1942), p. 290.

- ³⁷ Richard Roberts, "The Problem of Conscience," International Journal of Ethics 29 (1919), pp. 338, 337.
- ³⁸ Roberts, p. 335.
- ³⁹ [Kauffman, ed], "Things Worth Remembering," Gospel Herald 9 May 1918, p. 98; "Our Ministers Responsibility," Gospel Herald 27 June 1918, pp. 217-218.
- ⁴⁰ Jacob C. Meyers, Report of the General Conference Mennonites in France in Reconstruction Work Clermont-en-Argonne, Meuse, France June 20-22, 1919, p. 130-131.
- ⁴¹ John Horsch, "Are Mennonites Entitled To Liberty of Conscience?" Gospel Herald 12 July 1917, p. 290.
- ⁴² Langer, pp. 290-91.
- ⁴³ [Kauffman, ed.], "Conscientious Objectors And The Issues Involved," Gospel Herald 25 July 1918, p. 290.
- ⁴⁴ [H. Frank Reist, ed], The Christian Monitor IX (Oct. 1917), 292.
- ⁴⁵ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 26 April 1917, p. 2.
- ⁴⁶ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 10 May 1917, p. 2.
- ⁴⁷ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," 10 May 1917, p. 2.
- ⁴⁸ See Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms, p. 87. Some readers, Juhnke observes, detected a pro-German editorial bias in Krehbiel's paper. Krehbiel responded that editorial neutrality had not been violated.

Peace Problems Committee, "A Petition," 1919,
rpt. in Mennonite Statements on Peace and Social
Concerns ed. Urbane Peachey (Akron, Ohio: MCC U. S.
Peace Section, 1980), p. 82.

CHAPTER SIX
ON THE DEFENSIVE:
MENNONITES SEEK REAPPRAISAL OF THEIR IMAGE

Mennonites took the offensive in questioning the government's actions throughout the course of the war. But criticism only mounted from the public, and the government did not, as Mennonites had hoped, feel pressured to account for its actions or to apologize to this obscure religious group. The Wilson administration had far more pressing war-related concerns to deal with than debating the problem of nonresisters. Much to their chagrin, Mennonites soon realized that the government was not going to sympathize with Mennonite concerns, nor could criticism from a hostile public be ignored any longer. Mennonites grudgingly acknowledged that their only hope was to seek to correct the image Americans had of them. Mennonites would have to engage in what rhetorical critic Walter R. Fisher has termed "a rhetoric of purification."¹

The Mennonites' decision to address the charges against their character confirms the view taken by Fisher and Noreen Kruse that people attempt to defend their characters rhetorically when their identities are in question,² and when they believe that failure to do so will result in irreparable damage to their reputations.³ Moreover, that the Mennonites' decision to defend themselves was reached painfully confirms Maurice

Natanson's claim that engaging in personal or "genuine" argument is uncomfortable because we do not like to take the risks necessary to explore our convictions.

When individuals feel the need to engage in a rhetoric of self-defense, Fisher states, they will concentrate upon defining themselves clearly and in favorable terms since their ultimate purpose is to seek re-evaluation from their accusers. Definitional strategies manifest themselves in various ways. Individuals can clarify their characters by setting others in juxtaposition. They can correct a widely held negative image by communicating a sense of the unfairness of the charges. They can repair their images⁴ by identifying with the values of their accusers.

Mennonites attempted to repair their image rhetorically by engaging in the strategies of dissociation, denial, and identification. This chapter traces the inventive ways in which Mennonites used these techniques to construct an apologia of Mennonitism. First, they dissociated themselves from the larger class of conscientious objectors. Since no distinctions were made under the law between the religious and nonreligious C. O., Mennonites feared that nonreligious C. O.'s were taking advantage of legislation enacted expressly to protect an historic peace stance. More importantly, they worried that the public would question the sincerity of all C. O.'s. Hence, rhetors of the faith wished to distance themselves from other objectors

by demonstrating that the Mennonite objection to war on conscientious grounds was completely different. Second, they refuted the charges of insincerity and pro-Germanism. Mennonite rhetors wanted desperately to counter the charge that they had temporarily adopted a C. O. status. As a result, their historic position against war was paraded in print on countless occasions. MC Mennonites denied charges of pro-Germanism by renouncing all ties to Germany, while GC Mennonites adopted a posture of dignified silence and encouraged members to adopt the English language. Finally, they identified with the cherished American value of patriotism while having little if anything to do with the military establishment. Mennonites emphasized their benevolent civic activities, their role as farmers, their sacrificial efforts, and redefined the meaning of patriotism in a way that Mennonites could celebrate it. Some Mennonites, primarily of GC origin, rationalized that their consciences would allow them to support non-violent activities connected to the military such as Liberty Loan Drives, the Red Cross, and non-combatant duties.

As with other argumentative strategies, however, Mennonites rehearsed these lines of argument among themselves for use in case they were accosted by angry citizens or interrogated for their sincerity by government officials. Rarely did they feel it was appropriate to repair their image directly to a

ferverly patriotic public that had already made the nonresisters a convenient scapegoat. Thus, it was primarily in Mennonite publications that definitional strategies were used to correct their negative image.

Conscience With A Difference

One way Mennonites tried to define themselves in favorable terms was to dissociate themselves from other individuals and groups who claimed status as conscientious objectors (c. o.'s). Unfortunately, the name "conscientious objector," which had originally been used by the War Department to refer to those who belonged to a church that embodied nonresistance, was now applied to those who, for many reasons, refused to take part in the war.⁵ Dismayed by the lax use of the term, MC leader J. S. Hartzler remarked: "This was unfortunate. If the two classes had been kept separate the first class would have been better understood." Hartzler understood that distinction in hierarchical terms, with religious objectors faring far superior. "The two classes are entirely distinct--legally, morally, and practically," Hartzler instructed fellow believers, explaining further that Congress gives legal status to religious objectors, but "wholly ignores the other"; the one obeys God and the traditions of his church, while the other "is merely choosing to accept the loose and untried speculation of modern theorists who avow no respect for religious Scriptures"; the one

includes individuals who have registered under particular denominations, while the other "would make it easier and more of a refuge for an unlimited number of slackers."⁶

Other Mennonites echoed Hartzler's disappointment that Mennonites were being unjustly lumped together with undesirables by registering as conscientious objectors. Editor S. M. Grubb of The Mennonite was unhappy that army officers were not bothering to segregate the religious objectors from other objectors as the law commanded:

The spirit of the press, and the public fattened upon the stuff the press feeds it, is to regard all non-resistance as a species of pro-Germanism. . . . [S]ome officials are not altogether out of sympathy with this attitude [because] religious objectors for whom the law provides, have been segregated with I. W. W.'s, Socialists and other types of objectors for whom no provision is made by law and to whom peace is not a matter of religious⁷ creed.

Mennonites were understandably concerned that non-religious C. O.'s were taking advantage of legislation enacted expressly to protect an historic peace stance and, in so doing, smearing the label of conscientious objector. Daniel Kauffman of the Gospel Herald expressed his dissatisfaction this way:

There should be a distinction made between the man who for conscience' sake can not see his way clear to comply with the wishes of his nation and the self-seeking man who hides under a cloak of 'conscience' to keep out of disagreeable places; between the man who proves himself conscientious in all he does and the man who is 'conscientious' only in spots.⁸

Mennonites seemed to think that the solution to this unfortunate problem was simple. The Mennonite position could be made more palatable by contrasting their peace stance with the positions taken by the nonreligious and insincere nonresisters. Such optimism was evidenced in the following passage from the Gospel Herald: "If these distinctions would be clearly made and freely recognized by all people it would be but a short time until most of the present unpleasantness connected with the attitude of nonresistant people would be a thing of the past. . . ."⁹ Contrary to what one might assume, this article did not appear shortly after war was declared, but in a 1918 summer issue, revealing just how ineffective Mennonites had been at making their position clearly known. Two months later Kauffman tried again at encouraging members to make these distinctions: "We owe it as a duty to them as well as to ourselves and the world in general to make our position clear, so that well meaning people may not labor under a wrong

impression as to what we are or what we believe and what our attitude really is. . . ."¹⁰ Finally, Kauffman reassured his readers: "Many a well meaning man, being misinformed, assumes an entirely different attitude from what he would if he knew the facts."¹¹ When the Southwestern conference of the Mennonite Church convened in August, they echoed their revered bishop's advice. "Our ministers are urged to make this position clear to all people, using moderation in their utterances, but speaking the Word of God with all boldness," stated one resolution.¹² For Mennonites, truth was self-evident; it only needed to be explained accurately for all misunderstandings to be rectified. As Kauffman put it:¹³ "the facts speak for themselves."

From the preceding passages a paradox becomes evident. Mennonites expressed a desire to dissociate themselves from the general class of people placed in the conscientious objector category; at the same time they did not want to answer the charges directly for fear of the retribution that might come from publicly engaging in genuine argument. Moreover, Mennonites believed that once the truth was made known to outsiders, they would be understood and evaluated separately from other conscientious objectors, yet there was little effort during the war to make these facts known to anyone outside Mennonite circles. Mennonites were sorely disillusioned for believing that "these facts [were] fully established and easily accessible to

all who wish to know the truth. . . ." ¹⁴ The facts referred to were so inaccessible that outsiders asked: "If the charges are not true why doesn't someone put in a rejoinder?" ¹⁵ Mennonites deceived themselves into thinking that the public would come searching for the "rejoinders" buried in Mennonite tracts.

D. H. Bender, a MC Mennonite from Hesston, Kansas provided a notable exception to the general vow of shunning public exposure. In a county newspaper that served several small towns in Kansas, Bender took it upon himself to educate non-Mennonites on the Mennonite position. In what came to be a rather lengthy, factual article, Bender outlined the biblical basis of nonresistance, traced the faith's heritage to Holland in the 1500's, described the migration to Russia and the United States, and provided an exhaustive list of services that the Mennonites were providing in the present war, including sums of money contributed to various relief headquarters. ¹⁶ When Bender prefaced his piece with the comment: "We feel confident, however, that when our real position is understood and the work the Mennonites actually are doing is fully known, there will be no ground left for such adverse criticism," he at least made efforts to make such an aim realizable. More typically the sporadic attempts by individuals at explaining the Mennonite position to the wider American public were prompted by pointed accusations wherein certain individuals, usually ministers, were targeted

for abuse. Such was the case in Wayland, Indiana where Mennonite minister Simon Gingerich accused of making "pro-Germans" and "disloyalists" out of the youth of his church was asked to explain his actions and ordered to fly the flag at his home. Gingerich agreed to be interviewed for an article responding to the charges. In that article, he shared how Mennonites had sacrificed¹⁷ and served in the world crisis.

These efforts to go public with a defense of Mennonitism were all too infrequent. Mennonite rhetoric that sought to repair the faith's image by dissociating religious objectors from other conscientious objectors went unnoticed by most Americans. Mennonites were content to harbor the comforting belief that "these facts were fully established and easily accessible to all."

Denials, Rejections, And The Liabilities of 'No'

Mennonites were painfully aware of the host of accusations about them circulating in public places. They were insincere, cowards, slackers, yellow, pro-German, disloyal, traitors, mentally deficient, lazy, and parasites. Mennonites took these charges seriously because they attempted to correct this negative image by vociferously denying each and every disparaging description. They were not insincere; they were not pro-German; and they were not unpatriotic. Readers of Mennonite newspapers received plenty of refutational

evidence to convince them otherwise.

Mennonites took different approaches to refuting the charge that they were insincere-- that their policy of nonresistance had been adopted after the war had been declared as a convenient way to avoid participation. Kauffman made the charge appear ludicrous. He wrote that if the charge is "that we became suddenly conscientious when the war began, then we became suddenly conscientious at the beginning of every war in history since we as a church had existence, for in all previous wars we had the same attitude toward war that we have now."¹⁸ Elsewhere, Kauffman set the record straight by declaring: "Our conference records bear evidence of the fact that the two most prominent tenets of Mennonite faith with reference to war and Government are: 1) non-resistance, or abstinence from all carnal strife, and 2) loyalty to the Government under which we live."¹⁹ While Kauffman may have exaggerated the second point by calling it a "prominent" Mennonite tenet, he was attempting to reconcile what in the public mind were two contradictory positions. Opponents argued that even if C. O.'s could prove their sincerity, the C. O. status was itself disloyal.

Interestingly enough, the most comprehensive and persuasive defense of the Mennonites on this issue and other charges was a paid advertisement by an anonymous Mennonite writer in the Elkhart, Indiana, The Elkhart Truth, which came one year after the war was over. This

lengthy defense was designed to reveal "the real facts about the Mennonites." In response to the charge that Mennonites temporarily adopted C. O. status, this citizen of Elkhart firmly remarked: "Mennonites have always upheld the principles of nonresistance and they have never asked for anything from any country except liberty of conscience."²⁰ Again, the perplexing question arises: if Mennonites were so anxious to prove the sincerity of their nonresistant stance, why didn't they place articles like this one in public papers during the war? Perhaps the Mennonite justification for delay was that once Americans had lost their patriotic fervor they would be more receptive to arguments that explained the position of a nonresistant group, and they would be less inclined to inflict verbal and physical abuse. Although the war had ended before this discourse was formulated, war memories were still fresh for Mennonites and the public. This paid advertisement represented a way to assuage the bitter feelings and improve the strained relationship between the public and the Mennonites, and, thus, it warrants notice here.

S. M. Grubb also was intent on refuting the charge of insincerity to his readership. Grubb's position was that actions, not words, would be the only way to convince the greater American public that Mennonites did not become nonresisters for expedient purposes. Thus he explained:

My own personal view of the present exemption

law is that it had better have been omitted so that those of the so-called peace sects who sincerely believe in the doctrine of non-resistance might have the opportunity of proving their absolute confidence in the doctrine by paying everything that it might have cost, even withholding their lives, were such a price demanded.²¹

Though this course of action would involve extreme faith, it was, perhaps, the only realistic way in which the Mennonite position would be perceived as sincere.

Many Americans remained uninformed or refused to believe that any C. O., religious or otherwise, Mennonite or non-Mennonite, really held steadfast to a long-standing creed of unconditional nonresistance. And since they would not fight, a more serious charge materialized; C. O.'s could only be pro-German. This accusation implicated the Mennonites, in particular, since many GC Mennonites claimed a German heritage, spoke the German language, and publicly supported Germany before United States intervention.

Mennonites were acquainted with many of the specific accusations of pro-Germanism hurled at them. As an MC Mennonite with no cultural ties to Germany, Daniel Kauffman did not find it uncomfortable reiterating those charges to readers of the Gospel Herald. "Among other things," he wrote:

we are told that we are pro-Germans, and that

if the United States were in a war with England our attitude would be quite different from what it is now; that we were planted here in America about seventy years ago to raise seed for the kaiser and to join in the German propoganda at the psychological moment; that some of our prominent ministers going about to visit the camps and looking after the spiritual interests of our young brethren are²² in the pay of Germany.

Kauffman was ready for a one-two counter-punch. "The Mennonites believed in and taught nonresistance for several centuries before there was an imperial Germany," he countered. More intriguing, however, was his second line of defense: "Most of the Mennonites now in America are descendants from Holland and Switzerland, not from²³ Germany." Kauffman, whose ancestry like most MC Mennonites was Swiss, was willing to disregard the heritage of GC Mennonites in order to confirm his American citizenship! This was not a unique argument advanced by MC Mennonites. The Elkhart writer, a MC member, also refused to acknowledge the heritage of General Conference Mennonites. "[Mennonites] have never been pro-German in any sense," he wrote, "for their ancestors came, nearly all, from Switzerland many years ago. Try to imagine a non-resistant people supporting the kaiser and his cohorts' military program and you²⁴ will have an incongruity that cannot exist."

Mennonites of the Mennonite Church had no reservations in responding to the accusation of pro-Germanism by denying their German heritage. So proud of their Swiss heritage, they even treated the charge lightheartedly. Kauffman shrugged off the pro-German label with the remark: "[The charge is] that we are pro-Germans," but I say [n]ot any more so than our forefathers were pro-British in Revolutionary days, or pro-Mexican in the war with Mexico, or pro-Turk in the present war."²⁵ The comparisons were intended to show how ridiculous it was to charge Mennonites of being pro-German, but Kauffman's inaccurate account of history weakened its argumentative punch.

Mennonites of the General Conference were unable to treat the charge of pro-Germanism in such a flippant manner. For them, the "incongruity" so described by the MC Elkhart writer did exist. While GC Mennonites never supported the German military program, they had been sympathetic to the German people, and even expressed pride in the German nation. These Mennonites had to wrestle with how they could forsake German ties when they had publicly claimed them only a year ago. One has to wonder if GC Mennonites felt that their brethren of the Mennonite Church had gone too far in trying to re-establish themselves as upright American citizens when they had to dissociate themselves from German-born Mennonites of the General Conference in order to do so.

G. C. Mennonites had an awkward problem to deal

with. Editor Grubb of the English newspaper The Mennonite handled the situation deftly. Grubb explained to his readers that the Government knows "most of us speak German and have German names," and that "much of the money [we] raised for relief was, by the givers, directed to go to the German Red Cross." But more damaging yet is that "[i]t has been charged in Washington that German Red Cross money was diverted to pro-German propaganda just before America entered into the war." Grubb's recommendation was to avoid the issue with outsiders--a familiar Mennonite strategy. Grubb discreetly cautioned Mennonites of the harm that would result if they tried to give an honest explanation to the public on this issue, or continued to write articles that were in sympathy with Germany. His admonishing statement began: "[T]here will be some who are not at all discreet in the expression of their opinions, when they express them the body to which they belong gets the full benefit." More directly, Grubb added: "Loose talk today not only puts the one who does the talking in danger of being roughly handled by his neighbors but also exposes him to prosecution by the authorities."²⁶ This was not an accusation that GC Mennonites could deny or refute to set the record straight. Rather the charge of pro-Germanism was an unpleasant reminder of a fateful blunder that must at least be silently acknowledged and carefully downplayed.

Grubb's task must have appeared enviable to C. E.

Krehbiel, editor of the German Der Herold. The free-flowing German patriotism of the years preceding U. S. intervention, occurred not in The Mennonite, but in the GC newspaper for German-speaking Mennonites--members of the faith who were more comfortable with the German language and who, as the most recent immigrants to America, had closer ties to Germany. These Mennonites had donated large sums of money to the German Red Cross; they had denounced the Allied forces in editorials for mistreating Germany, and they had kept up a steady stream of correspondence with German Mennonites in their Fatherland. There was, to put matters simply, no denying a pro-German bent to the contents of Der Herold between the years 1914 and early 1917.

Krehbiel elected to repair the damage of, what appeared to be by all accounts, a gargantuan faux pas by interpreting the charge of pro-Germanism as primarily a language problem, and not a problem of national loyalties. Krehbiel had a much easier task in responding to critics who decried the fact that some Americans could not or did not want to speak the English language than in explaining away German patriotism. For one thing, it was the less emotional component of the accusation; for another it was still correctable.

As an able reporter, Krehbiel kept his German readership on top of happenings regarding the restricted use of German. As a detached observer, Krehbiel reported matter-of-factly whenever he stumbled upon news of

German censorship. Readers were regularly updated on elementary schools that had banned the German language, on colleges that had dropped their German departments, and on Mennonite German teachers who had lost their jobs.²⁷ Krehbiel dutifully printed without editorial comment official government bulletins, like "The Plan for Americanization," that, among other things, stipulated: "In all schools where elementary subjects are taught, they should be taught in the English language only."²⁸ In his scouting of various language-related rulings, Krehbiel even anticipated the censorship of German in American newspapers, including his own. Though a people who, in Krehbiel's own words "don't usually cross a bridge until we get there," Krehbiel reported in the Aug. 9, 1917, edition of Der Herold that he suspected that "we will have to refrain from using the German language" and encouraged readers to "go on to the English language" without regret.²⁹

So accepting was Krehbiel of the demand to speak the English language that when the law forbidding the printing of war-related content in foreign languages was passed in late 1917, Krehbiel rationalized it to his readers, adding that "we are going to abide by the regulations that have been given."³⁰ Many German Mennonites, however, were not as eager as their newspapers' editor to make the transition to English. One member of the faith expressed the sentiment of many when he wrote: "I am not convinced that Mennonitism and

the English language are compatible."³¹ Somewhat perturbed, Krehbiel had to remind subscribers repeatedly that: "This all has to be written in the English language, so please send it in the English language or not at all. Before we can print anything in German, we have to have a man under oath translate this before we put it into the mail by way of the newspaper. So now you know we are limited and if we mentioned something that you had written perhaps you will recognize it." Then for good measure, Krehbiel repeated his editorial policy: "But we are not going to publish it if it is in German. Send it to us in English if it is at all necessary,"³² adding somewhat caustically "and make it short."

Krehbiel was not insensitive to his readers fears and general disinterest in learning the English language. But he remained stern in upholding the administrations's policy of speaking or writing in the English language with regard to the war. Scolding recalcitrants of the faith, Krehbiel wrote:

Now English is our national language and everyone has to admit that. And as soon as a person wants to become a citizen of this country, he has to learn this language. He has to make every effort to do so. It is absolutely right and just that a person does not criticize and scold as soon as he sees a German newspaper has some English articles in it. It is an unhealthy relationship if a man

is a citizen of this country and then fights³³
the learning of its language.

Speaking directly to the concern that the faith might be weakened, if another language were adopted, Krehbiel exposed its fallacy: "The idea that some of our faith will be lost just because we change languages is a most narrow-minded idea. If that were the case then we would all have to go back to Aramaic or the Hebrew language and never change from that."³⁴ Resistance to change on that point was simply lame reasoning, Krehbiel believed.

Throughout the course of the war, Krehbiel used his influential paper to cajole members of the faith into wholesale acceptance of the English language. His rhetorical burdens were lifted slightly by making the language issue germane to the charge of pro-Germanism while refusing to engage in a debate surrounding national loyalties in the present war. Mennonites could not clear themselves of the charge of being German sympathizers, despite the fact that German patriotism had come to a screeching halt at the outset of the war. Nobody was more keenly aware of that than Krehbiel. But Krehbiel reasoned that if German Mennonites began to speak the English language, they might come to be regarded as having American loyalties in the public's eye. "The citizens of German extraction should be especially conscious of the fact that it is important that they learn the English language," Krehbiel explained. "That way people will not be suspicious of

their feelings."³⁵

Americans remained suspicious of the Mennonites though. Despite attempts by their Swiss brethren to disavow the German roots of Mennonitism, Mennonites of Swiss and German extraction, GC's and MC's alike, became the targets of violent retributive acts by angry mobs under the pretext of pro-Germanism. Whether they denied or skirted the attacks of pro-Germanism, this charge remained a difficult one for Mennonites to refute, and served as a painful lesson to Mennonites of German descent of the perils of participating in the political world.

Mennonites dissociated themselves from the larger category of conscientious objectors and denied that they were insincere or pro-German. But these strategies designed to clear their image were controlled by the nature of the accusations; their statements of self-defense were built around and restricted by the unfortunate charges forced upon them by the wider citizenry. Hence, outsiders became "master of the controversy"³⁶ even in Mennonite circles. The posture of defensiveness, a necessary consequence of adopting such strategies to the exclusion of others, is not healthy for a church, sect, or any group, attempting to carve a niche of legitimacy for themselves. When a defensive posture is evident, a group faces negativistic, splintering tendencies because the ingredient of rejection is uppermost in their minds.³⁷ Mennonites

understood this at least in an intuitive sense. Not only did the practice of denying each and every disparaging charge enslave them to unpleasant subjects, but their principles of nonresistance and nonconformity had negative meanings to outsiders. As observed in chapter four, Mennonitism prompted a public mindset of associating the negativistic principles of the faith with passivity. Mennonites were known for what they would not do. To repair their "do-nothing" status and to avoid the pitfalls of being driven into a corner saying "no" to accusations, Mennonites searched for more constructive ways to defend themselves.

Loyalty With Severed Ties To The Military

Mennonites wanted desperately to be identified with their countrymen as patriotic American citizens. To build what they hoped would be a convincing line of defense, at least as it was rehearsed in Mennonite communications, Mennonites devised several strategies to highlight the similarities between themselves and the wider citizenry. Mennonites of both Conferences attempted to gain the favor of the wider public by drawing upon the venerated traits of loyal citizenship. The end result of such efforts was to see a more positive reflection of themselves in the social mirror.

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Mennonites went to great lengths to re-affirm characteristics of loyal citizenship not associated with

the military. They pointed to a host of benevolent activities that they dutifully performed, capitalized upon their visible roles as farmers, emphasized that they, too, were sacrificing in this time of crisis, and expanded the meaning of patriotism to embrace an altered version of civil religion.

For a group traditionally satisfied with being called "The Quiet In The Land," Mennonites' attempts to accentuate active, noticeable dimensions of their loyalty was an exercise in image-reversal. Members of the faith who before the war heartily agreed with C. E. Krehbiel that: "[Ours] is not the kind of loyalty that has a lot of hoopla that we have to let everybody know about it,"³⁹ were following a very different example in the wake of U. S. intervention--an example that even C. E. Krehbiel was setting. "It is important that a person ask himself very directly: what can I do for my country to show that I am loyal to it," Krehbiel advised, stressing further that each individual "has to be ready to do something and in some way to serve."⁴⁰ Krehbiel used strong words in warning members of the consequences of a passive witness: "The government then has no obligation toward us if we haven't been active citizens,"⁴¹ he warned.

As part of their effort to help call attention to visible aspects of loyal citizenship, Mennonites expressed interest in giving generously to those in need. When The Mennonite first addressed the war issue,

the search for ways in which Mennonites could make non-military contributions to their communities was given high priority. S. M. Grubb stated:

We have always insisted that testimony against war does not make us any the worst [sic] citizens. In times of war it remains for us to show that we are good citizens. . . . Binding up wounds, carrying helpless ones out of danger, helping innocent sufferers, are Christ-like duties which should appeal to every able-bodied man among us.⁴²

The Christian Monitor was more austere in reminding Mennonites of their civil and Christian obligations.

Editor H. Frank Reist wrote:

[O]ur religious convictions . . . [do] not excuse us from bearing our share of the burden to relieve suffering. If we refuse to take up arms the world has a right to expect that we exemplify the spirit of the Master by giving liberally of our means and service for the succor of those in need.⁴³

MC Mennonites acted upon the advice of Reist and others to relieve suffering and give liberally of their services by creating The Relief Commission For War Sufferers in December of 1917. Understanding that "Our militant countrymen have had a right to challenge the sincerity of our faith," an MC member, J. R. Allyger, suggested that official Mennonite relief and

reconstruction organizations would turn "a protest or mere passivity" into "positive alternatives" and "construct[ive] ideals [that] transcend the mere objections."⁴⁴ J. C. Meyer, coordinator of Mennonite reconstruction efforts, concurred: "We as Mennonites owe it to our generation to carry out our ideals in the social order."⁴⁵ Cognizant of the efforts by their MC brethren, Der Herold encouraged GC Mennonites to follow their lead: "The Old Mennonites [MC's] have already collected \$100,000 to be used for rehabilitation in the war areas. Wouldn't it be in place for the other branches of Mennonites to also go in this direction?"⁴⁶ The GC equivalent turned out to be The Emergency Relief Commission, an agency that collected in excess of \$40,000 and periodically printed lists of contributors in both The Mennonite and Der Herold.⁴⁷

Daniel Kauffman of the Gospel Herald was less concerned with specific ways in which Mennonites could help in the crisis than he was in reminding members of the desirable traits of loyal citizenship that they already possessed. Noting that, "nonresistant people . . . are peaceable and law-abiding and the governmental expenses on their account are practically nothing; that they are sober, conscientious, and industrious," he drew the conclusion that they "contribute to the nation's stability and wealth . . . and hence are a positive contributing force to the cause of righteousness [which] makes the nations desire them as citizens. . . ."⁴⁸

Not only did Mennonites look for immediate ways to relieve suffering and paint a respectable character sketch of themselves, they also highlighted their role as farmers. Since one of the major occupations of Mennonites was farming, and harvesting food became as essential as manufacturing munitions, an argument for Mennonite loyalty based upon the fact that they were hard-working farmers was difficult to refute. Mennonites did not need to convince the public that the farmer was of great value to the country during the war. Generals in the throes of battle and the President in a national address had publicly praised their efforts. John Pershing, the commander-in-chief of the Allied forces, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the American farmer through the Secretary of Agriculture:

"Will you please convey to farmers of America our profound appreciation of their patriotic services to the country and to the allied armies in the field. . . Food is of vital military necessity for us and for our Allies, and from the day of our entry into the war America's armies of food producers have rendered invaluable service to the Allied cause by supporting the soldiers at the front through their devoted and splendidly successful work in the fields and furrows at home."⁴⁹

President Wilson echoed that appreciation in a national

address to the people. In praise of the farmer, Wilson predicted at one point that: "The toil, the intelligence, the energy, the foresight, the self-sacrifice, and devotion of the farmers of America will, I believe, bring to a triumphant conclusion this great last war."⁵⁰ After hearing Wilson's appeal to the farmers to join the crusade by providing food, C. E. Krehbiel reprinted part of the address in Der Herold and voiced his approval by responding: "Certainly no good citizen will have scruples on this point."⁵¹ Aaron Loucks, writing in the Gospel Herald concurred. Farming during wartime "cannot be wrong when by so doing we are supplying the necessities of life for ourselves and our fellowmen."⁵²

While Loucks wanted to ease members' consciences on the righteousness of providing for a country at war, he, like many Mennonites, was aware of the tremendous moral pressure on Mennonite farmers to feed the hungry in the face of skyrocketing prices on farm commodities. Tobacco, the crop raised by Mennonites in the East, nearly trippled in price from 1914-1918, and wheat, the primary crop produced by Mennonites in the great plains states, doubled in price in the same time period. Mennonites did not want to be recognized for their fattened pocketbooks alongside their military exemptions.⁵³ To circumvent that association, Loucks urged Mennonites to "produce the necessaries of life, not only for ourselves, but for others who will have

need and cannot be producers." For as he warned: "unless food becomes more plentiful prices will continue to advance until they will be beyond the reach of the common population."⁵⁴

The need for food in winning the war on all fronts gave rural Mennonites a wonderful opportunity to boast that their occupations provided ample proof of loyalty to country. Since Der Herold's readership was almost exclusively rural, the paper frequently sprinkled official government advertisements urging farmers to "Cultivate the Soil," "Keep it Coming," "Send the wheat, meat, fats, and sugar--the fuel for fighters," as "Victory is a question of Stamina."⁵⁵ The paper even broke editorial policy in the April 18, 1918, issue by printing an illustration that depicted the farmer of America as an integral role in America's wars. The mightily-built farmer in the foreground (who could have easily been taken as Mennonite) with jutted jaw and sleeves rolled up is hard at work sewing wheat. A small sketch in the background shows a determined farmer of the colonial era (presumably during the Revolutionary war) pulling a plow. Both images are set in a background of the stars and stripes, and the caption below reads: "PATRIOTS." The message is crystal clear: Farming has always played a major role in the country's welfare in times of war. The farmer is as much the patriot as the man on the firing line. The editor added: "It is the duty of every Christian at this time to help with

raising food. Half the world is going hungry and it could be that much of it is going to waste. But that does not excuse us from wasting one kernel."⁵⁶

Mennonites relished the ability to proudly proclaim that "our farmer is as important as anybody in the trenches."⁵⁷ Occasionally, however, Mennonites exaggerated the importance of their role as the nation's food producers. Daniel Kauffman could not suppress an air of superiority. "War is not the only thing that keeps up a nation," he remarked confidently. "Even now it is proclaimed by the war authorities that this war will be won, not by the armies but by the tillers of the soil."⁵⁸ Not only did Mennonites see themselves as essential and loyal citizens, but they harbored an exaggerated belief that they, not those on the firing line, would be the real persons responsible for bringing the war to an end. Kauffman's statement was a prime example of a rhetorical problem that Mennonites faced. In the very process of establishing themselves as loyal citizens, it was easy to praise themselves for doing the "right" things, which, of course, implied that the rest of the nation was doing the wrong things.

A closely related, but more pronounced, attempt to re-affirm their loyal citizenship in a non-military way was to demonstrate that they could make larger sacrifices, since they would not participate in the war. The concept of sacrifice is rich with symbolic import and supreme irony in that the very best argument one can

make in support of a good is one's willingness to
sacrifice himself for it.⁵⁹ Mennonites wanted to make
larger sacrifices in order to give what they hoped would
be sterling testimony to the fact that they were like
their fellow citizens in many respects and unlike the
irreligious nonresister.

As previously discussed, Mennonites denied charges
of insincerity in the hope that they would be judged
apart from the general class of conscientious objectors.
But Mennonites also felt that it was necessary to
respond positively to these charges. By showing the
public that they were willing "to go the extra mile" to
relieve suffering, Mennonites believed that this would
be ample proof to demonstrate that they were indeed a
different kind of C. O. and ones whom their fellow
citizens should be proud of. Mennonite leaders strongly
urged their members to do more for those in need than
most citizens were doing. S. M. Grubb envisioned that
Mennonites would remain outcasts if they did not make
such large sacrifices. He frankly remarked: "Should our
people not respond, even with greater energy and in
greater numbers than those who believe in war, they
would deservingly bring upon themselves the contempt of
being slackers."⁶⁰ H. Frank Reist, writing in The
Christian Monitor, echoed Grubb's sentiments: "If we
want to give indisputable evidence that we are seeking
exemption from military service on scriptural grounds
and not because of cowardice or in order to escape

making sacrifice, we must do so by making a larger sacrifice."⁶¹ Similarly, Aaron Loucks realized that Mennonites needed to seize as many opportunities as they could in order to prove their sincerity as conscientious objectors. He told members:

We should always be willing to contribute to causes which we can support in amounts greater than those asked of us for the support of the war. We should not shrink from hardships or sacrifices, but show that it is wholly a matter of conscience with us. Let us prove our sincerity.⁶²

Daniel Kauffman challenged members to take action immediately. "This is your time," he began, "to prove that your failure to support war measures is in no sense due to a desire to take it easy or to shirk responsibilities." He pressed the issue by asking: "How does your contribution toward the relief of war sufferers compare with the contribution of the average person who has no scruples against war?" Admonishing members who had failed to perform their Christian duty, he asked: "Can you point to your record and prove that you have . . . contributed liberally to the support of the needy, even beyond the suggestion of the Government or the demands of reasonable people?"⁶³ Mennonite Church member J. E. Hartzler was even more demanding of his fellow members. He was determined to make Mennonites appear to the public as courageous, patriotic, and even

heroic for performing so many good works. He exclaimed:

Every member of the church should do more than the soldier on the firing line. We should do more than buy Liberty Bonds. We must do more than simply contribute to the Red Cross fund. We must go the 'second mile,' and as a church we must do more toward relief and reconstruction than can possibly be done through military avenues If the church will start something soon . . . the world will have no occasion to point the finger at us and say 'slacker.'

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As all of these writers indicate, it was of utmost importance for Mennonites to "bend over backwards" to demonstrate that they, too, were loyal American citizens. Yet in wishing to make larger sacrifices through non-militaristic avenues, Mennonites were giving these acts of loyalty higher status than military sacrifices. Mennonites trod a fine line between identifying with their fellow citizens and appearing morally superior. The writer who raised the status of the Mennonite farmer above that of his fellow citizens overstepped that line. So, too, did Hartzler in his great enthusiasm to show the public that Mennonites were the most industrious, loyal citizens. In one self-righteous passage, Hartzler exhorted:

Every man and woman in the Mennonite Church can render a greater and more noble service to

God and to the human family than can the man who enlists in military service and dies on the firing line. It is not a difficult thing to die for a country; but it takes a great faith and courage to live for God and our⁶⁵ country.

This statement only served to distance Mennonites from the wider public and it further exemplified the rhetorical problem. Attempts to identify themselves as patriotic Americans resulted in arguing for the rightness of the Mennonite position because Mennonites also identified themselves as disciples of Christ.

Mennonites went to great lengths to prove that loyalty to one's country could be demonstrated by doing good deeds, giving of financial resources, growing food for others, and sacrificing for the good of the country. Yet allegiance to the state was the acid test of patriotism in war time. Unwavering support of the government in war or peace times was the mark of the true patriot.

The Mennonite faith strictly forbade unquestioning obedience to government where it conflicted with allegiance to Christ's principle of nonresistance. The flag and the cross could not be worshiped together. Civil religion was heresy. It would have appeared that Mennonites had no recourse but to be silent about this aspect of patriotism. Before the war, Mennonites had frowned on Fourth of July celebrations, referring to the

holiday as "a celebration in which prayer, patriotism, fire-crackers, and foolishness formed a prominent part,"⁶⁶ and "nothing for Christian people to have a part in."

During the war, one might have assumed that they simply refrained from commenting on that part of the American psyche they could never understand for fear of retributions. The July 4, 1918 issue of Der Herold told another story, however. Two articles, one a Fourth of July message from the government and another from a Mennonite minister, essentially overrode the Mennonite stance of nonresistance because each identified the government with God. On the front page, readers were greeted by a patriotic message from the government printed in English reminding its citizens that "Now is the hour for unquestioning loyalty to constituted authority, doing what it orders, obeying what it requests, sacrificing when it asks, suffering, if need be, with the full hope and assurance that thus we are opening up the way to victory. . . . To authority in these days, as unto God, the inquiry, the only inquiry of the right-thinking American should be, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"⁶⁷ In another time or place, Mennonites would have been shocked and horrified to discover such a blatant endorsement of civil religion in their church paper. Even in 1918, amidst the crisis of citizenship Mennonites were experiencing, it seemed strangely inappropriate material and an extremist effort at identification.

Yet the peculiarity of this issue of Der Herold becomes greater in light of the fact that a Fourth of July sermon delivered by H. D. Penner a General Conference minister and reprinted in German surrounded the official Fourth of July address and echoed its themes! Penner preached to members of the faith that "Every true citizen should be thankful to God for our country and we ought to express it. It ought to be expressed in a prominent manner; don't keep it quiet."⁶⁸ Elsewhere, Penner attempted to reconcile loyalties to God and country by pronouncing: "God created us wanting us to be happy and for this purpose he gave us the ingredients of happiness--the family, the state, and the church. None of these elements can be ignored or even scorned and neglected. The state shouldn't be neglected anymore than the other two--family and church."⁶⁹ Rarely, did Mennonites venerate the state in the same breath as the church, treating them as equal in all respects. According to the dictates of their faith, Penner's sermon could have been tagged heretical. Explanations for the sudden outburst of patriotism that necessarily involved a forfeiture of Mennonite principles are scarce. One can surmise that because Mennonite tracts printed in German were under surveillance by the government for subversive activities that editors, like C. E. Krehbiel, wanted to play it safe and give the pretense of patriotism. But such an interpretation belies the fact that Mennonites

formulated their self-defense in their own periodicals precisely because they circulated in the safe confines of their own communities. Additionally, if Mennonites were threatened by government surveillance, they would not have challenged the administration's policy or questioned the legitimacy of democracy as they did in other issues of the paper. Perhaps in their zeal to identify with their patriotic neighbors, they temporarily lost sight of their religious distinctiveness. Perhaps this issue of Der Herold was more of an extraordinary exception than the rule.

Such a rationalization, while plausible in many respects, fails to account for the policy of printing the emblem of the United States flag at the top of the editorial section of every issue of Der Herold between the years 1917-1918.⁷⁰ Whether the editorial for that week covered the war, or church activities, a picture of a waving American flag identified the first column on the second or fourth page as the editorial section. While a picture of a flag does not call for unquestioning allegiance to the state or equate loyalty to God with loyalty to country, as the Fourth of July messages tended to do, it was, nonetheless, an oddity in a Mennonite newspaper. Why a flag, Mennonites might have asked, and not a cross? The unbridled American patriotism evidenced in Der Herold during the war, like the unabashed support of Germany before the war, projected the image of a people clumsily struggling with

how to address political issues through Mennonite spectacles.

For what ever the reason, Der Herold's flair for patriotism, as it was defined by the state, was not standard fare in other Mennonite tracts of either the General Conference or the Mennonite Church. Since Mennonites very much wanted to appear patriotic, though they could not carry a gun or pledge unwavering allegiance to the state, the meaning of patriotism was often altered to encompass what they could do for their country. The Mennonite recognized the importance of this and devoted much of one issue to addressing the question, "What Is Patriotism?" R. F. Landis, the author, cited common definitions of patriotism before giving his own, which "more accurately" reflected the meaning of the term. Landis contended that patriotism is not a brave, fearless spirit for a barren or cultivated piece of land or a country. "It is rather a brave fearless spirit in the individual for the principles on which our country is established." Landis further contended: "Patriotism is a backward look with a forward step, looking backward and forging ahead." To illustrate this point, Landis proclaimed:

Let us be patriotic, let us look back to Abraham Lincoln and the boys of '61 and '65. These men aided to make men of different color free, from the bonds of slavery. Translating anew the words of Paul that with Christ there

is neither Greek nor Barbarian, neither bond
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nor free, but all one in Christ.

Landis's initial comments appear to reinforce the conventional meaning of patriotism, but as he applied this definition, it became apparent that fighting for one's country was not a patriotic gesture. Landis argued:

What we need is a patriotism that will illuminate our hearts so that we can look back, not only over sixty some years to the Civil war, nor simply one hundred forty-one years to America's Independence, but rather over the nineteen centuries which have passed. In the distance see Him who delivered the City . . . who taught that prayer and love for personal enemies was the all-conquering weapon of the kingdom of heaven. . . . The patriot of God, every one clad in the whole armor of God, has the only true and ultimate weapon of
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peace.

The fearless spirit and the war terminology remain, but intimations of aggression, war, destruction, or killing are absent. The symbol of patriotism is not the flag, but the cross. The true patriot does not raise the sword of combat but offers the branch of peace.

This constructive form of patriotism was also evident in the Gospel Herald. Kauffman stated: "It should also be made plain that there is a difference

between constructive patriotism which seeks the best interests of home and country and the destructive spirit of the mob which in the name of 'patriotism' inflicts violence upon the in-offending man who tries to obey the Word of God as he understands it."⁷³ Kauffman disapproved of the "misguided" patriotic intentions of mobs to set the Mennonites straight, but he also echoed the sentiments of Landis in rejecting the meaning of patriotism as fighting for what one thinks is a righteous, democratic cause.

Mennonites like Landis recast patriotism in the constructive terms of Christian love, peace, and compassion. Yet, oddly enough, they were also attracted by the wartime terminology that marked the spirit of American patriotism. Landis spoke of "the ultimate weapon" of peace and of the true patriot being "clad in the whole armor" of God. Similarly, The Christian Monitor advocated Christ-like gestures of patriotism, but adopted militaristic metaphors. Reist stated: "[W]e are ready and willing to cheerfully make a possible sacrifice for Him, and . . . we are willing and anxious to have our boys and girls enlist in the service of the Master."⁷⁴ The GC leader, P. H. Richert, expressed the same wish for young Mennonites. Writing to Kauffman, Richert said: "May our boys in gratitude so much more willingly follow the Lord's draft into his service when peace comes again."⁷⁵

Wartime terminology, while decidedly inappropriate

taken literally, renewed the biblical stance of nonresistance with its timely meaning, figuratively applied. More broadly conceived, Mennonites' words for God and their faith principles, by definition, had to be used analogically. The supernatural is the realm of the ineffable, and language by definition is not well suited to the expression of the ineffable. Hence, our words for God are necessarily borrowed from our words for the sort of things that we can talk about literally.⁷⁶ Mennonites could make the world of the supernatural understandable and even enticing by referring to the Almighty as a "patriot" and Christ's teachings as "the ultimate weapon."

Mennonites altered the meaning of patriotism considerably to accomodate their Christian identity. Yet they did not completely reject the basis of American patriotism. Mennonites made a concerted effort to identify with the democratic goals of the nation, even though they could not support the democratic means. Grubb explained most eloquently that Mennonites were not so different from other Americans in this regard, and in the process skillfully demonstrated how parallel structure creates rhythm, enhances the precision of language, and creates an impression that the rhetor⁷⁷ thinks in a very orderly fashion.

Though we are a people of peace we no more
want the things that our enemies would impose
upon the world than do the rest of our

countrymen. Indeed, we might say we have the same goal in view as they. We want the world to be safe for democracy; we want the rights of smaller nations respected; we want the word of a people to be sacredly and honorably kept; we want the hand of the assassin to be stayed; we want the virtues of women to be respected; we want the aged and helpless to be protected, not butchered . . . we want these things as much as those who are fighting for them . . . but we want to go about it in a different way.⁷⁸

General Conference leader J. G. Ewerts whole-heartily agreed with Grubb. "We long to help this great Republic, dedicated to liberty and democracy, to realize its noblest aims. These aims we approve of, even where we cannot approve of the means by which they are to be attained. . . ."⁷⁹

Although Mennonites supported the "noble aims" of their fellow Americans, the question arises as to whether Mennonites had an alternative means of achieving these desired goals. In fact, Mennonites did offer a "third way" of Christian relevance. Ewert suggested that:

When two sides are grappling in a deadly conflict, it is not true that there is no other way out but for one or the other side to 'win' by knocking the other opponent down. . .

. there is a third way, the Christian way of reconciliation and understanding, of forebearance and forgiveness, of patience and love, that reaches the divine height of loving one's enemies.⁸⁰

The Mennonite solution to the world crisis was totally consistent with their peace stance. It was not, however, a realistic alternative. Mennonites failed to articulate exactly how they would implement the "third way" of Christian reconciliation on a world-wide basis. Moreover, the third way of loving one's enemies had no political relevance. For political persons, there were only two sides to this war. The Christian way was⁸¹ decidedly inappropriate in a polarized world.

Mennonites did not expect Americans to agree with their solution to the crisis. It is less clear, however, whether Mennonites actually believed that they could appear as patriotic Americans in the public's eye after changing the meaning of patriotism. Writing with militaristic metaphors, a bold, courageous tone, and supporting the democratic ends of their countrymen might lead one to conclude that they hoped their efforts would be well received by the wider citizenry. Yet these strategies were so riddled with flaws that this conclusion seems unlikely.

As had been the problem with other Mennonite efforts to reconcile their American and Christian identities, this strategy left an impression of

Mennonite self-aggrandizement. Altering the meaning of patriotism not only gave Mennonites a chance to see themselves as patriots, but it emphasized that their "constructive" form of patriotism was good, and the "destructive" patriotism of the vast majority was bad. Rather than demonstrate their patriotic ties with the larger community, Mennonites highlighted their patriotism at the expense of their fellow citizens.

A more basic flaw with this strategy is that it was not realistic to think that such a powerful, emotive word as "patriotism" could be given a new meaning. Rhetorical critic Richard Weaver writes that words such as "democracy," "American," and "patriotism" are "God-terms"--"expressions about which all other expressions are ranked as subordinate."⁸² As God-terms, it is difficult to change their meanings. To begin with, they defy definition in the usual manner because people fear their potency will be taken away. They are also publicly-agreed upon attitudes grounded in a particular way of viewing the world. Perhaps most importantly, they serve the psychological function of upholding national egotism.⁸³ When Mennonites defined patriotism as peace through prayer, they weakened its impact, they challenged the American world-view that, at times, peace can only be achieved through war, and they bruised the American ego by claiming that to be a soldier, to carry a gun, or to die for one's country was not true patriotism.

From a Mennonite perspective, however, these efforts served the important psychological purpose of reducing the discomfort of holding fast to two seemingly contradictory identities. Claiming to be an American citizen in the midst of war involved an expression of patriotism. Since Mennonites could not support the war militarily, they were forced to change the meaning of the term. In this way, they could, at least in their own minds, affirm their loyalty to the country without being disloyal to their faith.

Loyalty With Minimal Ties To The Military

Could the doctrine of nonresistance be stretched to allow for additional patriotic acts--acts marginally associated with the military? Mennonites asked themselves this searching question as they looked for additional ways to repair their image. Some Mennonites rationalized that their consciences would allow them to support non-violent activities such as Liberty Loan Drives, the Red Cross, and non-combatant duty, even though these were a part of the war machine.

One important test of loyalty associated with the military arm of the government was contributing to the war bond drives. Much of the support generated for these drives came from government agencies, state officials, and the President himself. On more than one occasion, Wilson told Americans: "To subscribe to the Liberty Loan is to perform a service of patriotism."⁸⁴ Kansas

Mennonites heard Governor Capper exhort: "I appeal to every citizen of Kansas to meet this call of the Nation generously and promptly."⁸⁵ Official solicitations for "patriotic" support were boosted by a well-orchestrated drive conducted by the Treasury Department. An Honor Flag would be awarded to each community that subscribed the sales quota set for it by the Federal Reserve District Liberty Loan Committee. A blue star to be sewn to the flag would be awarded to communities each time they increased their quotas by 100 percent. An Honor Role bearing the words: "These are the people of our town who are helping to win the war" would be displayed prominently in each community.⁸⁶

It was difficult for some Mennonites to resist this patriotic non-violent act of goodwill. H. P. Krehbiel rationalized that "a war bond is a kind of tax, and Jesus told us to pay taxes."⁸⁷ Not entirely, sure, however, what the Mennonite stance should be on this issue, C. E. Krehbiel initially discussed liberty bond drives cautiously. Der Herold was, for much of 1917, an informational source for readers on what bond drives entailed. Everything from how much loans cost, when they were due, how much interest they accrued, to how one made out an application could be found within its pages.⁸⁸ Of course, the very fact that these "information pieces" existed at all, and that they could be found in the editorial section, was evidence of at least indirect support for this war-related act of

goodwill.

Krehbiel, too, became more opinionated as the war progressed. An early April 1918, issue of the paper, for example bore little resemblance to a Mennonite newspaper. One page alone carried fourteen advertisements and official bulletins encouraging support for liberty loan drives. The choice was simple: "Your choice: Bonds or Bondage?" "Go On? or Go Under?" "Will you lend your money and be free or hoard it now and pay it out in Tribute when Liberty is lost?" Even a vicious anti-German ad designed to whip up financial support for the war passed editorial scrutiny: "Carry the war to the kaiser," the ad demanded, "by lending your Cash to Uncle Sam. Every Liberty Bond you buy hits the Hun a blow."⁸⁹ While these hard sell advertisements in support of the war appeared out of place in a Mennonite newspaper, the aggressive, anti-German ad most certainly was a glaring contradiction in a German-Mennonite paper.

Mennonites were not unaffected by the onslaught of campaigning for war bonds. In some localities Mennonites justified giving money to the drives because they were promised that their contribution would be used to purchase food, not ammunition.⁹⁰ All too frequently, however, Mennonites who purchased war bonds did so as a result of the extreme pressure put on them by their fellow citizens. Like the abrasive posters, flyers, and advertisements that demanded the purchase of bonds,

fellow citizens angrily inquired of Mennonites: "Where have you classified yourself in this great drive for Liberty? There are but two classes--you fall with the one or the other. You are either placing yourself with the patriot or the slacker, with honor crowned or with the yellow streak."⁹¹ In the face of such threats by Americans who took it upon themselves to enforce loyalty to the country, some Mennonites were willing to bend the principle of nonresistance.

Most Mennonites, however, did not buy war bonds because these were voluntary contributions that, in effect, represented one's direct support of the war. Rather, they attempted to devise bond plans that would allow them to contribute financially in ways disconnected from the military. The MC leader, Aaron Loucks, was especially instrumental in proposing alternative loan plans to satisfy conscientious scruples. Both the Lancaster and Franconia conferences of the Mennonite Church adopted his plan to deposit money in local banks for local purposes only, and agreed that Louck's proposition would serve in lieu of purchasing Liberty Bonds.⁹² So important was it to find an acceptable alternative to signing up for liberty loans and to hit upon an alternative that would get official sanction from the Treasury Department, that Loucks published hundreds of copies of a tract outlining a proposed loan system entitled: "Meeting The Issue."⁹³ Unfortunately, the Treasury department could not endorse

the Mennonite loan plans since it was not compulsory to purchase liberty bonds, though it did give assent to the arrangement being a private contract between the depositor and his local bank.⁹⁴ After their encounters with liberty bond collectors, Mennonites might have also asked themselves: Could not the government bend its position to allow for alternative patriotic acts?

Another test of loyalty associated with the military branch of the government was contributing to or participating in the Red Cross. The President was actively involved in whipping up support for a war-related activity. Wilson vigorously promoted the Red Cross as a worthy Christian cause in stating: "This cross . . . is an emblem of Christianity itself."⁹⁵ This was yet another patriotic, non-violent cause that Mennonites found difficult to resist. As a whole, Mennonites of the General Conference rationalized that they could support the Red Cross. But an official endorsement of this organization, however, was not without expressed reservation by key GC leaders. In the General Conference statement from the Western District to the Secretary of War, delegates offered reluctant support for the Red Cross. The uneasiness with which delegates arrived at a position was captured in the line: "The Conference cannot attempt to dissuade those who can do so freely and feel called to do voluntary medical service in the army under the Red Cross in times of war. . . ."⁹⁶ That the resolution was so negatively

stated reflected the ambivalence that Mennonites had toward a constructive program tied to a destructive organization. The Red Cross aided the destitute and wounded, it represented Christian aims, after all its symbol was the cross, but how closely was it supervised by the War Department and to what extent did it represent only the Allied forces? Mennonites wondered. Though Mennonites did not arrive at a satisfactory answer to this question, delegates of the Western District grudgingly elected to overlook its ties to the military establishment and focus upon its assistance in bringing the war to an end.

Other Mennonite leaders voiced little hesitation in championing the Red Cross. Here was a way to prove our sincerity as devoted Christians and as loyal citizens, they reasoned. S. M. Grubb, for instance, rationalized supporting the Red Cross by arguing that not to do so was to take a pious, insensitive stance:

I certainly cannot fold my hands and say: 'I am a pacifist,' when millions are . . . in misery craving for the drink of cold water given in the disciples' name. Hospital work Red Cross, YMCA, reconstruction and sanitary work offer opportunities for the service of our people to an extent that could use all
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their strength.

Krehbiel, too, saw no incongruity in supporting the Red Cross and opposing the war. When the campaign to

raise one million dollars for the Red Cross was publicized, Krehbiel responded without hesitation: "The Herold is glad to take a part in this," explaining that: "The Red Cross is the only organization that does not draw the line between friend and enemy. It respects both The Red Cross should be supported because of this by those who do not take up arms." Aware that contributing Mennonite resources to this organization was a point of dispute, and perhaps in anticipation of resistance to his position among the Herold readership, Krehbiel added: "Even though this might be against the conscience of some people because they don't take the sword, [failing to support the Red Cross] is not carrying out the point correctly. It is told to us by Christ himself that healing should be promoted by the Christian. Remember the Samaritan did this. The Master, himself, was always ready to show compassion." ⁹⁸ With members clear on this issue, Krehbiel must have reasoned, the repeated advice in Der Herold ⁹⁹ for readers to give their last dollars to the Red Cross would not be interpreted as an insensitive command that violated conscience but as helpful advice that eased conscience.

Mennonites who were not convinced that the Red Cross was a compassionate, Christian organization, read full-page advertisements in their church newspapers sponsored by Mennonite businesses to solidify this image and convince them otherwise. One advertisement in Der Herold highlighted both the humanistic and Christian

aspects of the Red Cross, by personifying the organization as a good samaritan and a compassionate mother. As "the Greatest Mother in the World," the Red Cross was "showing mercy in a healthy, human way," "eager to comfort," "rebuilding," "reaching out," "warming hearts," and "healing wounds." Its constructive, humanizing dimensions absorbed, readers also learned of its Christian message of peace and reconciliation. The Red Cross did not stand in judgment, but like the good samaritan "stretch[ed] forth her hands to all in need; to Jew or Gentile, black or white; knowing no favorite, yet favoring all."¹⁰⁰ Ads like this one raised anew the pressing question: How could a peace-loving, God-fearing people fail to support such a constructive effort by Christian people to bring peace on earth?

Although supporting the Red Cross represented an important way for Mennonites to affirm their loyalties to God and country, this identification strategy was not very effective because the GC's position was not widely adopted by other Mennonites. The Mennonite Church believed that the whole military--from the army down to the Red Cross--was directly or indirectly out to destroy the enemy. MC Mennonites might have corrected Krehbiel's observation that "the Red Cross is the only organization that does not draw the line between friend and enemy" by pointing to the fine print in the ad that appeared in his paper. The Red Cross was hardly the good samaritan

"knowing no favorite" because it only brought relief to "every War torn allied country," it was only there "to help your soldier boy," and it was "enthusiastically¹⁰¹ endorsed by your Army, your Navy and your Allies."

The MC's rationale for standing in opposition to the Red Cross was clearly stated in the Southwestern Pennsylvania conference minutes early in 1917.

We also believe that the Red Cross, when serving in a civilian capacity, is a worthy cause; but when, as in existing circumstances, the Red Cross is taken under the military arm of the Government and becomes an adjunct of the War Department nonresistant people can not consistently render aid under such circumstances but should contribute their money to other causes and do their deeds of¹⁰² charity through other channels.

Taking a "purist" stance, MC Mennonites would not bend the principle of nonresistance and support the Red Cross in order to identify with the wider American public. For these Mennonites support for the Red Cross infringed on an integral principle of Mennonitism that any participation in carnal warfare was evil. Supporting the Red Cross was too high a price to pay for demonstrating one's loyalty.

It was unfortunate that this issue was a major point of dispute for the two conferences because in showing a lack of consistency to outsiders, Mennonites

created grounds for charges of insincerity. Furthermore, support for the Red Cross suggested that Mennonites might eventually join the war effort, since they appeared to differ about the meaning of their doctrines. More seriously, however, was the fact that it threatened to weaken the faith, as members issued reprimanding words and showed their disapproval of each other's position.

Another source of conflict between the two Conferences involved a third test of loyalty associated with the war, that of performing non-combatant duty. Mennonite men drafted by the Selective Service Law had more pressing decisions concerning the extent of their loyalty than their brethren back home. Almost all Mennonites affected by the service law accepted the order to report to training camps in the fall of 1917, since the law provided that "no person shall be exempted from service in any capacity that the President shall declare non-combatant" and violators faced charges of desertion. While in camp, Mennonites took advantage of the law which temporarily granted them the right to reject wearing the uniform and participating in drills. But when the long-awaited order defining non-combatant service was finally issued, it was a disappointment, because it failed to make provision for service outside the military organization. Wilson officially defined non-combatant service as 1) service in the medical corps, 2) service in the quartermaster corps, and 3)

service in the engineering corps.¹⁰³ This was an unsatisfactory ruling for Mennonites of both Conferences. While Mennonites would not have to carry a gun, they would be directly connected with the military and with the purpose of taking human lives. J. S. Hartzler complained that such work "would suggest service back from the line of danger [and] that Mennonites accepted it [only] because they were afraid of danger, and that was not true."¹⁰⁴

Few of the MC draftees accepted any form of non-combatant duty, while GC draftees were more disposed to accept non-combatant duty.¹⁰⁵ Those who refused to obey the President's order were sent to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas where they were given a hearing before a government-appointed tribunal to judge the sincerity of their religious convictions. If found sincere, they were recommended to be furloughed for agriculture. If not found sincere, they would suffer the penalty of disciplinary imprisonment.¹⁰⁶

Mennonites were divided on whether or not they could bend the doctrine of nonresistance to support Liberty Loan Drives, the Red Cross, and non-combatant duty in order to prove their loyalty and Christian goodness. Because these activities were a part of the American war machine, many Mennonites feared that going along with their fellow citizens in support of these activities would forfeit the essentials of Mennonitism. Because Mennonites did not present a unified front in

support of these activities, the attempts made by some members to prove their loyalty to outsiders went without notice.

Showcasing in print their constructive efforts of volunteering for relief work, sewing wheat, purchasing war bonds, and serving in the Red Cross was evidence that Mennonite rhetoric of self-defense was marked by great diversity and, upon occasion, contradiction. The breadth of the arguments designed to re-define their image bore testimony to the fact that Mennonites had become acculturated into the American way of life and wanted desperately to maintain their status as loyal American citizens in their own eyes and in the public's eye. The more arguments Mennonites constructed, the better chance they had of proving their loyalty and of explaining an easily misunderstood religious position to outsiders. The contradictoriness of the arguments could only be expected from a people who had ignored the inevitable crisis for so long that they were unprepared to address the war issue with a clear purpose. It is little wonder that some arguments were not convincing, occasionally contradictory, and had the potential to backfire. Yet, given the fact that Mennonites constructed positions with little or no time to discuss them with the wider fellowship, one has to admire the range of opinions that reached publication and the steady optimism that Mennonites displayed in facing such a formidable, rhetorical challenge.

Perspective By Incongruity

Church newspapers and Conference statements provided the prime forums for the range of arguments designed to purify the Mennonite image. Members of the faith received position statements in piece-meal fashion from their ministers, editors, and official representatives. It was incumbent upon individuals to fit the various apologetic statements into a coherent whole.

The notable exception to this rhetorical procedure was provided by a little-known General Conference Kansas farmer by the name of Gerald Dahlke. In a sixteen page pocket-size pamphlet entitled: "A Defense of the Mennonites Against Recent Attacks Made Upon Them,"¹⁰⁶ Dahlke constructed an apologia, complete with story line, vivid language, and a host of inter-related arguments designed to refute the "cruel attacks" against them and bolster the Mennonites image as upright American citizens. Though printed in English, Dahlke advertised his definitive defense of the Mennonites in German-Mennonite newspapers, perhaps under the assumption that Mennonites of recent German descent faced the most formidable obstacles in repairing a tarnished image among the wider public. For only a small fee members of the faith could purchase a "pre-packaged" apologia.

Dahlke's defense of the Mennonites resembled, in

some respects, the rhetorical efforts of others to purify the church's tainted image. He implicated the government for failing to make good on President Grant's promise of military exemption. Mennonites had suffered persecution everywhere, Dahlke noted, and so came to "the United States which had from the very beginning been the home of religious liberty and freedom." Like so many other Mennonite rhetors, Dahlke recognized that blaming the government for their unpleasant situation temporarily removed them from the spotlight and, in his own mind, forced the government to account for its inconsistent, dishonorable, actions.

Dahlke also perpetuated the mistaken assumption that Mennonites did not need to publicize their defense outside Mennonite circles; truth was self-evident for those wishing to seek it out. Ostensibly, the target audience for the tract was the outside public. In his opening paragraph, Dahlke asserted: "This article is written with no other object in view than to put the Mennonites in the proper light and justify their stand on recent events against the undeserved attacks made upon them." More directly, he claimed that "After having gained a full knowledge about the history of the Mennonites, especially learning the lofty motives that prompted their actions in taking the stand they take, this class of people will be appreciated and loved." By every indication, the discourse was formulated with non-Mennonites in mind. Yet Dahlke made no effort to expose

the tract to the wider public and non-Mennonites were not going to come searching for an apologia among Mennonite publications. Following the lead of other rhetors, Dahlke was content to "justify their stand" against "the undeserved attacks" by rehearsing the defense for the faithful.

In repairing the damaged image of the Mennonites Dahlke employed many of the same strategies utilized by other Mennonite rhetors. He denied that the Mennonite stance was insincere. Military exemption (never referred to as nonresistance) was not the stance "of a tramp," but the stance taken by "their ancestors on account of their religious principles and scruples"--a principle for which they became "martyrs during the middle ages from 1524 to 1614." He redefined loyalty to one's country. The Mennonites "are as desirable citizens, judged from the viewpoint of their worth and integrity as any other class of people in this the best country in this world of ours. . . . They have always done their duty." Dahlke provided examples of their benevolent disposition when called to the aid of their neighbors in distress. Loyalty was clearly associated with good deeds, not carrying a gun. He portrayed Mennonites as sacrificing in extraordinary ways, "alleviat[ing] suffering and preserv[ing] life" wherever "they could lend a helping hand." Dahlke also identified with the democratic goals of the country. "The whole world longs for a general world peace. In the midst of war, the

heart of the soldier even on the European battlefields longs for peace, the peace that has been preached by the Mennonites for many years, that has been advocated by President Wilson and supported by Governor Capper of Kansas." Mennonites had similar hopes as the government and the men in the battlefields. The point of dispute was not over the goals of peace, but the methods of accomplishing that peace. As Dahlke explained: "The Mennonites believe this world peace can be attained by international law based on the Bible," whereas "Nations want to attain this world peace by the sword."

As observed previously, the strategies Mennonites used to identify with other Americans had their shortcomings, and Dahlke's efforts at identification contained liabilities too. For example, the alternative means Dahlke proposed for ending the war were neither realistic nor relevant. "International law based on the Bible" had little hope of actual implementation and had no political relevance in a world plunged deeply into war. To outsiders, such solutions demonstrated political naivete, if not, outright incompetence. Moreover, by arguing that Mennonites were loyal citizens because they made larger sacrifices than their fellow man, Dahlke opened himself up to the charge of claiming moral superiority on the Mennonites' behalf. In "bending over backwards" to demonstrate their charitable activities, Dahlke ran the risk of having this attempt at identification backfire; Mennonites were not only

"desirous citizens," but better citizens, if, as Dahlke contended, they should be perceived as "model citizens." Finally, in tracing the noble cultural heritage of the Mennonites, as a way to "place them in their proper light," Dahlke was guilty of excluding MC Mennonites. The MC Mennonites of Swiss origin who arrived in America long before the German-Russian Mennonites, would have found little in Dahlke's tract to remind them of their cultural heritage, or, for that matter, to construct a convincing defense of themselves. Early Mennonite immigrants to the United States are conveniently omitted in order to highlight the history of GC Mennonites living in the central plains states. Like the MC writers, such as Daniel Kauffman and the anonymous Elkhart source, who failed to acknowledge GC Mennonites in their defense of the Mennonites, Dahlke, too, was guilty of a parochial defense.

While Dahlke's defense of the Mennonites is similar in some respects to other Mennonite apologetic statements, it is fascinating rhetorically, and warrants separate analysis here, because in many respects it is astonishingly distinctive. Rather than reinforce the traditional image of Mennonites as a Christian conservative people, who went about their duty in a quiet, unassuming way, or support the ideological dimension of Mennonitism by explaining the principles of nonresistance and nonconformity, Dahlke created "a perspective by incongruity"--a method for gauging

situations by verbal 'atom cracking.'" That is wrenching loose words belonging by custom to a certain category¹⁰⁷ and making hitherto unlinked categories.

Specifically, the defense of Mennonites through Dahlke's perspective by incongruity can be seen in three image reversals.

First, Mennonites were a people who lived for the sacred, world and remained suspicious of the secular world, a people determined to "be in the world yet not of it." Yet Dahlke's defense of them is essentially grounded in secular justifications and clearly "of the world." While not a minister, Dahlke's defense of his people on secular grounds was still considered highly unusual. For all members of the faith, the Bible was the source of all truth, and Mennonites based their arguments on biblical passages and Mennonite doctrine. Oddly though, not once does Dahlke mention nonresistance, nonconformity, the Dordrecht Confession of Faith, or quote biblical passages. At two places in a sixteen page defense, he refers to "religious beliefs [which] give courage to endure," and world peace which "can be attained by international law based on the Bible." The apologia in all essentials aims to bolster Mennonite loyalty to their country. Reasoning perhaps that their loyalty to God was intact, Dahlke elected to shore up the Mennonites' national loyalties to the exclusion of church loyalties. Nowhere is that choice more clear than when Dahlke recounted a heart-warming

story of Mennonites doing their patriotic duty:

Hardly had these Mennonites settled on their farms, even before the pioneer days had passed, when an appeal came to them for help. The crops west of Ellinwood county had failed and urgent help was needed, and when the call came, they responded heartily and gave freely. . . . They gave not as church members to church members, but as loyal citizens to citizens.

From the careful and deliberate phrasing of the last line, it is apparent that Dahlke wanted to emphasize the patriotic, not the religious side of the Mennonites. These members gave to those in need not so much because it was what the Christian would do as it was what the loyal citizen would do.

That loyalty to country could take precedence over loyalty to God among Mennonites was one image reversal that constituted an incongruous perspective. Another attempt at "verbal atom cracking" was Dahlke's interpretation of the principles of nonconformity and nonresistance. Dahlke argued that Mennonites did not court obscurity, but had close ties with their larger communities, and that Mennonites were not a peculiar people who embraced an unpopular stance on military service, but shared a desire for military exemption with many other people. When Russian Mennonites immigrated to this country they were greeted with open arms by

American citizens, according to Dahlke's recollection. So congenial was each to the other that "Bonds of friendship were established between the two nationalities--which have endured for forty years." Contrary to the idea that Mennonites preferred to keep to themselves and dwell in isolated communities, Dahlke depicted Mennonites as friendly and congenial; people who had developed close ties with the larger community. This image diffused the charge that Mennonites appeared morally superior to non-members for their asocial, nonconformist practices.

Neither were Mennonites peculiar or nonconformist in their stance on military exemption. Dahlke took great care to establish the fact that other Americans besides the Mennonites affirmed an exemption status. "Besides the Mennonites," Dahlke informed his readers, "there are the Quakers, Dunkards, and River Brethren, who hold the same views on the questions of military service." Elsewhere, that list of proponents broadened considerably:

[T]he Mennonite church is not the only church that opposes the 'Military-Draft-System'. There are thousands upon thousands of individual citizens, who follow this principle in their life. Thousands of people came from Germany and Switzerland, who do not believe in militarism although they are not Mennonites. They left their homes in Europe to escape the

military draft system. Not only that, but we have a large number of people of English descent, men and women of noble character and lofty ideals who have worked whole-heartedly for world peace and we honor them for their devotion to this noble principle and ideal.

By showing that military exemption had diffuse support, Dahlke removed the dubious distinction that Mennonites held for being singled out as convenient scapegoats for abuse. At the same time he gave their own doctrine of nonresistance more credibility.

In keeping with his strategy to downplay the uniqueness of the Mennonite position in regard to war, the Mennonite term for military exemption, "nonresistance," was never used. Nonresistance was the historic principle of Mennonitism, a word closely associated with the Mennonite people and a word that reflected the biblical basis for requesting military exemption. The "thousands of individual citizens" that Dahlke described did not all subscribe to the doctrine of nonresistance, but, for a variety of reasons, refused to support the military. While Dahlke did not go so far as to claim mainstream support for the rejection of military service, he did bring the Mennonite position closer to being accepted as a viable stance. Mennonites were not, as the tenets of the faith proscribed, "sheep among wolves," or prone to live a lifetime of suffering in the name of Christ, for their "radical,"

"separatist," views. On the contrary, they reflected the views of a healthy minority, who very much wanted not only to be understood, but "appreciated and loved."

That the Mennonite position could conceivably become "appreciated and loved" by patriotic Americans was just one of many examples of a third image-reversal that comprised the most notable and distinctive aspect of Dahlke's apologia. Dahlke questioned the image of Mennonites as humble, unassuming folk, who preferred to be called "the Quiet in the Land." With a penchant for hyperbole, Dahlke magnified both the virtues of Mennonites and the dastardly charges levied against them. Dahlke overstated his case from the very beginning: "After having gained a full knowledge about the history of the Mennonites. . . . this class of people will be appreciated and loved." Seemingly oblivious to the great sacrifices that Americans were taking to uphold democratic values, the patriotic fervor that gripped the country, and the conviction expressed by most Americans that the war was a moral and just cause, Dahlke clung to the fantastic belief that his fellow American citizens would be approachable, even amicable, to the Mennonite stance. Ignoring the advice of Mennonite leaders that it would not be in the Mennonites' best interest to publicize their objections to the war or "to get into peace arguments just now when their fellow citizens were smarting under the deeds of a devilish foe," Dahlke, albeit not actively seeking a

wider audience, stepped out on a limb by advancing such a preposterous idea.

Likewise, when Dahlke portrayed the Mennonites as loyal, upright, American citizens, he did not go about it in the modest Mennonite way. Rather, he boasted of their accomplishments, overstated their good qualities, and made exaggerated claims to clear them of any wrongdoing. The easiest way for Dahlke to boast of Mennonite loyalty was to exploit their capabilities as farmers, for as everyone knew the American farmer was an integral part in winning the war. Dahlke's sentimental account of the European Mennonites' nomadic existence is the backdrop for raising the Mennonite farmer to heroic stature. When Holland passed a military draft law and Mennonites were forced to leave that country for Russia, Dahlke sadly observed: "Of course Holland did herself harm by passing that military draft law, because for that very reason she lost her best farmers." Fortunately, the Czarina Catherine of Russia gave permission for Mennonites to settle in her country. She knew that Mennonites would be "model farmers" and "had the reputation of being progressive and industrious" and believed that "[w]herever the Mennonites settle, the desert becomes a blooming garden spot." In little time, Mennonite colonies in Russia came to be called "the Granary of Russia" and "whatever surplus in crops Russia then had came from the immigrant Mennonite colonies." At last, government officials in

Russia recognized that despite their refusal of military service, Mennonite farmers provided the country with its "strongest support." Dahlke's depiction of Mennonites as a precious resource and not a source of trouble or embarrassment for government officials explained Dahlke's version of the enthusiasm expressed by United States officials at having Russian Mennonites cultivate their soil. When Mennonites considered immigrating to the United States, "they were overwhelmed with invitations to come" and President Grant was so impressed with them that "he granted them a personal interview."

In addition to marveling at the successes that Mennonites had farming, Dahlke showed how industrious they were in bettering social and educational services, and praised their natural abilities as leaders. In Russia, the Czarina believed that Mennonites "should become an ideal in morals and conduct to her people, knowing that her people had sunk to a low degree in morals and culture." Her plan, Dahlke further detailed, was that "the churches, schools and model farms of the Mennonite farmers through their attractive aspects would be an incentive to her subjects to do likewise." Wanting to convey just how capable Mennonites were, Dahlke recalled that they were "asked to plant and cultivate forests and even were given the supervision of other men." Mennonites living in America were of the same stock in Dahlke's continuing saga. "The Mennonites

believe and work for progress in the highest sense," he pontificated. Adding that "Should anyone desire to know what the Mennonites have done for [their] country, some very interesting figures could be produced by the Mennnonites, showing large sums of money. . . ." Dahlke did not hesitate to parade their accomplishments.

They now own an [sic] support six colleges; fifteen academies; four hospitals, one of which costs \$75,000.00; three sanitariums, for [sic] consumptives; three homes for the aged; and six assylums [sic] for lepers. They have done missionary work among the Red Men of America for the last thirty-three years. In fact they have sent missionaries to all parts of the world, namely to India, China, Africa, Japan and the different islands and everywhere they have met with very encouraging success.

Dahlke, no doubt, hoped that flaunting such an impressive list of civic accomplishments would prove that Mennonites were progressive, intelligent, desirous citizens and not as the widely circulated accusations suggested backward, unintelligent slackers.

The same strategy of creating a complete re-evaluation of the Mennonites' accusers was accomplished when Dahlke exaggerated the nature of the accusations against them. Dahlke overstated the case in his attempt to convey the message that the accusations against the Mennonites were grossly inappropriate, yet he refrained

from identifying from whence the accusations stemmed. Mennonites had been "cruelly attacked placing them in the darkest light." "Certain men," Dahlke indicated have so "falsely accused the Mennonites" that they want "to place the same in the front ranks to have them cruelly shot." In astonishment and indignation, Dahlke at one point expressed: "These attacks are so fierce and unbecoming a gentleman from the standard of the present civilization that one would be inclined to compare them with the utterances of the dark Middle Ages, such as could be made only in the years 1524 till 1624, when Christians were butchered by the thousands." So unfair were these charges that Dahlke surmised that they were "probably the greatest sin committed. . . ." Yet such accusations, for all their punch, went unattributed. They were, according to Dahlke's testimony generated by shadowy figures, "certain men in their public speeches in the East."

In an attempt to elicit sympathy for a people wrongly accused and to preserve any hope of identifying with his fellow Americans, Dahlke amplified the severity of the charges without taking the political risks of indicting specific individuals. Even where the political risks were minimized, as in the well-known accusation made by Teddy Roosevelt that if C. O.'s would not serve their country, they should be put on mine sweepers,¹⁰⁷ Dahlke refused to link directly the accusation and the accuser. His objection to Roosevelt's extremist

accusation was made enthymematically. "At the time when Mr. Roosevelt was president the Mennonites honored and respected him and even helped to elect him to that high office," Dahlke recalled. To which he followed with the rhetorical question: "Does their confidence merit unkindness?" Dahlke's attempts to magnify the seriousness of the accusations against the Mennonites revealed both its benefits and its liabilities in describing the dispute that Mennonites had with the wider American public.

Dahlke's juxtaposition of incongruous images in its varied dimensions created a view of Mennonites that was at once startling, enlightening, and wildly imaginative.¹⁰⁸ More directly, in wrenching words from their "constitutional setting," a perspective by incongruity is especially designed to "remoralize" a situation that has been demoralized by inaccuracy.¹⁰⁹ Dahlke's defense of the Mennonites through its perspective by incongruity was essentially a drastic attempt to remoralize or rejuvenate a badly damaged image promulgated by "undeserved," "cruel," and "false accusations." It was an effort to tip the scales of public perception in the opposite direction. And while fellow members might have raised an eyebrow at its pretentiousness, and non-Mennonites most certainly would have written it off as an absurdity, or worse, Dahlke had, in effect, created grounds for synthesis--a remoralization of the Mennonite image.

Dahlke's defense distinguishes itself for more than its high-profile of the Mennonites. It also clearly exemplifies several of the rhetorical problems that plagued Mennonite rhetors. Mennonites had always been a people grounded both ideologically and rhetorically in the Bible. While Dahlke's secular defense might have been motivated by the realization that his militaristic-minded neighbors did not want to hear biblical justifications for their stance, the simple truth was that without the Bible, Mennonite rhetors floundered. Dahlke was no exception. His inexperience at defending his fellow believers in secular terms was expressed in the opening line: "Most likely the readers of this pamphlet will be surprised to read an article of this nature from my pen." Dahlke was severely constrained in drawing a favorable composite of the Mennonites with only secular material to draw upon. If one could not defend them for their qualities of Christ-like discipleship, or explain the tenets of their faith, or explain their rich, troubled religious heritage, what, in good faith, was one left to piece together? Dahlke's only choice in attempting to exonerate Mennonites of all charges and to "put them in the proper light" was to be wildly imaginative and magnify their secular traits by embellishing their life story--a choice no other Mennonite apologist was willing to make.

Dahlke was also constrained in formulating a convincing defense to outsiders because despite his

depiction of the openness of the Mennonite community, it was relatively isolated. The liabilities of a nonconformist lifestyle to efforts of establishing communicative ties with non-Mennonites was evident in Dahlke's address. As a citizen removed from the mainstream of political thought, Dahlke was utterly incapable of understanding the "cruel attacks" made upon him and his fellow believers. The incredulous tone of the apologia was sustained throughout. "Why should these bitter attacks be made upon them at all?" Dahlke asked beseechingly. "Would somebody call this work the deed of a 'tramp'?" he added. Mennonites, like Dahlke, could not convey familiarity with their opponents' position because they were not exposed to them. The insular Mennonite life, the "worldly" naivete, of which Dahlke was a product, explained his ability to express with all seriousness his goal to give "a full knowledge about the history of the Mennonites" in order that "this class of people will be appreciated and loved."

A final rhetorical obstacle that Dahlke, like many Mennonite rhetors, encountered was a lack of rhetorical training. Dahlke was unskilled at presenting an articulate, polished position statement to outsiders. The occasional awkward phrase, and grammatical and syntactical errors contributed to the general observation that Dahlke was less than comfortable in the role of rhetor. German may have been his first language which would explain, in part, the clumsy phraseology.

More critically, as explained in chapter four Mennonites were not accustomed to playing the role of church spokesmen to outsiders. They had never seen the need to be gifted rhetorically when the Bible was the source of all truth. Daniel Kauffman's advice to Mennonite speakers "not to make a display of their wit or oratory" summed up the problem well. Dahlke's attempt to defend his faith by assuming the role of church spokesman and then failing to maintain that posture was proof of his rhetorical inexperience. Dahlke began the apologia by narrating in the third person. By speaking of "the Mennonites," "this class of people," their faith," Dahlke could assume an authority role. The third person narrative serves as a distancing device and as a way to make a defense appear more objective. But Dahlke failed to maintain the third person narrative. He began with a personal reference ("Most likely the readers of this pamphlet will be surprised to read an article of this nature from my pen."), and interrupted the third person narrative throughout the defense with references to himself. At one point Dahlke lapsed into a story about his ancestors. "My grandfather left his home in Holland on account of the military draft," Dahlke recalled fondly. Elsewhere, as if cognizant of the inappropriateness of shifting tense, Dahlke interjected: "The readers will pardon a personal reference." At other times, Dahlke simply dropped the reference to "the Mennonites" in favor of "we" before completing a

sentence. Assuming the role of church spokesman to outsiders was difficult for many Mennonites, especially a Kansas farmer with little training in the art of persuasion.

In the final analysis, Dahlke's "defense of the Mennonites against recent attacks made upon them" did not diffuse those attacks, nor convince outsiders of the Mennonite position, nor equip members with cogent secular arguments for use outside Mennonite circles. Rather, it served a useful purpose in terms of maintaining the faith. As ill-formulated and ineffective as some of Dahlke's strategies were from an outsiders standpoint, the apologia was an ego-boost for the Mennonite image. Dahlke's genuflections on their proud heritage was therapeutic. Mennonites took center stage in Dahlke's satisfying tale. They were actors, doers, movers, innovators, industrious, progressive, resourceful, and, above all, model citizens. The narrative structure was an ideal way to magnify their desirable traits. A good story has clearly identifiable good characters (model Mennonite citizens) and bad characters (certain men from the east). A good story gives coherence to experience (Mennonites have been unjustly attacked because outsiders are oblivious to their sterling civic record and their glorious cultural heritage). A good story gives its readers a lesson to live by (Mennonites are strong, resilient people, who like their ancestors "will not walk on flowery paths of

ease through this world"). Finally, and perhaps most importantly in this case, a good story demonstrates fidelity to the truth, if it is used for rhetorical purposes. Dahlke's perspective by incongruity would have been judged an improbable story to outsiders, but as quite probable to fellow believers, though they, too, might have conceded to Dahlke's stretching of the truth. For this reason, Dahlke's defense of the Mennonites did more to reaffirm their image among themselves than to repair a tarnished one in the public's eye.

Notes

¹ Walter R. Fisher, "A Motive View of Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56 (1970), p. 132. Fisher advocates that we perceive rhetorical situations in terms of motives. He suggests that an "organic relationship" exists between the rhetor's perception and his response to circumstances; our perception determines the characteristics of our discourse. Fisher outlines four motives or kinds of rhetorical situations; affirmation--giving birth to an image; re-affirmation--revitalizing an image; purification--correcting an image, and subversion--undermining an image.

² Fisher, p. 136.

³ Noreen Kruse, "Motivational Factors In Non-Denial Apologia," Central States Speech Journal, 28 (1977), p. 14.

⁴ Fisher, pp. 136-137; See also B. L. Ware and Wil A. Linkugel, "They Spoke In Defense of Themselves: On The Generic Criticism of Apologia," Quarterly Journal of Speech 59 (1973), pp. 273-283. There is some conceptual slippage in Fisher's work that warrants brief attention. Initially, Fisher discusses purification as "a motive concerned with correcting an image." Later, he argues that a rhetoric of purification is found in situations in which a communicator attempts to refine an ideology. [emphasis mine] It is not clear whether Fisher intends

to use the terms "image and ideology" synonymously. For the purposes of this paper, a rhetoric of purification will be used exclusively in reference to the refining of one's image.

⁵ J. S. Hartzler, Mennonites In The World War (Scottsdale: Penn.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1921), p. 99.

⁶ J. S. Hartzler, pp. 98-99.

⁷ [S. M. Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message of a Mennonite Minister To His People In Wartime," The Mennonite 18 April 1918, p. 3.

⁸ [Daniel Kauffman, ed.], "Conscientious Objector and The Issues Involved," Gospel Herald, 25 July 1918, p. 291.

⁹ [Kauffman, ed.], "Conscientious Objector," p. 291.

¹⁰ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity In This Hour of Trial," Gospel Herald, 26 Sept. 1918, p. 451.

¹¹ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Attitude," Gospel Herald, 11 April 1918, p. 26.

¹² History of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Conference 1876-1923 Unpublished conference minutes of 16 August 1917, p. 167, (GCHL).

¹³ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity," p. 450.

¹⁴ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity," p. 451.

¹⁵ "The Real Facts About The Attitude of The Mennonite Church On The Issue of The Late War," The Elkhart Truth, paid advertisement 20 Jan. 1920, n. pag. rpt. in Mennonite Yearbook and Directory (Scottsdale,

Penn.: Mennonite Pub. House, 1921), pp. 24-25.

¹⁶ D. H. Bender, "Mennonites Helping," Harvey County, Kansas Newspaper, name unknown, n. pag. Newspaper clipping located in J. E. Hartler Collection, Box 1, (AMC).

¹⁷ Simon Gingerich, "An Open Statement," The Wayland News, Waylan Ia., 4 March, 1918, n.pag. The article that prompted Gingerich's apologia was: "Final Warning Given Preacher," Wayland News, 19 Feb. 1918, n. pag. Both clippings located in J. E. Hartzler Collection, Box 1, (AMC).

¹⁸ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Attitude," p. 26.
¹⁹ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity," p. 450.
²⁰ "The Real Facts About The Attitude of The Mennonite Church on The Issue of The Late War," p. 24.

²¹ [Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message," p. 2.
²² [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity," pp. 449-450.
²³ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity," p. 450.
²⁴ "The Real Facts About The Attitude of The Mennonite Church on The Issue of The Late War," p. 24.

²⁵ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Attitude," p. 26.
²⁶ [Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message," p. 3.
²⁷ [C. E. Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles" Der Herold 3 May 1917, p. 4.

²⁸ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 11 April 1918, p. 5.

²⁹ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 9 Aug. 1917, p. 4.

- ³⁰
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 7
Dec. 1917, p. 2.
- ³¹
Letter from M. C. Hirshy to Dr. Thierstein 3
Sept. 1917, H. P. Krehbiel Correspondence 1918, (BCLA).
- ³²
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 25
April, 1918, p. 4.
- ³³
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 20
June 1918, p. 4.
- ³⁴
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 20
June 1918, p. 4.
- ³⁵
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 20
June 1918, p. 4.
- ³⁶
Kenneth Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form (rpt.
Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1973), p.
228. In his essay entitled: "The Calling of The Tune,"
Burke writes: "To build one's statements around an
absolutely anti-authoritarian wish is to let the
authoritarians be master of the controversy. . . . And
an absolute revolt against authority in all its forms is
as enslaving to speculation as is the absolute worship
of authority." The argument advanced here is that
Mennonites let the wider citizenry be "masters of the
controversy" when they restricted their defense to
denials of the attacks made against them.
- ³⁷
Kenneth Burke, Attitudes Toward History vol. 2
(New York: The New Republic, 1937), p. 219.
- ³⁸
Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, p. 227. Burke
writes that identification is "one's way of seeing one's

reflection in the social mirror."

³⁹
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 5
April 1917, p. 4.

⁴⁰
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 26
April, 1917, p. 4.

⁴¹
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 3
May, 1917, p. 4.

⁴²
[Grubb, ed.], "War At Last," The Mennonite 12
April, 1917, p. 4.

⁴³
[H. Frank Reist, ed.], "Relief for War
Sufferers," Christian Monitor, 9 (Dec. 1917), p. 357.

⁴⁴
J. R. Allyger, "The Acid Test of our Sincerity,"
Gospel Herald 23 Jan. 1919, p. 770.

⁴⁵
J. C. Meyer, "The Purpose of this Conference," in
Report of the General Conference of Mennonites in France
In Reconstruction Work Clermont-en-Argonne, France June
20-22, 1919, p. 15, Unpublished, (GCHL).

⁴⁶
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 30
May 1918, p. 2.

⁴⁷
"Gifts received by the Emergency Relief
Commission of the General Conference of Mennonites of
North America since Aug. 23, 1917 to Aug. 12, 1920,"
n.p.: n.p., n.d. (BCLA) pp. 1-24.

⁴⁸
[Kauffman, ed.], "War Problems For Non-Resistant
People," Gospel Herald, 17 May 1917, p. 114.

⁴⁹
John Pershing as quoted in Francis E. March,
History of the World War (New York: Leslie Judge Co.,
1918), p. 167.

⁵⁰
Woodrow Wilson, "An Appeal To The Farmers To
'Stand By,'" in The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, ed.
Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (New York: Harper
and Row, 1927), I, 174.

⁵¹
[C. E. Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold
19 April 1917, p. 4.

⁵²
Aaron Loucks, "The Church and War," Gospel
Herald, 26 July 1917, p. 314.

⁵³
James C. Juhnke, "Mennonite Benevolence and
Revitalization In The Wake of World War I," Mennonite
Quarterly Review, 60 no. 1 (1986), p. 19.

⁵⁴
Loucks, "The Church and War," p. 314.

⁵⁵
Der Herold 18 April 1918.

⁵⁶
Der Herold 18 April 1918, p. 1. Der Herold did
not print illustrations in its newspapers. The sketch of
the farmer is a rare exception.

⁵⁷
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," 19 April 1917,
p. 4.

⁵⁸
[Kauffman, ed.], "War Problems For Non-Resistant
People," p. 114.

⁵⁹
Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form, p. 253. Burke
explains further that "Of all the inconsistencies in
which the human mind is entangled, this confusion
between 'goodness' and 'sacrifice' seems the most
unavoidable. . . ."

⁶⁰
[Grubb, ed.], "War At Last," p. 4.

⁶¹
[Reist, ed.], "Editorial," Christian Monitor, 9
(Sept. 1917), p. 261.

- ⁶² Loucks, "Meeting The Issue," Exemption Committee Material, H. P. Krehbiel Collection 1918, (BCLA).
- ⁶³ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity," p. 450.
- ⁶⁴ J. E. Hartzler, "Are Mennonites Slackers?" Gospel Herald, 13 Dec. 1917, p. 683.
- ⁶⁵ Hartzler, "Are Mennonites Slackers?" p. 683.
- ⁶⁶ [Kauffman, ed.], Gospel Herald 1 July 1915, p. 225.
- ⁶⁷ "A Fourth of July Message," Der Herold 4 July, 1918, p. 1.
- ⁶⁸ H.D. Penner, "Suncht der Stadt Bestes und betet fur sie zum Herrn!" Der Herold 4 July 1918, p. 1.
- ⁶⁹ Penner, "Suncht der Stadt Bestes und betet fur sie zum Herrn!" p. 1.
- ⁷⁰ The policy of printing the emblem of the United States flag at the top of each editorial section of Der Herold began on March 22, 1917, and ended on Dec. 19, 1918.
- ⁷¹ R. F. Landis, "What Is Patriotism," The Mennonite, 19 July 1917, p. 2
- ⁷² Landis, p. 2.
- ⁷³ [Kauffman, ed.], "Conscientious Objector And The Issues Involved," Gospel Herald, 25 July 1918, p. 291.
- ⁷⁴ [Reist, ed.], "Editorial," p. 261
- ⁷⁵ Letter from P. H. Richert to Daniel Kauffman, 28 Feb. 1918, Richert Collection, File #22, (BCLA).
- ⁷⁶ Burke, The Rhetoric of Religion, (rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 15.

- ⁷⁷ Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, The Rhetorical Act
(Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1982,), p. 274.
- ⁷⁸ [Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message of a Mennonite Minister," p. 4.
- ⁷⁹ J. G. Ewerts, Editorial, Vorwaerts 17 May 1918,
n. pag.
- ⁸⁰ Ewerts, Editorial, Vorwaerts, 17 May 1918, n.
pag.
- ⁸¹ James C. Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms
(Newton, Ks.: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 108.
- ⁸² Richard Weaver, "Ultimate Terms in Contemporary Rhetoric," in Ethics of Rhetoric (Chicago: Henny Regnery Co., 1953), pp. 212, 218, 228-229.
- ⁸³ Weaver, pp. 218, 228-229.
- ⁸⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "Appeal For The Second Liberty Loan," Public Papers of President Wilson, p. 105. This appeal was also used in two other addresses: "Appeal For The Third Liberty Loan," Public Papers, pp. 203-204, and "Appeal For The Fourth Liberty Loan," Public Papers, p. 276.
- ⁸⁵ Arthur Capper, "Governor's Proclamation," Der Herold 4 April 1918, p. 7.
- ⁸⁶ "Liberty Loan Honor Flag," Der Herold 18 April 1918, p. 2.
- ⁸⁷ H. P. Krehbiel, "Die Stellung der Gemeinde Jesu Christi zum Modernen Staat," Der Herold, 25 April 1918, p. 1.

⁸⁸
[C. E. Krehbiel, ed.], Der Herold See 24 May, 1917; Informational articles concerning Liberty Loans could also be found the following year. See 23 May 1918; 20 June 1918.

⁸⁹
Der Herold 4 April 1918, p. 7.

⁹⁰
C. Henry Smith, The Story of The Mennonites 4 ed. rev. and enl. by Cornelius Krahn, (Newton, Ks: Mennonite Publishing Office, 1957), p. 805.

⁹¹
"Fourth Liberty Loan," The Goshen Democrat 2 Oct. 1918, p. 5, col. 4. Clipping located in G. F. Hersberger Research, Peace Problems Committee: The Mennonite Church in World War I, Box. 46 (AMC). Interestingly, this threatening article did not appear in the editorial section of the paper, but in the "News of the Day." See also Smith, p. 805, and Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms, pp. 104-105. Juhnke notes that of all the tests of loyalty, it was the war bond issue which usually became the pretext for mob violence.

⁹²
Conference Minutes of the Franconia conference of the Mennonite Church, 25 July 1918, Souderton, Pa; Meeting Minutes of the Board of Bishops of the Lancaster conference of the Mennonite Church, 18 July 1918, Lancaster, Pa; Unpublished and rpt. in Mennonite Statements on Peace and Social Concerns ed. Urbane Peachey (Akron, Ohio: MCC U. S. Peace Section, 1980), p. 238.

⁹³
Aaron Loucks, "Meeting The Issue," Pamphlet, n.p.: n.p, n.d. in Loucks and Hartzler Correspondence,

Peace Problems Committee 1918-1919, Box 4 (AMC).

94 Loucks conveyed this information in "Meeting The Issue."

95 Woodrow Wilson, "For The American Red Cross," Public Papers of The President, p. 209.

96 "Report of the Special Committee For Freedom From Military Service of The Western District Conference to the 26th Conference," Minutes Western District Conference 1906-1917, p. 45.

97 [Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message," p. 4.

98 [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 21 June 1917, p. 4.

99 [Krehbiel, ed], "Editorielles," Der Herold 20 Dec. 1917, p. 4.

100 Der Herold, 16 May 1918, p. 4.

101 Der Herold, 16 May 1918, p. 4.

102 "Conference Minutes 16 Aug. 1917," History of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Conference 1876-1923, p.

158.
103 E. H. Crowder, Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), pp. 58-59.

104 Hartzler, pp. 51-52.
105 Juhnke, A People of Two Kingdoms, p. 103.

106 Smith, p. 796.
107 Gerald Dahlke, A Defense of the Mennonites Against Recent Attacks Made Upon Them (n.p.: n.p., [1917]), pp. 1-16.

¹⁰⁸ Burke, Attitudes Toward History, pp. 201-202.

¹⁰⁹ "Roosesvelt Attacks Objectors To War," New York Times, 31 Jan. 1918, p. 6, col. 4.

¹¹⁰ Burke Permanence and Change (Los Altos, CA: Hermes Publicatons, 1954), p.90. Burke argues that a perspective by incongruity is intended to create these responses

¹¹¹ Burke, Attitudes Toward History, pp. 203-204.

CHAPTER SEVEN
KEEPING THE FAITH:
MENNONITES RE-AFFIRM THEIR IMAGE

Mennonites cautiously took the offensive in reminding the government of its obligations to respect freedom of conscience. They also defended their image to the government and the wider American public by adopting strategies of dissociation, refutation, and identification. But not all Mennonite rhetoric during the war was a defense of Mennonitism to outsiders nor a questioning of government policy. Much of the rhetoric served the essential function of maintenance: keeping the faithful strong in the face of adversity. Mennonites may have feared engaging in genuine argument with an unsympathetic public, but they were more fearful that the world crisis would undermine the very existence of their church. Apprehensively, Mennonites observed that "The world has become a neighborhood and we are 'in the world' as we have never been before."¹ More pointedly, H. P. Krehbiel imparted soberly: "The Mennonites will now be purified by fire. What will become of us in the heat?"² Such reluctant acknowledgements of worldly encroachment expressed a common concern among Mennonites as to what the future would hold for the church. Mennonites were keenly aware that, if their faith were to be preserved and the membership remain strong, it would be essential for members re-affirm the

righteousness of Mennonitism to themselves and to each other.

Rhetorical transactions with the self, as outlined in Chapter one, can serve a reflexive task of psychologically refurbishing oneself. The very practice³ of verbalizing one's beliefs reconstitutes the self. To a significant degree, Mennonite rhetoric fulfilled a consumatory function for its members. Through the inventional process itself, Mennonites could reaffirm who they were. Articulating their beliefs, fears, suggestions, and admonishments in print carried intrinsic worth. Among other things, it aided in reducing the uncertainty of espousing an unpopular position with its share of penalties.

While one's self may be the primary audience, others of the group may identify with the rhetoric insofar as they share similar concerns.⁴ The Mennonites' practice of defending their religious convictions to each other corresponds to what Walter R. Fisher calls "a rhetoric of reaffirmation" whereby a person "attempts to revitalize a faith already held by his audience." Fisher contends that reaffirmative rhetoric is characterized by "Christian life renewal themes." Strategies such as tying the past, present, and future together and emphasizing that out of suffering comes everlasting life can be found in rhetoric designed to reinforce⁵ commitment to a faith.

Mennonites utilized Christian life renewal themes

in a variety of ways to reinforce a commitment to their religious heritage. First, refamiliarizing members with the biblical and historical basis of nonresistance became an important way to ground Mennonitism in a relevant epistemological framework and instill confidence in the faith's legitimacy. The retelling of Mennonite history lessons often took the form of venerating martyr ancestors of the church. Second, re-emphasizing the importance of membership in a select body of believers became an important way to maintain membership loyalty. Fearing perhaps that the demands of war would wittle away at church attendance and ultimately erode church affiliation, rhetors saw the necessity of praising members for remaining true to such high Christian standards and distancing themselves from other wayward nonresistant bodies. Third, drawing sharp distinctions between Mennonitism and militarism became an important way to prevent compromise or half-way stances that could lead to wholesale adoption of the Crusade mentality. Cultivating an "us versus them" mentality polarized rhetorical and behavioral choices thus encouraging members to stake out recalcitrant positions on war issues. Fourth, redefining the war to emphasize its positive connotations became an important way to help members survive as devoted Christians in a world at war and to emerge from the experience with minimal psychological battle scars. War fears were repeatedly transformed as challenging and welcomed tests

of faith-- tests not unlike those experienced by Jesus and other key biblical figures. War evils were also transformed by diminishing their importance. The war was merely a passing event, insignificant in the totality of God's plan for his followers. Fifth, resolving the uneasy relationship that existed between an individual's conscience and church polity became an important way to convince members that for all the advice given, their leaders were mindful of church creed which granted the superiority of individual conscience over a collective conscience. Mennonite rhetors deftly handled the fact that church doctrine did not require a rigid adherence to the official church position by candidly acknowledging that the faith honored and respected individual conscience, and yet at the same time gently suggesting that individual and church conscience be merged.

The church press was largely responsible for propogating the five themes that characterized Mennonite reaffirmative rhetoric. Mennonite publishing houses had always seen their mission as one of preserving the foundations of the faith, maintaining cohesive ties among Mennonite groups, and giving counsel as to how Mennonites should respond to worldly issues. That mission, as highlighted in chapter two, became all the more important during the course of the war. Daniel Kauffman gave testimony to the ambitious, yet vital, function of the church newspaper as a forum of

reaffirmative rhetoric when he wrote: "The object of a church paper ought to be not only to defend and to promulgate the principles and doctrines for which the Church stands but also to strengthen every individual, every congregation, every institution, and every conference in the church."⁶ The war presented editors, publishers, and contributors with an unparalleled responsibility in making Kauffman's claim realizable.

An Entrenched Stance Against War

One of the prominent Christian life renewal themes that surfaced in a number of Mennonite publications was confirming the biblical and historical basis of nonresistance. Justifying nonresistance on these grounds was essential for Mennonites to reinforce the commitment entailed in their faith. Proving that Mennonites were dutiful Christians involved using the Bible to support nonresistance. Mennonite leaders encouraged members to be well-versed in relevant New Testament passages that addressed the evilness of war. As it was, Mennonite leaders feared that some members had become unfamiliar with what the Scriptures said on the subject of war. When General Conference leaders convened in April of 1917 to discuss the war, they expressed their concern:

The long period of rest and the supposed security have been detrimental for some. Many many [sic] did not know on what scripture passages our confession of nonresistance was

founded, especially among the young people. .
. .[So] the Committee decided to publish two
collections of scripture passages in order to
still remedy this deficiency to some extent.⁷

Der Herold and The Mennonite followed these GC
proceedings with interest, by informing readers of the
key resolution that "the scriptural foundation on the
doctrine of nonresistance [would] be printed by the
Herald printing company and sent out under the auspices
of H. P. Krehbiel,"⁸ and by printing Krehbiel's
admonishing words on what Christ and the Apostles taught
Christians to do:

Christ's teachings prohibit retaliation,
hatred, envy, bitterness, malice, evil
designs, revenge, strife and physical
violence. Christ's teachings enjoin love,
goodwill, kindness, and helpfulness to enemies
as well as to friends. . . . In view of these
truths a sincere and faithful follower of
Christ cannot consistently participate in war
in any form.⁹

Printing biblical passages that supported nonresistance
was a way in which Mennonite leaders could help members
see that their position was founded on the essentials of
Christianity. Furthermore, because the Bible was primary
evidence for justifying nonresistance, Mennonite leaders
were also able to help members make a relevant defense
of their faith to outsiders, without having to rely on

other forms of Mennonite doctrine, which could be interpreted by outsiders as obscure and irrelevant. In fact, not only did Mennonites encourage their fellow members to re-acquaint themselves with Bible verses that addressed the Christian's duty in war, they urged members, if at all possible, to go "to the trouble of memorizing all of these scripture passages, which is best of all."¹⁰

Daniel Kauffman, the ideologue and authoritative bishop among MC Mennonites, made it his crusade throughout the course of the war to encourage members to stand firm on God's word in times of crisis. In one of many passages in the Gospel Herald where the editor urged readers to get back to the Bible, he wrote: "[T]he testimony of Christ and the apostles with reference to carnal warfare is so clear (Matt. 5:38-45; 26:51, 52; John 18:36; Rom. 12: 17-21; II Cor. 10:4; etc., etc., etc., etc.,) and emphatic that we can not for one moment think of surrendering the nonresistant faith."¹¹ The centrality of the Bible as evidence for the nonresistant stance was also clearly expressed in the Mennonite Church Statement on Military Service that Kauffman and other MC leaders prepared:

As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, we interpret His command, 'Resist not evil,' by His other teachings on this subject; viz., 'Love your enemies.' 'Do good to them that hate you.' 'My kingdom is

not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.' 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' The Bible also teaches us not to avenge ourselves (Rom. 12:17-21), that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (II Cor. 10:4), and that "the servant of the Lord must not strive" (II Tim. 2:24).¹²

Through a strategy of enumeration--a list of examples which give overwhelming support for an argument, MC Mennonites hoped to instill confidence among members as to the legitimacy of Mennonitism in the present crisis. Establishing the biblical foundation for nonresistance was so critical to the re-affirmation of their faith principles in these tumultuous times that Aaron Loucks, president of the Mennonite Publishing Company, decided that funds should be appropriated to print a handy pocket-size tract that, among other things, served as a concordance of relevant passages on nonresistance.¹³ Loucks tract, no doubt, eased efforts at memorization considerably.

Both conferences re-affirmed the fact that Mennonitism was based on God's Word. Yet they did not ignore what had become a point of tension for some members. Outsiders were quick to point out that in the Old Testament Christians fought just and righteous wars under God's command. How, then, could Mennonites offer a biblical rationale for nonresistance when the Bible

could be used to support either position? One writer for The Mennonite was prepared for this argument. Posing the question as it might have been formulated by non-Mennonites, she began: "Question: If war is wrong for the Christian, why did God Himself in the Old Testament lead Israel into battle and into victory against their enemies?" The appropriate Mennonite response came quickly: "Answer: The Jews were then living in the age of law and judgment, whilst we dwell in the dispensation of grace and mercy."¹⁴ Acting as a biblical authority, this member of the faith followed the question-answer series with a lengthy exposition of the great difference between the Old and New Testaments, between Israel and the church of Christ. This writer, as did others, wanted to demonstrate unequivocally that the biblical stance of nonresistance was not vulnerable to this all too frequent challenge.

Mennonites quoted Scripture to show that they were dutiful Christians in maintaining nonresistance during war. Yet to further demonstrate that their doctrine was and always had been scripturally based, leaders frequently reprinted the central tenet of Mennonitism: the Dordrecht Confession of Faith adopted at Dordrecht, Holland, in 1632. This document relied heavily upon Scripture in explaining the Mennonite aversion to war. Its initial passage reads:

Regarding revenge, whereby we resist our enemies by the sword, we believe and confess

that the Lord Jesus has forbidden His disciples and followers all revenge and resistance, and has thereby commanded them not to 'return evil for evil, nor railing for railing'; but to 'put up the sword into the sheath,' or as the prophets foretold, 'beat them into plowshares.' Matt. 5:39, 44; Rom. 12: 14; I Pet. 3:9; Micah 4:3.¹⁵

The Dordrecht Confession of Faith was ample proof that Mennonitism was biblically based. Yet its repeated appearance in Mennonite tracts served another purpose; that of proving to themselves, if not to outsiders, that Mennonites were sincere conscientious objectors; they had not temporarily adopted nonresistance as a convenient way to escape the present world conflict.

The frequent appearance of a central doctrine from the post-Reformation era was just one indication that members felt the need to document carefully both the biblical and historical basis of nonresistance. Other century year old Mennonite documents and official church statements with much less recognition were also ressurected from obscurity as further proof of an historical, not an expedient, stance against war. The Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac for 1918, for example, reprinted an official statement that MC Mennonites had drawn up in 1775 that registered the church's position against war.¹⁶ Many church leaders believed that in emphasizing the church's historical stance against war

members would be less inclined to question whether they could still be members in good standing if nonresistance were dropped. In a concerted attempt to discourage that misguided thought, John Horsch penned a lengthy article for the Gospel Herald entitled: "When was the Principle of Nonresistance Made a Part of the Creed of the Mennonite Church," wherein he emphatically denied the possibility of there ever being a time when Mennonites did not embrace nonresistance.¹⁷

In addition to pointing out the long-standing doctrines of the faith that opposed war, Mennonite rhetors encouraged members to remember why their ancestors had become martyrs and preached the importance of gaining strength from them. A notable example of that practice was evident in the MC statement on military service. Featured prominently in the position paper was a passage that called attention to the stoic posture of the early Mennonites. MC bishops and deacons in collaboration wrote: "[Nonresistance] has been uniformly held by our forefathers from Reformation times and their loyalty and devotion to their faith is attested by their suffering, even to the extent of martyrdom and banishment by those governments enjoining military service upon their citizens."¹⁸ Reminding members of the Anabaptists' exemplary devotion to the principle of nonresistance gave them a high standard to emulate. S. M. Grubb made a point of reminding his readers that their ancestors held fast to the principles of

nonresistance at any price:

As Mennonites we cling to our historic principle of testing against war. Four centuries, some of them marked with bloody persecution, are behind us perpetuating the glory of our fathers who were so far in advance of their times as to dream of a time¹⁹ when wars should cease to curse the earth.

Regarding the early Mennonites with high esteem, Grubb hoped that present day Mennonites would want to keep the heroic tradition alive. A similar attitude was expressed by Gerald Dahlke. "Our ancestors did not walk on flowery paths of ease through this world," he wrote, "nor did their persecutors escape the hand of the Almighty and it is this unwavering trust in their Heavenly Father that makes them [present day Mennonites] hold to their principles without wavering or faltering."²⁰ Dahlke was optimistic that members would never doubt the logic of the nonresistant stance, especially given their knowledge of the tumultuous history and enormous sacrifices of their forefathers.

Others took a more authoritative approach by commanding that members not forsake what the early Mennonites died for. Loucks confronted members with the disconcerting question: "Remember our forefathers suffered persecution and death for the sake of maintaining these principles. Shall we be less loyal and faithful?"²¹ Jacob C. Meyers echoed Loucks probing

question when he asked pointedly: "Are we worthy to be
classed as their descendants."²² Kauffman told members
to "remember the thousands who died a martyr's death
rather than give up their faith in Bible
nonresistance."²³ All of these rhetors urged members not
to forsake the essential tenet of Mennonitism by
rekindling pride in their past, emphasizing that they
played a vital link in carrying the torch of an
undiluted faith into the future, and essentially arguing
a fortiori that if their ancestors withstood the horror
and anguish of torture surely present day Mennonites
could withstand penalties that paled in comparison.

Calling attention to the martyred ancestors of the
faith in an attempt to generate renewed enthusiasm for
the principle of nonresistance was effective from a
philosophical perspective as well. The concept of
martyrdom is a highly emotive and powerful term in a
religious context. Kenneth Burke writes that
"[S]acrifice is the essence of religion" and of all the
modes of sacrifice "none is more eloquent than
martyrdom."²⁴ A totally voluntary self-sacrifice enacted
in a grave cause symbolizes the ultimate heroic act and
the great worthiness of a cause. Furthermore, the notion
of becoming a martyr is appealing because it is a way to
identify with the most sacred martyr--Jesus Christ.
Finally, because martyrdom is a defenseless way to
suffer at the hands of some outside force, it is often a
powerful way to suggest that one's persecutors are

cruel, unjust, and evil.

The government was not unaware of the power of martyrdom. In a report compiled by the Military Intelligence Division (MID) on military surveillance of nonresisters during the war, there is evidence that government officials refused to prosecute Loucks for violating the Espionage Act because they did not want to give him "either the notoriety desired or the opportunity of playing the role of the martyr."²⁵

Mennonite leaders, too, were well aware of the power of martyrdom as a testament to the burning vision of the faith. When the military exemption law was interpreted by outsiders as "protection" and "privilege" to protect slackers, Grubb remarked impatiently that he wanted "to have the opportunity of proving . . . absolute confidence in the doctrine [of nonresistance] by paying everything that it might have cost, not even withholding [their] lives, were such a price demanded."²⁶ On more than one occasion, Kauffman stated: "[T]he blood of the martyr is the seed of the church."²⁷ Martyrdom, as these Mennonite leaders recognized, was the ultimate testimony of a strong faith and a convincing way to prove the sincerity of their stance to outsiders. The war, of course, did not demand nor even allow Mennonites to make the extreme sacrifice for their nonresistant stance. Mennonites could only speculate as to whether or not, as members steeped in the American way of life and growing up in an untroubled generation, they would have

shown the same ruggedness, fortitude, and courage of their 16th century ancestors. At least one member of the faith had the disappointing answer: "I wish the Mennonites and the Quakers in our day had had the convictions and the courage of our leaders of earlier days."²⁸

Only The Strong In Heart Need Apply

Perhaps the Mennonites of twentieth-century America would have been hard-pressed to emulate the stoic postures of European Anabaptists, but they were, nonetheless, still a hearty breed of devoted Christians and members of a church that demanded very high standards of its followers. To encourage members to remain faithful to their church throughout the war, Mennonite rhetors re-emphasized the importance of their membership in a select body of believers. Giving members a sense of pride in their religious affiliation served an essential re-affirmative purpose. Church leaders pointed out that Mennonitism stood for something distinctive, and that many people could not meet the requirements of the church because it demanded too much of a Christian sacrifice. In short, the overriding message of this strategy to renew commitment to the faith can be summarized thus: a Mennonite is someone who is special; someone who has a more perfect desire to follow Christ; someone who should feel honored to be a part of a dedicated few.

A pertinent aspect of getting members to feel pride in their association with the Mennonite Church was to stress the fact that Mennonites stood apart from other protestant denominations. In the Mennonite Church statement on military service, the distinctiveness of the church is evident in a prominent passage entitled: "Our Standard." Delegates affirmed: "that in all places [our people] may be known by the Scriptural designation--`A peculiar people, zealous of good works.'" ²⁹ Grubb also emphasized the special character of the Mennonite faith by stating flatly: "It stands for something distinctive." ³⁰

Of course, Mennonites were not satisfied with being distinctive, or peculiar, or separated from other Christians just for the sake of being different. Mennonite rhetors closely associated distinctiveness with specialness. Mennonites were different from other religious groups because the church required commitment to a higher set of standards. The MC statement on military service succinctly captured that high standard: "[Our people stand for] the surrendered life, a consistent separation from the world, and an attitude of peace toward all men." ³¹ Kauffman's book The Conservative Viewpoint elaborated upon the special standards of the church. Unlike other Christians, Kauffman intimated, Mennonites attempted to be examples of God's paradoxical dictum: Be ye in the world, but not of it. This involved, according to Kauffman, that

Mennonites be "models of holiness and purity," "God's representatives on earth," and "lights to the world," and perhaps most difficult of all to be both "pilgrims," because "we are in the world to do all the good we can," and "strangers," because "we should not live for this world, but for the world to come."³²

Standards like these were not for the weak at heart. And Mennonites understood that their strength would not come from a large following. In its smallness, Mennonites contended, their church was distinctive, not weak and obscure, but strong and special. Providing counter-arguments to the common assumption that the power and strength of a group is determined by its size was important for several reasons. First, it was easy to assume that since Mennonites were one of the smaller bodies of Christians, their demands for complete exemption need not be taken seriously, and, second, because the church could not show a large following, they were often categorized as an obscure religious group. These charges were detrimental to keeping the faith strong in a crisis situation. H. Frank Reist attempted to remedy the potential damage of such charges by comparing stringent requirements for joining the Mennonite church with the lax requirements for joining other churches. Readers of the Christian Monitor, no doubt, whole-heartily confirmed Reist's efforts at distinguishing the Mennonites as a superior religious group. He wrote:

We believe that it would be desirable to have and maintain some high standard for applicants, one that . . . will require of all applicants certain evidences of fitness for church membership. The tendency has been to lower the standard. It is a very easy matter to 'join church' The result is that churches today are loaded down with unconverted members who hinder her in her spiritual progress and service for the³³ Master.

That the Mennonite church should entertain the idea of an application process wherein prospective members would be required to demonstrate some degree of "fitness" to Mennonite principles reinforced for members the select company of which they were a part.

In a similar vein, Grubb emphasized the special character of the faith by emphatically denying the idea that smallness meant weakness: "If our church is not large in numbers, there are a number of reasons why we prize it all the more for its being our church," he countered, adding "[T]he Mennonite church aims not at increasing its size, being satisfied rather to increase the respect for its principles which insist that there must be a separation from the world." Grubb, like Reist, went so far as to claim that many people could never become Mennonites because the church required levels of "fitness" or Christian sacrifice that were too high.

"[T]hose who are outside of it," he wrote, "are frequently out because they could not come in if they wanted to unless they changed both their way of living and believing."³⁴ Other writers also argued that remaining a faithful Mennonite in tumultuous times required great courage that most did not have. One guest contributor of The Mennonite recalled that from the movement's inception, membership had been small because of the total commitment required. He explained the small following of Anabaptists by noting "many would have become Mennonites had the times called for less³⁵ heroism."

In calling attention to the rigorous membership qualifications of their church--degrees of fitness that required a total commitment to Christ's principles, even courage and heroism in the face of religious persecution--members could explain away their small numbers and reverse the popular perception that strength is equated with bigness and weakness equated with smallness.

With the high expectations of members, Mennonites had difficulty attracting outsiders in peace times. When the world was engulfed in war, the church had to prepare itself for losing members that it had attracted and yet somehow find ways to perservere. Mennonite leaders braced themselves for watching fellow members leave the flock in the face of extreme pressures from outside. After several readers of The Mennonite voiced their

concern to the editor about the fact that some Mennonites in their community had slipped away to other churches during the present crisis, Grubb responded rather callously: "Such losses came about because our aims and ideals were too high for the shallow-minded to approve and our very losses along this line have been our gain, because we have remained what we set out to be instead of permitting our standard to be lowered for no other reasons than to acquire mere bigness."³⁶ To be sure, Grubb's line of reasoning appealed to those who elected to endure the trials of war and stand firm in the faith as the real Christians, but it failed to reflect an element of compassion or forgiveness, or a recognition of human foibles--important traits for a group of believers who called themselves Christ's disciples.

In point of fact, Mennonite congregations did not deal with wayward members so severely. Bishops of the Springdale Church in Waynesboro, Virginia decided that "since instances of disloyalty are so varied--some the result of weakness or extreme pressure, others as evidence of disloyalty or indifference to the doctrine of nonresistance--we recommend that the disposition of individual cases be left to the local officials." On a personal note the bishops added: "We believe due sympathy should be accorded to right meaning brethren who in case of severe pressure yielded a point of doctrine. . . ."³⁷ The bishops of Lancaster County who

met in Pennsylvania to discuss, among other things, the issue of sagging membership granted much leniency to those who in a weak moment had compromised their faith principles. They agreed that "the brethren who have taken active service in the army, and those who enlisted, may be reinstated to membership on making a full confession of transgression." For the brethren who accepted noncombatant service, the repentance consisted of an apology.³⁸

Although the idea of a faith comprised of those who had never yielded to temptation might have appealed to church leaders in theory, put into practice the policy would have seriously eroded the faith. Being in the world, the church would not be unblemished. Mennonites would have their share of prodigal sons and daughters. Under certain circumstances some members would sacrifice principle for expediency. That Mennonites by and large invited back into the fold those who had once walked away was evidence of a church that cared deeply about its losses and wanted desperately to avoid religious obscurity.

While Mennonite rhetors understood that the problem of dwindling church membership in their own faith needed to be addressed forthrightly, they were much more comfortable and willing to discuss the faltering membership of other nonresistant bodies. Self-examination for the purpose of exposing weaknesses is never gratifying. By exposing the weaknesses of others,

members could divert attention from their own troubles, take some comfort in knowing that their church was not in the serious trouble that others were, and, ultimately, provide further incentive to remain firm in the faith.

Mennonites followed with great interest and alarm the militant actions of their brethren in Europe. When the stunning news was delivered to members that Mennonites in Germany and Austria were "in sympathy with the efforts of their countries to take everything in the world that does not belong to them and destroy everything that opposes them," Grubb could think of no other reasonable explanation than to say that the war "had bewitched Mennonites there."³⁹ In later issues of The Mennonite, still in disbelief, Grubb questioned how any one could "by any method of reasoning, justify an allegiance with the unspeakable Turk. . . ." Dismayed, he concluded: "I have yet to hear of a Mennonite martyr in Germany or anywhere else."⁴⁰ Kauffman was quick to inform American Mennonites that their European brethren seriously jeopardized the future of the church. Disgruntled over the weak faith they had exhibited, Kauffman remarked with some perturbation:

We hear a great deal these days about what 'Mennonites' are doing. In this connection it is well to bear in mind that there are some who have left the Mennonite faith but forgot to drop the name. As already stated, in Europe

there are Mennonites engaged in the work of
41
killing and being killed. . . .

Reports of the failing of Mennonitism on the European continent elicited fear for the longevity of the faith on the other side of the Atlantic. If a majority of the Mennonites in Germany and Austria had sacrificed their identity to embrace a militant nationalism, what would become of the church's integrity in America, members asked. If nothing else, Mennonite leaders reasoned, the unbiblical actions of German Mennonites might prompt fellow members to stand up for the principles of the faith.

Other nonresistant bodies closer to home did not escape scrutiny in Mennonite correspondence for failing to uphold rigorous standards of membership. The practices of both the Church of the Brethren and the Quakers were frowned upon by Mennonite rhetors as encouraging a lax faith commitment. One MC member hoped his fellow believers would learn a lesson from the serious mistakes committed by the Church of the Brethren. "We have seen what compromise has done to the Church of the Brethren," he began gravely. "They have accepted army reconstruction and other non-combatant service and as a result their name is scarcely mentioned in connection with non-resistance." His bleak pronouncement included the observation that "they have manifestly lost their identity on this principle. The public has not stamped them as C. O.'s and probably they

are not deserving of this high privilege."⁴² Less condemnatory, but no less dissatisfied with their actions, the Gospel Herald made the Quakers the subject of a lesson for their own faith. "Among those who protest against connecting pacifism with disloyalty are the Society of Friends or Quakers. They are manifesting their loyalty by mobilizing their young men for service. While holding aloof from actual fighting they mean to serve their country in the way of hospital service, relief work etc.,--an attitude which is at least⁴³ questionable for nonresistant people."

The Society of Friends, the Church of the Brethren, even Mennonites in Germany compromised faith principles in some way, and hence ran the risk of dilluting, if not washing out entirely, an historic nonresistant stance. Reporting the questionable and unfaithful actions of other groups gave Mennonites further impetus to reaffirm their own faith. This strategy, as with their efforts to emphasize the church's distinctiveness and high standards, reverse the perception that strength lies in numbers, and cope with membership losses, became of vital importance to lessen the unpleasantness of being rejected by the larger American public. Re-emphasizing the significance of their membership was a way to keep members from foresaking their Mennonite ties to join mainstream America's support of the righteous crusade to make the world safe for democracy.

A Battle Between Competing Scenes

Nonresistance was the biblical stance. Mennonites had embraced this Christian tenet from the beginning. Mennonites had to be zealously committed to becoming "God's representatives on Earth" in order to meet the demanding membership requirements. These words were essential for members to hear again and again. In the face of public pressure to join the crusade mentality and rout the horrible Hun in order to preserve life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, members wanted to hear that facing this difficult test was worth the sacrifices involved. They wanted to hear that their position was the righteous one. Distinguishing themselves from other wayward nonresistant bodies was one way in which Mennonites could clarify their own identity and preserve an aura of superiority. Distancing themselves from the crusade mentality became a more important way to protect their distinctiveness.

Rhetors of the faith were able to draw the lines between Mennonitism and militarism by calling attention to the dangers of compromise. With its repeated use in Mennonite tracts in negative contexts, the word "compromise" became a baneful concept. Compromise meant weakness, selling-out one's principles, giving in to sin, and placing the church in jeopardy. Kauffman's favorite sermon topic was to warn members against the perils of compromise. Using his editorial discretion, Kauffman devoted a good deal of space in the MC's church

paper to spell out the dangerous long-term ramifications of a compromising stance both to the individual and the church. With so much consternation expressed over the consequences of giving in to external pressures, Mennonite rhetors, like Kauffman, hoped to intensify the importance of clinging to the essentials of their faith. "History has proven that compromise in one generation means surrender in the next," Kauffman flatly told readers of the Gospel Herald.⁴⁴ To Mennonites of the Indiana-Michigan conference, he preached: "To draw the line on all war measures is the only satisfactory platform to stand upon. Let us be consistent. If we thought that war was right we should go into it with all our might. If it is not right then draw the line on all war measures. We are in a testing time. Compromise means trouble."⁴⁵ Similarly, H. P. Krehbiel tested readers of Der Herold with the pointed question: "Can you actually love your enemy and pray for him while you are rushing at him to kill him?" Krehbiel provided the emphatic reply: "No! No! So it is plain that there is no room for love and goodwill in the conflicts on the battlefield."⁴⁶

Upon their repeated efforts to caution believers on the dangers of compromise, members began to absorb this concern and openly testify that they, too, understood the need to draw the line on all war-related activities. One MC Mennonite wrote Loucks that he now understood the need to distance himself from worldly influences if he

were ever to emerge from the crisis with his Mennonite identity intact. "Contrary to what I formerly thought," his revelation began, "I am not ashamed to be called a stand-pat, uncompromising conscientious objector. I can see no honorable position in a half-way stand."⁴⁷

Mennonites recognized that the distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, morality and immorality, etc. must always be presented clearly, simply, and in polar extremes to prevent "half-way stances." In order to preserve Mennonite identity, members were forced to choose between Mennonitism or militarism. Straddling the fence, or compromise, was not an alternative. This strategy confirms an important dimension of reaffirmative rhetoric that has been adopted by many groups intent upon reconstituting their identity in the face of external pressures. In order to enhance one's identity as an out-group, there is often a need expressed among group members to distance oneself from one's adversaries; the very process of identifying a self involves identifying against others. By identifying against a war mentality, Mennonite rhetors could thereby delineate their own position--locate themselves by contrast. Such a strategy necessarily becomes self-persuasive and confirmatory.⁴⁸

In charting the progression of social movements, Burke corroborates the cohesive function of an us versus them mentality. He observes that the essential ingredient of every social movement is a marked devil

figure. "Men who can unite on nothing else," he writes, "can unite on the basis of a foe shared by all." More pointedly, he notes that adversaries need to belong to one category only. If members perceive that there are various enemies, it will lead to incipient doubts as to their own cause.⁴⁹ Mennonite rhetoric confirms these theories with a notable twist. The polarization between Mennonitism and militarism, insofar as it was a battle between the secular and sacred world, kingdom of God versus the kingdom of man, was actually a battle between competing scenes. The "enemy" was an entire way of life. Belief systems were in conflict, not persons. To describe the conflict in these terms is to depersonalize the confrontation. By identifying the antagonism as between competing scenes, Mennonites could issue apologetic statements in an effort to identify with patriotic Americans while at the same time issue reaffirmative statements in an effort to identify against militarism.

When Mennonites decided to rehearse their rhetoric of self-defense among themselves, they perpetuated a drive to separate themselves from a competing way of life. When German Mennonites expressed reservation at learning the English language, they feared that an insidious aspect of Americanism had impinged on their world. When Aaron Loucks published and circulated the popular pocket-size tract on nonresistance, he contributed to the efforts of polarizing the two world

views.

Loucks tract deserves special attention, not only because it found its way into a great many Mennonite homes, but because its form and content accentuated the great distinctions between good and evil and reduced the complexities of war to simple, clear-cut issues. On both sides of the credit card size tract were the two sides, militarism and Mennonitism, in dramatic juxtaposition. Readers received in capsulized form testimony of "The Warrior" versus "The Christian" and the foundations of "Nonresistance" and "War."⁵⁰ Loucks made the evils of war and the goodness of peace strikingly clear by using reluctant testimony, a strategy by which the source adds credibility to the message precisely because he has nothing to gain by stating it and everything to lose. By quoting "noted warriors," Loucks enhanced the credibility of his devastating depiction of war.

Moreover, Loucks believed that he could escape recrimination for printing "seditious" messages because they did not originate with him or any Mennonite, but from officers of the government. Without editorial comment, Loucks simply listed their descriptions of war one right after the other. "War is hell," General Sherman had once pronounced. Napoleon topped him, describing it as "the business of barbarians." Montiesquieu had once made the disillusioned observation that "If Europe will ever be ruined it will be by its warriors." Hooker offered the treasonous revelation that

"The truth is, good men can not be good men and fighting men. They must have the devil in them. To kill one another, they must have their blood up, and then they are just like devils." Mennonites could not have devised a more ugly picture of war themselves. That "good men cannot be fighting men" because soldiers are transformed into devils was a poignant reminder of the perils of compromise.

Below the warriors' testimony lay "The Christian's Duty,"--a series of bible verses that served as a code by which all good men lived. Strategically, the Bible passages chosen for the Christian's honor code reflected the Mennonite position exactly. Such duties as "To obey God even though the powers that be may command us to do otherwise--Act 5:29" and "To live a quiet and peaceable life, a life of holiness consistent with our profession--I Tim. 2: 2; Eph. 4:1" described this nonresistant body, not Christians who supported the war efforts. Both sides of the tract were sprinkled liberally with Scripture to re-emphasize the biblical basis of the Mennonite position. In fact, so important was it to associate Mennonitism with Biblicism that excluding the Mennonite Publishing House stamp, the word Mennonite never appeared in the tract.

Loucks' tract would have probably escaped the scrutiny of the government for seditious activity had it not included a section entitled: "Some Facts Concerning War." Contrary to the earlier practice of using military

men to denounce war, Loucks elected to make the "facts" speak for themselves. Where such "facts" (and not opinions) came from only Loucks knew. One of the first "facts" about war was that: "Might, not justice, decides its issues." The seditious implication, of course, was that all wars were motivated by greed and conquest, not moral and just principles. Another "fact" about war was that "moral degradation and lawlessness invariably follow in the wake of war." A reconstruction period, then, was woefully misnamed. Perhaps the most challenging, if not audacious, "fact" listed was that "the annals of history contain no records of nations that long retained commanding power after an era of conquest." Loucks assumed that any nation that went to war had visions of take-over. The closest this tract came to identifying against individuals, not ideologies, was the ill-advised remark: "The men who are responsible for war seldom get within range of the enemy's bullets." The attack on the integrity of heads of state read loud and clear. The duplicitous men who declared war and asked their fellow citizens to sacrifice their lives if necessary for the country, were not the same men who carry out those orders.

Loucks "facts concerning war" helped maintain the gulf between competing scenes. The lines were clearly drawn between war and peace, good and evil. Loucks adopted an absolutist stance in order to polarize the world of the Christian and the world of the warrior.

"All war is evil" the tract asserted. No gradations between just and unjust wars, good and bad soldiers existed. Such universal claims also gave the tract a distinct ahistorical flavor. It was not just applicable for Mennonites in the crisis of the Great War; rather, it was relevant for all times and all places. Its ahistorical character, however, also gave the impression that Mennonites were an apolitical people who owed no loyalties to any country. To be sure, Mennonites wanted to convey the message that Christ's Rule superseded government's everchanging laws. But, as analyzed in chapter six, Mennonites did affirm certain aspects of an American identity. In this respect, the tract overstated its case. As far as the government was concerned, it overstepped the law in its disrespectful attitude toward government too. As a result, its publisher would be held accountable.

Taking Control of The Crisis

It was one thing for Mennonites to find rhetorical means by which to re-confirm the righteousness of their church identity, it was quite another for them to actually go about their daily routine without events of the war controlling them. The war loomed larger than life for many Americans. As a relatively small, obscure, religious group, it would have been very easy for members to become overwhelmed, if not paralyzed, by its insatiable demands for sacrifice and its rude intrusion

on community tranquility. Mennonite writers, who before United States intervention had grimly stated that: "It is idle to dream of a war-less world," and "Our faith in the sanity of the world has fallen to a point where it disappears,"⁵¹ were quick to recognize that such comments were patently inappropriate for helping members remain faithful in a crisis situation. By the time America had entered the fray, such expressions of hopelessness and despair had tapered considerably.⁵² The task before Mennonite leaders now was to alter the impression of the war as a "violent storm" that pinned their church to either a defensive or a defenseless posture. Mennonite rhetoric designed to convince members that the war need not control their actions was characterized by two seemingly contradictory strategies: to celebrate the war as a "day of opportunity" that would test their faith and to dwarf the significance of the war by transcending their present situation.

Mennonite rhetors, like C. E. Krehbiel, reasoned that if Mennonites could be convinced that the war was less a grim situation than an opportunity to test the extent of their faith, then remaining loyal to the church would carry with it a positive challenge. The editor attempted to accomplish that among his German readership in each editorial. Beginning with the April 5, 1917 issue of Der Herold and continuing through the Dec. 7, 1917 issue, Krehbiel prefaced each editorial topic with the phrase: "The best time to establish peace

is today." The constant reminder that Mennonites should demonstrate an optimistic attitude amidst the pressures of war was an important way to buoy their faith and diffuse an all is lost attitude.

But as the war wore on, it became increasingly difficult for members to maintain an optimistic outlook. Sensitive to that problem, Krehbiel started a new policy on Dec. 7, 1917, to head each editorial section with two Bible verses, one from Ephesians 4:26: "Be Ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," and the other from James 1:20: "For the wrath of Man worketh not the righteousness of God." In light of the increasing pressures on Mennonites to conform to the war, from the verbal and physical abuse for their nonresistant stand to the prohibition of the German language in published materials that discussed the war, Krehbiel's change of policy was a candid acknowledgement that Mennonites were only human; it was easy to get discouraged and angry at the incessant badgering and the many restrictions on their activities. Yet the new slogan, like the old, served to boost the morale of church members and give them guidance to cope with frustrating and intimidating skirmishes with outsiders.

Other contributors to Der Herold also gave readers reason to believe that some good would come out of this unpleasant experience. Minister H. D. Penner, using the poignancy and inspirational value of figurative language, told GC Mennonites that he was convinced that

"we are facing the rising sun and have everything to live for," and that "[i]f ye have faith the size of a mustard seed" through this crisis "you can move⁵³ mountains."

Krehbiel was not the only Mennonite editor to use his influential post to reverse members' perception of the war. In several issues of the Gospel Herald, Daniel Kauffman explained to his readership that war was not all bad. "In the midst of trials," he confidently announced "is our brightest opportunity to shine for the Master."⁵⁴ Kauffman often espoused the position that the war did not present an unfortunate or hopeless situation. He was still claiming in the waning months of the war that "We have opportunities today that we have not had before in this generation."⁵⁵ Not only did he want members to see the brighter side of the war, but he wanted them to see the war as a precious opportunity to demonstrate their faithfulness. Kauffman once explained to MC members that the war could be compared to a series of difficult tests that, if passed, would create a most satisfying and rewarding feeling. "In war times we may expect any kind of test," he warned. "In some places it is not a test of national or state law but of mob law. In other places it is not a test of law or lawlessness but a test of endurance in the face of public sentiment, or cunningly devised arguments against the nonresistant faith, of tempting offers of place and preferment, of other tests which try our faith, courage, and quickness

of perception." Kauffman followed this long list of tests with the challenge: "Will we stand the test?"⁵⁶

Likewise the small conference affiliated papers, the Christian Evangel and the Christian Monitor viewed the war as a great opportunity for Mennonites to show their true Christian discipleship. A. Augspurger, writing in the Christian Evangel proclaimed: "This is a day of testing for those societies who make the claim of being Christian, and their character brought under the full light of the gospel."⁵⁷ Augspurger did not claim that this would be an easy test, but, nonetheless, it was a test that Mennonites should enthusiastically endorse. H. Frank Reist, editor of the Christian Monitor, also voiced enthusiasm for interpreting the present situation as an opportune time for members to show the world that they were devout Christians. "We as a Church are today face to face with an opportunity to give a practical testimony for Christ such as has seldom or ever confronted her," he exclaimed. Reist further speculated: "May it be that God is giving the Church her last great opportunity for the accomplishment of the task given her by the Master upon His departure?"⁵⁸ Rather than silently affirm the rightness of Mennonitism in order to avoid unwanted publicity from an unsympathetic public, Reist believed that Mennonites should call attention to the Christian principle of nonresistance. In this way, Mennonites could show their unwavering devotion to Christ's peace principles.

GC Mennonites who subscribed to The Mennonite received plenty of advice encouraging them to respond to the crisis as if it were an essential test of faith. H. G. Allebach, a guest contributor, realized the importance of this opportunity when he wrote: "The present war is an unequaled opportunity for us to demonstrate, if we can, the immense superiority of the gospel of peace and non-resistance."⁵⁹ Similarly S. M. Grubb envisioned that if Mennonites could see the war as an opportunity to express their devotion to Christ then "after the smoke of battle is cleared away we will be a stronger and more influential people. The thousands or more young men who are now in the detention camps . . . will set a new standard of non-resistance." Grubb even went so far as to believe that the wider American public would eventually see the wisdom of the Mennonite position. "Already has their example set folks to thinking," he remarked in reference to the Mennonite draftees in camp. Grubb concluded with the optimistic assessment that "When once the world gets sane again men and women will see the sense there is in doing exactly as Jesus would have them do."⁶⁰

On more than one occasion, it was members of the faith, not its leaders, who encouraged their fellow members to see the war as a test of courage and devotion to faith principles. One particularly persuasive argument came from a draftee whose entire letter was given prominence in the Gospel Herald. Speaking for the

Mennonite contingent in camp, draftee J. Heishman stated:

We . . . feel that the rise or fall of the Church hangs on our shoulders, for if it goes down now, it will never be recognized anymore as a non-resistant body. And we believe that it is our duty to stand and even give our lives if necessary to uphold for future generations the principles which our forefathers died to preserve for us.⁶¹

Intimations of heroism and even patriotism are evident in this draftee's statement. Mennonite leaders hoped that such dedication to the faith would be the rule and not the exception, that members would see the importance of using this test to show their faithfulness to Mennonitism and to God's Word.

Reversing the perception of the war from an unfortunate to a fortunate experience enhanced the Mennonites' desire to remain part of the church. But if the war presented a grand opportunity to demonstrate their Mennonite identity, how, exactly, were they to go about meeting the challenge in their home communities? Kauffman was prepared for this question. He suggested that members "should show by our quiet, peaceable, meek, pure, submissive, Spirit-guided life that our profession of nonresistance is not mere slavery to church creed but the expression of a living conviction. . . ." ⁶² In enacting the lifestyle of a dutiful Christian,

Mennonites could prove the sincerity of their convictions in the face of hostility.

A more concerted effort to give members direction on how to survive the test was for Mennonite rhetors to compare themselves to biblical characters. Since Mennonites were a people of the Bible, biblical images were critical to their self-understanding. Jesus was a central figure that Mennonite ministers and other church leaders urged their fellow members to pattern their lives after. As Krehbiel stated simply to his readers: "[T]he life of Christ is our example."⁶³ Kauffman outlined what that example entailed for his readers. "[Jesus] meekly submitted to his persecutors," he explained, "and though He might have called to His assistance more than twelve legions of angels from heaven to rescue Him from the cross, He used none of these powers in His own defense and died an ignominious death."⁶⁴ The argument might have continued thus: If Christ practiced nonresistance even in the face of death, can we as Christ's disciples abandon nonresistance in the face of public hostility?

Another key biblical figure in Mennonite rhetoric was the Apostle Paul. This disciple of Christ who remained an outcast much of his life and endured so much suffering in the hands of his enemies proved to be an excellent source of inspiration. Der Herold instructed its readers who were smarting under verbal abuse from the wider citizenry to take solace in his words. "Paul

warns the Christian that he is not supposed to get angry, he is not supposed to hate the wrong that has been done in over-powering him, he is rather to accept the evil and forgive him." Readers were reminded of Paul's last words of advice: "Be not overcome with evil, overcome evil with good."⁶⁵ The Gospel Herald also found it helpful to compare the perils that Mennonites had experienced in facing a hostile public with those that Paul had endured. One such article that members might have read with keen interest made that analogy particularly clear. It stated:

[T]hese oft-repeated statements, published as facts and seldom refuted in public print, leave an erroneous impression upon the minds of many people and encourages a feeling of resentment against nonresistant people--a feeling similar to that which impelled the mob to cry out against Paul. 'Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live.'⁶⁶

With this analogy, Mennonites could interpret the bitterness they endured from the wider citizenry as less painful, in fact, their run-ins with patriotic Americans could be seen as heroic when placed in relation to the trials of a great disciple of Christ.

The biblical figure that Mennonites most frequently compared themselves to was the proverbial Good Samaritan. This was an ideal comparison in light of the

fact that Mennonites wanted to remain faithful Christians and uphold nonresistance, yet also wanted to prove their loyalty by serving in a charitable capacity, such as relieving suffering. As one writer for the Christian Evangel remarked: "Personally we prefer to class the dutiful Christians with those whom Christ represented in the Good Samaritan."⁶⁷ Playing the role of the Good Samaritan entailed supporting the Red Cross for S. M. Grubb. He claimed: "If I cannot be a soldier, I can and ought at least to be a good Samaritan."⁶⁸ This was a meritorious argument in support of serving in the Red Cross, even though Mennonites were completely against supporting war-related activities. As the parable of the Good Samaritan goes, it was a Samaritan (whose people traditionally despised the Jews and vice versa) who helped the ailing Jew lying along the roadside. As the Samaritan look at the suffering man, he did not see a Jew but a fellow human being who deserved his help. Likewise, Grubb rationalized that persons who were killing were in great need. Mennonites needed to be dutiful Christians--Good Samaritans--and help their fallen brethren, not because they were militaristic Americans, but because they were part of the human family.

MC leaders also used the Good Samaritan comparison, but in this case it was used to justify the importance of Mennonites finding charitable works that were dissociated from the military arm of the government. J.

E. Hartzler instructed:

Let us not content ourselves in walking with the 'be good' fellows who passed by the man who fell among thieves. Let us join hearts and hands with the 'do good' man who came with oil and wine and carried the half dead man to the hotel and paid all his doctor bills. The good Samaritan was non-resistant but he did a service which the world shall never forget. No people on earth are in better position just now than are the Mennonites.⁶⁹

Acting the role of the Good Samaritan gave Mennonites a way to reconcile their loyalties to God and country. Mennonites could maintain their nonresistant stance and their image as hard-working Christians, yet help those in need and be seen as loyal Americans because Jesus taught his followers to be good neighbors to all persons.

If Mennonites could, in Kauffman's words, see that the war presented them with a bright opportunity to shine for the Master, an opportunity to become twentieth-century versions of exemplary biblical characters, and an opportunity to show outsiders the wisdom of the Mennonite position, then in Grubbs' words, they would emerge from the smoke of battle a stronger and more influential people. Transforming the war from a frightening enemy to a test of spiritual strength was an inventive way to take control of the crisis.

Another inventive strategy Mennonites used to avoid letting the events of the war dominate their lives was to downplay its significance, a strategy which would appear to contradict attempts to celebrate the war as a day of opportunity. The war could not be significant and insignificant at the same time, or could it? For a people set on being in the world, but not of it, the decision to make both arguments in an effort to maintain control of events made perfect sense. As "pilgrims" in the world, Mennonites were instructed to be "God's representatives on Earth," not just in peace times but in war times too. True disciples of Christ would view the war as an opportunity to shine for the Master. As "strangers" in the world, Mennonites were instructed to live "not for this world but for the world to come." Loyal followers of the Gospel would view the war as a necessary evil of the world that should be kept in perspective lest they became too absorbed in the affairs of this life.

But even with the knowledge that Mennonites wanted to enact a biblical paradox, one can question whether or not refusing to grant the war great import was a harmful avoidance strategy. Failing to discuss war issues had the potential to inflict damage on the church's longevity. If Mennonites did not remain informed on war news, how could they make an appropriate defense of their faith when confronted with a myriad of damaging charges from outsiders? Mennonites might have countered,

however, that failing to highlight war issues served a beneficial purpose. There were, from a Mennonite perspective, more critical matters for the church to address. More importantly, in terms of keeping the faith strong, the practice of giving minimal attention to war news, distracted members from dwelling on an uncomfortable subject, preserved the Mennonite principle of non-conformity, and, ultimately, dwarfed the threat of the war.

In keeping with Christ's teaching to be strangers in the world, Daniel Kauffman urged members not to let the war control their lives because "It is not the most important thing before us." He continued:

We are apt, in the time of noise and turmoil and clamor of war, to lose sight of things less noisy but of far more importance. . . . Let us apply ourselves to the great work of strengthening the Church, seeking the lost, building up Christian homes, magnify [sic] Jesus Christ in all we do, seek [sic] and follow [sic] the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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Kauffman transcended the immediate concerns generated by the war to focus upon matters "of far more importance" to the devout Christian. Passages like this served to distract members from contemplating the anxieties of war pressures, and helped to preserve a semblance of tranquility and separation from the world. The Gospel

Herald was not the only forum in which Kauffman avoided a discussion of war issues. The Conservative Viewpoint, Kauffman's extremely popular and influential book, was published at the height of the war, and yet there is no mention of war anywhere between its covers. Despite the fact that Kauffman saw so many "problems" facing the Mennonite church, as evidenced by a table of contents which identifies everything from dress problems to publication problems, the influence of the war is⁷¹ neither a cause or consequence of them.

Kauffman's belief that there were more important matters than the war for members to attend to was shared by the editors of the other Mennonite newspapers. During the course of the war, the layouts of the five major Mennonite periodicals regularly intermixed the numerous church-related subjects with only a few articles that addressed the war. In all five newspapers between the years 1917-1919, there was never an entire issue devoted to war concerns; in fact, with the exception of Der Herold, rarely was there an entire page devoted to war concerns. Der Herold provided the notable exception⁷² primarily due to its advertising policy. The war-related articles that did make it into print focussed exclusively on how Mennonites were affected. Information on legislation, such as compulsory military service, noncombatant specifications, Farm Furlough regulations, the sedition act, and Mennonite negotiation efforts with the government were appropriate. So, too, were

updates on the status of Mennonite draftees in camp and Red Cross and Liberty Loans contributions. Conspicuously absent were reports on the progress of the war on various battle fronts. Unlike American periodicals, which featured war-torn cities or patriotic G. I.'s and acquainted readers with names of battles, generals and casualties in order to make the war real for Americans back home, Mennonite newspapers closed their columns to war reports in order to keep the outside world from infringing on their lives; the less Mennonites had to know about the war, the less they were reminded that they held a nonresistant position in a resisting world. A prime example of editors' discomfort in bringing the war up for consideration was a remark that Kauffman made one year into the war. "We almost feel like apologizing⁷³ for mentioning the war question so often," he wrote. Despite the minimal number of articles published concerning the war, Kauffman voiced reluctance to subjecting members to a disturbing issue.

The editors of Mennonite papers felt much more comfortable giving coverage to such subjects as mission work, Bible study, Mennonite history, births, deaths, marriages, and other community news. It is of particular interest to look at the front-page of the Gospel Herald and The Mennonite in the issue after war had been declared. The Gospel Herald gave the news of America's entrance into the war one column on the first page. Yet getting equal coverage on the first page was an article

discussing whether or not there was such a thing as degrees of sinfulness. America's entrance into the war did not even rate front-page coverage in The Mennonite. Rather, Grubb decided to print an article of two columns on page four, alongside a three-column article that argued that "ministers of the gospel of today would preach better sermons if they would get more physical exercise."⁷⁴ From an outsider's journalistic perspective, juxtaposing a subject that warranted screaming headlines with a subject so trivial that it barely warranted a blurb in a humor column was the epitome of a gross error on the editor's part. But from a Mennonite perspective, it would not have been appropriate to emphasize a worldly concern at the expense of a church concern.

In Mennonite publications, war news had to compete with church news. By refusing to consider the war the most pressing news of the century, Mennonite rhetors could distract their fellow members from dwelling on an unpleasant subject and remain faithful to their Scriptural paradox. When editors refused to give war news any larger headlines than they gave to community news, they were giving the impression of "business as usual." Mennonites were a people of the Bible bent on doing constructive church work, and although the war intruded upon their lifestyle, Mennonites refused to give it their undivided attention. In deflecting attention from the war to dwell on Christian concerns,

the war became a less real threat to the church.

Mennonite rhetoric that aimed to downplay the significance of the war was also characterized by a tendency to dwell in the past or future, but not in the present. Specifically, this took the form of focussing on the glorious past and future of the church. This is an important strategy for group cohesion, according to Eric Hoffer. He observes that "[T]here is no more potent dwarfing of the present than by viewing it as a mere link between a glorious past and a glorious future . . . [for] a vivid awareness of past and future robs the present of its reality."⁷⁵

As discussed earlier, highlighting the glorious past of their martyred ancestors was a way to re-affirm the historical basis of nonresistance, but it was also a way to dwarf the present. When Mennonite writers reminded members of the barbaric torture that the early Mennonites endured for their peace stance, they were also reminded that their ordeal involved much milder forms of verbal and physical abuse that could not compare with the hardships suffered by their heroic forebears. The world war appeared much less threatening to the church when it was compared to the trials suffered by the early Mennonites.

The influence of the war on Mennonite thought and action was also lessened when it was put in the perspective of a perennial problem that Mennonites had always faced. The war only confirmed the history of the

Mennonites as transient people in quest of a land. Delegates of the Western District conference who convened in the summer of 1917 to discuss the war tried to downplay its significance by recounting their temporary stay in all countries. The minutes read:

[A] long stay has never been their [the Mennonites'] lot in any country. Finally they came to America, in the hope of having at last found a country in which they would be able to serve God undisturbed, in their own way. After years of peaceful labor, the same problem is again arising before us.

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Mennonites always learned to weather the storms of war before, as this passage implied. The present situation should not be any more difficult to endure than were crisis situations in times past.

Reliving a glorious, and sometimes troubled, past was one way to rob the present of its reality, another way was to hope for a better future. Hoffer notes:

"There can be no genuine deprecation of the present without the assured hope of a better future."

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Mennonite leaders frequently stressed the great rewards that would be forthcoming for the true Christian who remained a staunch believer in Christ's peace principles during this time of turmoil. One passage in the Gospel Herald portrayed a time in the near future when the world would be at peace again and Mennonites would be in good standing with the wider American citizenry.

Our prayers shall continue to ascend that the day may speedily come when the present differences and misunderstandings will have been wiped away, when our religious convictions may be fully recognized as guaranteed by national and state Constitutions, and when we may be able to serve in a capacity in which we can do so with a free conscience.⁷⁸

Such encouraging words helped members to place the war in its proper perspective. The war would not endure forever, as it so often seemed. This war, like all wars, was but a temporary suspension of life at peace. This was important for members to remember in the face of public pressure to support the war.

While Mennonites deprecated the war by focusing on a time in the not too distant future when the world would return to normal, they more frequently dwarfed the present crisis by focusing on a glorious life in heaven. As biblical people, Mennonites used the Bible to justify the fact that a better life was awaiting the devout Christian, just as they had done to justify the rightness of nonresistance in war times. Two scriptural passages frequently found in Mennonite periodicals that transcended the world crisis included: John 18:36: "My Kingdom is not of this world," and Col. 3:1, 2: "Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth."⁷⁹ As the Christian Evangel saw it, the lesson

from these passages was clear: "From these words of our Savior we can easily see that His great concern was with reference to His kingdom, and which also should be the great concern of everyone who claims the nonresistant faith."⁸⁰ Mennonites may not have been able to ignore all of the demands of the war, but, as Scripture commanded, they would not consider the war their most pressing concern.

Kauffman hoped to convince members to remain strong in the faith by reminding them that "there is a brighter day coming." To help fellow believers resist the pressures of war demands, he urged them to remember that "if we trust in God and keep our conscience bright before God and man there is a golden Crown awaiting us at the end." If members would "never lose sight of the cross" they could withstand the test of war.⁸¹

Elsewhere, Kauffman frankly stated: "Life here is a little thing compared with life over yonder . . . Let us look at life from this standpoint only."⁸² Since devout Christians were in the hands of God, it did not matter if they had to endure persecution here on earth. They would be justly rewarded by God in the future.

If Mennonites could dwell on a glorious life after death, they could effectively deflect attention from the war. Mennonite rhetors also recognized that they could downplay the significance of the war by wondering if it were not a sign of the Second Coming. Since much of the world was engulfed in battle, some Mennonites presumed

that Christ's return was imminent. One guest contributor of The Mennonite insisted that "the present crisis points towards the close of the Times of the Gentiles," and that "the revelation of our Lord may be expected any moment."⁸³ Concerning oneself with the Second Coming was a way to transcend specific war problems. Kauffman also found it important to discuss Christ's return to earth: "We do not know what will be the nature of the end of the present conflict, but we do know that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we (the righteous) also appear with him in glory."⁸⁴ Devoting one's thoughts to Christ's Coming served to distract members from dealing with "mundane" war problems. By rejecting the present to center their interests on the future, Mennonites could be consoled by the statement made by General Conference leaders that "although round about us it is dark, above us there is nevertheless light."⁸⁵

Mennonites discovered a number of ways to rob the present world crisis of its immediate threat to the church's longevity. They made war news compete with church news in Mennonite newspapers which showed that spokespersons of the faith were determined to keep the war from becoming their main priority. They compared the trials that Mennonites were currently enduring with the trials experienced by their martyred ancestors in order to show that the war was not the worst testing of their faith. They viewed the war as just one of many problems

that Mennonites have always had to contend with in order to eschew the war's grave significance. Finally, in order to dwarf the influence of the war, they set their sights on the return to peace and on their just reward in heaven.

Freedom of Conscience Versus Church Polity

From explaining the biblical and historical bases of nonresistance to celebrating their high standards of membership, from identifying against the war mentality to taking control of the crisis situation, members of the faith were provided with a veritable blueprint of a rhetorical foundation to help them reaffirm Mennonite identity. Mennonite rhetors presumed that if Mennonites were presented with a variety of ways to re-affirm the faith, members would be able to stand firmly united in facing the test. If Mennonites could support each other, the test would be less difficult. The old axiom: "united we stand, divided we fall," had a particular relevance in maintaining the church. Critic Eric Hoffer explains why it is necessary for members of a group to stand firmly together during a crisis:

The capacity to resist coercion stems partly from the individual's identification with a group. When individuals face a crisis or confrontation it is highly difficult to rely on the resources of his own individuality. His primary source of strength is not himself but

rather being part of something mighty,
glorious, and indestructible.⁸⁶

Mennonite leaders understood that members would be less inclined to be coerced into the line of duty if they could see themselves as part of a strong and mighty church. But in order for this goal to be realized, Mennonites needed to stress cooperation among various Mennonite groups. To some extent this was accomplished. General Conference leaders acknowledged the importance of working together. In the Western District's Committee Report, delegates expressed the desire to work with other Conferences. The minutes read: "[W]hen it comes to the test [the present world crisis], then we feel that we really all belong together. It has been the privilege of the Committee to deliberate jointly with similar committees of other conferences of our Mennonite people a number of times."⁸⁷ Moreover, when Mennonites made trips to Washington or sent letters to government officials, they made a point of including delegates from several Conferences.

But despite the expectations of many, Mennonites did not present a unified Mennonite front to outsiders on all issues. There was no Central Committee of Mennonites to make denominational policy. Therefore, Mennonites were not organized to speak with one voice on key war issues. While both MC and GC Mennonites recognized the extreme importance of cooperating with one another during the present crisis, members were not

willing to concede on issues that violated their conscience. Freedom of conscience meant something slightly different to each Mennonite, and this was the crux of the problem in establishing a unified front.

Freedom of conscience was a cherished right for Mennonites. In their church constitution of 1860, GC Mennonites had consciously emphasized that the moral code of the individual superseded the moral code of the church. With a clear purpose and a strong vision, the constitution read:

Each believer stands before God Himself in faith as a free individual, uncoerced by other believers. Each individual soul, created in the image of God, is competent and responsible to deal directly with God through Christ, without intervention of parent, priest, sacrament, church, or state. This personal responsibility to God is the basis for freedom
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of conscience.

Fifty-seven years later, in the midst of a world war that threatened to snuff out the existence of their faith, GC Mennonites tried to re-affirm the policy outlined in their constitution to grant individual conscience priority over a collective conscience. The report of the GC Committee on Military Exemptions in 1917, prefaced its guidelines on what drafted members of the faith should do in the absence of a ruling on noncombatant service from the President with the remark:

"The Committee does not find it easy to give a definite answer covering all cases coming up for consideration. In the first place, neither Committee nor Conference can formulate a man's conscience."⁸⁹ Church papers, for all their drafting of "official" Mennonite positions, reminded readers that in the final analysis each individual, not church polity, would formulate a stance on the war. Der Herold frequently stated: "It is important that a person ask himself very directly, what can I do without injuring my conscience."⁹⁰ On the issue of the Red Cross, for example, the paper suggested that "each one search his own conscience and see whether they are taking part in the war or taking part in helping others."⁹¹

MC Mennonites also revered freedom of conscience, though their constitution did not stipulate its precedence over the authority of church bishops. And yet, a guest contributor to the Gospel Herald, J. C. Meyer, was every bit as careful to recognize the extreme importance of spiritual autonomy, and even more philosophical about its preservation, than GC Mennonites. In an impassioned plea for its recognition, Meyer wrote:

[I]t does not help the cause to say that the Mennonite Church has decided that it is morally wrong to kill a fellow man. The question is: What do you think? What do you believe? What are you willing to do to

exemplify your faith in nonresistance?. . .
This is a question between God and the
individual. . . . This may sound like
dangerous individualism, but it is the natural
consequence of the idea of conscientious
objection.⁹²

Mennonites might have questioned Meyer's light dismissal of freedom of conscience never becoming "dangerous individualism." Mennonites in Germany had used Meyer's philosophy to justify their military support, and, consequently, forfeited Mennonite principles. "In order to satisfy his own conscience and the demands of the authorities," German ministers wrote, "we leave to the judgment of each of them as to our old Mennonite stance of nonresistance."⁹³ The advice American Mennonites gave to their boys in camp was hauntingly reminiscent of the words of their German brethren. Writing to Aaron Loucks, minister J. A. Ressler acknowledged that: "[I]t will be of little account for us to advise the boys as to what to do. . . . But we may be very free in telling them just what the law is and then telling [sic] it is for them to decide. The final decision will have to rest with the boys."⁹⁴ The Mennonite position appeared all the more fragile if Mennonite draftees were not getting firm guidance on faith matters in the company of temptors.

The real problem with espousing a totalistic notion of freedom of conscience is that when carried to its

logical conclusions such a stance implies a tolerance of all human action. Mennonites, surprisingly enough, understood this. C. E. Krehbiel told readers of Der Herold that "we really have to respect those young men who have volunteered [for military service] because it was their duty. If they really do it as a matter of conscience and feel it is a duty that they must perform, then lets give them our respect for feeling that way."⁹⁵

In one sentence, Krehbiel appeared to have undermined Mennonite reaffirmative rhetoric. For a religious group bent on emphasizing the importance of keeping the flock faithful, passages like these became enigmatic. If Mennonite leaders, like Krehbiel, were willing to make gross concessions to individual conscience, than the power of a group conscience lost much of its importance. But did Mennonites really believe that individuals were stronger than collectives? that an individual's moral code superseded church code? that, as in Meyer's mind, questions of faith were between God and the individual? The concerted efforts to maintain a Mennonite, as opposed to a mere personal, identity would suggest otherwise.

This fundamental tension that Mennonites experienced between the self and the group, between spiritual autonomy and spiritual conformity, can be explained in sociological terms as a struggle between the "I" and the "Me" of each individual. George Herbert Mead writes that: "The 'I' is the response of the

organism to the attitudes of the others; the 'me' is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes."⁹⁶ These components of the self are often in conflict. The "I," the existential component of one's self, may at times be incongruent with one's "me," the socially prescribed component of one's self. Freedom of conscience represented the "I" for Mennonites. Church doctrine represented the "Me." That freedom of conscience was protected by church doctrine proved to be ironic on one level. On another level, it reflected a yearning that the two be one and the same, and that one being the socially prescribed component of the self. Mennonites recognized that freedom of conscience meant something more personal than affirming the essential principles of Mennonitism, but that they still engaged in heated arguments to persuade members either to keep their consciences relatively open or closed regarding war demands was testament to the fact that they believed church doctrine need not be in conflict with individual conscience; that one's "Me" and one's "I" were compatible in all essentials.

The truth of the matter was that a church creed that sanctioned moral autonomy inherently created cause for disagreement within its body of believers. Mennonites had their share of controversy over war issues. One of the most divisive issues involved the Mennonite position on noncombatant duty. Daniel Kauffman held a staunch belief that all Mennonites should follow

the example of the MC's in refusing all forms of war-related work. He urged all Mennonite draftees to respond to orders from the military by politely refusing. In this way, the Mennonite position would be consistently demonstrated to others and members could take comfort in cooperating with various Mennonite groups. He wrote: "We trust that their example [MC draftees] may be but a sample of what our brethren are doing in all the camps. ⁹⁷ 'In unity there is strength.'"

Yet important as unity may have been for Kauffman, Mennonites did not draw the line at the same place on the issue of noncombatant service. In fact, on this issue, signs of disunity were as visible in Mennonite discourse as signs of unity. As has already been mentioned, the GC's generally accepted noncombatant duty as defined by President Wilson, and supported some additional patriotic acts that they did not consider directly under the control of the military, such as the Red Cross and Liberty Loans. The MC's, on the other hand, took an uncompromising position. They believed that complying with the Executive Order on noncombatant duty and supporting the Red Cross would only encourage the government to draft Mennonites into the service. Rather than allow for some diversity in interpreting what was militaristic and what was not, Mennonites of both Conferences engaged in heated debate on this issue, often overshadowing signs of cooperation.

Aaron Loucks urged members to remain faithful to

the MC position on noncombatant service by using a guilt-producing tactic. He compared all Mennonites who forsook nonresistance by serving in a noncombatant capacity to the sinful biblical figure--Pontius Pilate. Posing a confrontative rhetorical question, Loucks began:

When Pilate washed his hands and said, 'I find no fault in him,' did he absolve himself from the guilt of the death of Jesus? . . . But the people demanded that He be sentenced to death, and rather than incur the displeasure of the people he delivered Him to be crucified. . . . When he gave his consent to have Jesus crucified he was therefore guilty of the murder of Jesus. Will I be guilty of manslaughter if I enlist and enter the non-combatant service of any branch of the military forces?

Louck's answer was all too clear: "In consenting to become a party in war, regardless of what kind of service you render, you bear responsibility in the crimes that are committed in warfare."⁹⁸ Loucks used the biblical story to inflict a harsh reprimand on those members of the faith who, in his eyes, had strayed by compromising their position in a desire to remain loyal.

Like Loucks, Kauffman remained convinced that those members performing noncombatant duties were "being deceived as to the real issue" and "missing the point."

He continued: "Even the authorities recognize that a man in hospitals, munitions factories, and other kinds of noncombatant service is just as valuable in the work of overcoming the enemy as is the man who who [sic] carries the rifle and actually shoots."⁹⁹ The only faithful stance for the Mennonite was, in Kauffman's view, so self-evident that any member who thought otherwise was sorely misguided. Kauffman did not confine his disapproval of those who took up noncombatant work to words of explanation regarding the "true" position. In one particularly caustic passage, he stated:

Whenever the conscience breaks out only in spots you may depend upon it that it is either enveloped in dense ignorance or that there is more selfishness than conscience about it. . . . People who profess nonresistance but at the same time declare it their duty to 'do their bit' in the support of war . . . are either misled or insincere.¹⁰⁰

The Gospel Herald frequently printed such disapproving words for their fellow members of the faith who had not emulated the posture of the MC's on all war matters.¹⁰¹

Attacks on fellow members who were not conforming to the position taken by a particular Conference were not one-sided. S. M. Grubb of the General Conference issued an equally sharp reprimand to "the absolute pacifists" of the Mennonite Church. In one article, he not only pointed out the absurdity of an absolutist

position, but charged that the position was downright cruel:

There are those who would be so logical in their peace attitude that they would not even be of use in the military hospitals for fear that they would be helping to patch men up that they might be sent back again and fight. Aside from the positive cruelty that would let men die for fear that they might later, when cured, do that which could not be approved by us, there is a one-sidedness about it that calls for carrying the reasoning process further. They should not pay taxes, or till the ground, or raise cattle, or dig coal, or hew down trees, or spin yarn or weave a piece of fabric for all that would be helping win
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the war.

Grubb saw the MC's position as absurd. Kauffman saw the GC's position as misguided and unfaithful. Each wanted to see their own conscientious position taken by others and inscribed not only as a Conference position but as Church doctrine. Yet to use space in Mennonite periodicals to fire verbal shots at one another was highly detrimental to creating unity among all Mennonites. Open dissension among leaders of the faith only intensified the difficulty of remaining strong as a group in the face of adversity. Rather than put up a united front, which would have made congregations within

the church less vulnerable to public attacks of inconsistency and have made it easier for Mennonites to prove their faithfulness, the church elected to remain divided on the issue of noncombatant service. Mennonites wholeheartedly agreed with Kauffman that "In unity there is strength," yet they also agreed with GC delegates that no one "can formulate a man's conscience."

Fortunately, for both Conferences, Mennonitism survived the fissures that were bound to occur in a church that granted co-legitimacy to the individual conscience and the collective conscience of the church. For the most part, Mennonite rhetors were successful at encouraging members of the faith to merge personal identity with church identity. With numerous strategies designed to make Mennonites feel proud of their association with the church, they formulated impressive reaffirmative rhetoric. But then, in Kauffman's words, Mennonites affirmed "an extraordinary position"¹⁰³ which required a host of persuasive arguments to defend.

Notes

¹ "Opportunities and Responsibilities," Christian Monitor, 12 (1920), p. 455.

² "Peace and War Materials," H. P. Krehbiel Collection 1917-1931, Folder 12, (BCLA).

³ Richard B. Gregg, "The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest," Philosophy and Rhetoric 4 (1971), pp. 74-75.

⁴ Gregg, p. 75.

⁵ Walter R. Fisher, "A Motive View of Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 56 (1970), pp. 134--136.

⁶ [Kauffman, ed.], "Editorial," Gospel Herald 13 Jan. 1916, p. 1.

⁷ "Report of the Special Committee For Freedom from Military Service of The Western District Conference to the 26th Conference," Minutes Western District Conference 1906-1917 (BCLA), Unpublished, p. 39.

⁸ [C. E. Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 14 June 1917, p. 4.

⁹ H. P. Krehbiel, "Scriptural Foundations For The Doctrine of Non-Resistance," The Mennonite, 14 June 1917, p. 2.

¹⁰ Minutes Western District Conference 1906-1917, p. 39.

¹¹ [Kauffman, ed.], "Keep Your Vision Clear," Gospel Herald, 30 May 1918, p. 146.

¹² "A Statement of Our Position On Military Service as Adopted by The Mennonite Church, Aug. 29, 1917," Gospel Herald, 6 Sept. 1917, p. 420.

¹³ Aaron Loucks, "Nonresistance," Tract No. 153 (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, n. d.).

¹⁴ S. H. Booth-Clibborn, "The Christian and War: Is It Too Late?" The Mennonite 26 April 1917, p. 2.

¹⁵ "A Statement of Our Position on Military Service As adopted by The Mennonite Church," p. 240.

¹⁶ "Nonresistance," in Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac 1910-1924 vol. 24 (n.p. : Eastern Mennonite Conference, 1918), pp. 28-29.

¹⁷ John Horsch, "When Was The Principle of Nonresistance Made a Part of the Creed of The Mennonite Church," Gospel Herald 3 Jan. 1918, p. 724.

¹⁸ "A Statement of Our Position on Military Service as Adopted by The Mennonite Church," p. 420.

¹⁹ [S. M. Grubb, ed], "War At Last!" The Mennonite 12 April, 1917, p. 4.

²⁰ Gerald Dahlke, A Defense of the Mennonites Against Recent Attacks Made Upon Them (n.p.: n.p., [1917]), p. 9.

²¹ Aaron Loucks, "The Church and War," Gospel Herald, 26 July 1917, p. 314.

²² Jacob C. Meyer, "The Supreme Test," Gospel Herald 6 Feb. 1919, p. 804.

²³ [Kauffman, ed.], "Things Worth Remembeing," Gospel Herald, 9 May 1918, p. 99.

²⁴

Kenneth Burke, Rhetoric of Motives (rpt. Berkeley, Ca: Univ. of California Press, 1969), p. 266, and Leland M. Griffin, "A Dramatistic Theory of The Rhetoric of Movements," Critical Responses To Kenneth Burke ed. William Rueckert (Mnpls: Univ. of Minn. Press, 1969), p. 465.

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See the Military Intelligence Division (MID) report rpt. in Allan Teichroew, "Military Surveillance of Mennonites In World War I," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, 53 (April 1979), p. 124.

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[Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message of A Mennonite Minister To His People In War?" The Mennonite 18 April 1918, p. 4.

²⁷

Kauffman made this statement in: "Things Worth Remembering," p. 99; and later in his book: The Devotional Side of Life (Scottdale, Penn.: Mennonite Publishing Co., 1942), p. 53.

²⁸

Letter from M. C. Hirshy to Dr. Thierston, 3 Sept. 1917.
H. P. Krehbiel Collection, 1918 (BCLA).

²⁹"A Statement of Our Position on Military Service As Adopted by The Mennonite Church," p. 420.

³⁰

[Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite 28 June 1917, p.4.

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"A Statement of Our Position on Military Service as Adopted by The Mennonite Church," p. 420.

³²

Kauffman, The Conservative Viewpoint (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1918), p. 15-16.

- ³³ [H. Frank Reist, ed.], "Standards For Church Membership," Christian Monitor 10 (Aug. 1918), p. 612.
- ³⁴ [Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," p. 4.
- ³⁵ H. G. Allebach, "Why Is Our Church Not Bigger Than It Is? Is It Lack of Opportunity?" The Mennonite, 27 Sept. 1917, p. 3.
- ³⁶ [Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," p. 4.
- ³⁷ "Conference Minutes of the Virginia conference of The Mennonite Church, 6-7 Dec 1918, Waynesboro, VA"; unpublished and rpt. in Mennonite Statements on Peace and Social Concerns ed. Urbane Peachey (Akron, Ohio: MCC U. S. Peace Section, 1980), p. 92.
- ³⁸ "Conference Minutes of the Lancaster conference Board of Bishops, 2 Oct. 1919, Lancaster, Pa"; unpublished and rpt. in Mennonite Statements, p. 90.
- ³⁹ [Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite 8 Feb. 1917, p. 4.
- ⁴⁰ [Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message," p. 3.
- ⁴¹ [Kauffman, ed.], "Things Worth Remembering," p. 99.
- ⁴² Letter from O. B. Gerig to J. S. Hartler, 9 Oct. 1918; Loucks and Hartzler Correspondence 1918-1919 Box 3, (AMC).
- ⁴³ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorial," 26 April 1917, p. 72.
- ⁴⁴ [Kauffman, ed.], "Conscientious Objector And The Issues Involved," Gospel Herald 25 July 1918, p. 290.

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Kauffman, Message preached by Daniel Kauffman to the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite conference, Wakanesa, Indiana, 5,6, June 1918; rpt. in Indiana-Michigan conference Minutes 1918, p. 238 (GCHL).

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H. P. Krehbiel, "The Scriptural Foundations for the Doctrine of Non-Resistance," Der Herold 31 May 1917, p. 4.

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Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form (rpt. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1973), p. 193.

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Aaron Loucks, "Nonresistance," Tract. No. 153.

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[Kauffman, ed.], "Editorial," Gospel Herald 29 April 1915, p. 65; [Grubb, ed.], "Editorial," The Mennonite 16 March 1916, p. 4.

⁵²
Grim accounts of the devastation of war, while commonplace in Mennonite newspapers as long as the war remained in Europe, became increasingly rare after U. S. intervention.

⁵³
H. D. Penner, "Sucht der Stadt Bestes und betet fur sie zum Herrn!" Der Herold 4 July 1918, p. 1.

⁵⁴
[Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity In This Hour of Trial," Gospel Herald 26 Sept. 1918, p. 450.

⁵⁵
[Kauffman, ed.], "Things Worth Remembering," p. 99.

⁵⁶
[Kauffman, ed.], "Conscientious Objector And The Issues Involved," p. 291.

⁵⁷
A. Augspurger, "The Mennonite In Reply To Dr. Gray's Article: What The Bible Teaches About War," Christian Evangel, 7 (Sept. 1917), p. 1.

⁵⁸
[Reist, ed.], "Editorial," Christian Monitor, 9 (Sept. 1917), p. 261.

⁵⁹
H. G. Allebach, "Why Is Our Church Not Bigger Than It Is?" p. 5.

⁶⁰
[Grubb, ed.], "Will We Stand The Strain," The Mennonite 3 Jan. 1918, p. 4.

⁶¹
J. Heishman, "Camp Life," Gospel Herald, 2 May 1918, p. 83.

⁶²
[Kauffman, ed.], "War Problems For Non-Resistant People," Gospel Herald 17 May 1917, p. 115.

⁶³
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 5 April, 1917, p. 4.

⁶⁴
[Kauffman, ed.], "Things Worth Remembering," p. 98.

⁶⁵
[Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 5 April 1917, p. 4.

⁶⁶
[Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity In This Hour of Trial," p. 451.

⁶⁷
A. Augspurger, "The Mennonite In Reply To Dr. Gray's Article," p. 1.

⁶⁸
[Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message of A Mennonite Minister To His People In War?" p. 4.

⁶⁹

J. E. Hartzler, "Are Mennonites Slackers?" Gospel Herald 13 Dec. 1917, p. 683.

⁷⁰

[Kauffman, ed.], "War Problems For Non-Resistant People," p. 115.

⁷¹

The Conservative Viewpoint was published in 1918. And yet there is no mention of the war. The table of contents reads: Educational Problems, Mission Problems, Publication Problems, Amusements, Dress, Our Young People, Holding the Conservative Ground. Any of these chapters, it would seem, could have used the war for examples. That the war was not used gave the book an ahistorical flavor. Its absence functioned to transcend the troubles of the war.

⁷²

As explained in Chapter one, Der Herold was a journalistic experiment in Mennonite church papers. One of its notable distinctions was a liberal policy on advertisements. Krehbiel made no distinctions between Mennonite and non-Mennonite advertisements. As a result, the papers was often sprinkled heavily with advertisements encouraging support for the war. In more than one issue, entire pages were devoted to war advertisements. Of course, the German newspaper also took a more active interest in the affairs of the war, precisely because of its readers' cultural heritage. The substantive portions of the paper were devoted to war issues in a more pronounced way than were its English counter-parts. But like all Mennonite church papers,

most of the articles did not discuss the war in any form.

⁷³ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Attitude," Gospel Herald 11 April 1918, p. 1.

⁷⁴ J. M. Kreider, "Farm For A Living While You Preach," The Mennonite, 12 April 1917, p. 4.

⁷⁵ Eric Hoffer, The True Believer (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 70-71.

⁷⁶ Minutes Western District Conference 1906-1917, p. 37.

⁷⁷ Hoffer, p. 69.

⁷⁸ [Kauffman, ed.], "Relief For War Sufferers," Gospel Herald 4 April 1918, p. 2.

⁷⁹ See for example, Christian Evangel, 7 (July 1917), p. 162; Gospel Herald, 9 May 1918, p. 98; 12 April 1917, p. 1; 26 July 1917, p. 314.

⁸⁰ Valentine Strubhar, "Nonresistance," Christian Evangel, 7 (July 1917), p. 162.

⁸¹ [Kauffman, ed.], "Things Worth Remebering," p. 99.

⁸² [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity," p. 450.

⁸³ Margaret L. Kratz, "Is The First Note of The Trumpet Sounding Out," The Mennonite 21 Feb. 1918, p. 2.

⁸⁴ [Kauffman, ed.], "Things Worth Remembering," p. 99.

⁸⁵ Minutes Western District Conference 1906-1917, p. 37.

⁸⁶ Hoffer, pp. 62-63.

- ⁸⁷ Minutes Western District Conference 1906-1917, p. 40.
- ⁸⁸ Cornelius Krahn, ed. 4 vols. Mennonite Encyclopedia, (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1955), p. 469.
- ⁸⁹ "Report of the General Conference on Exemption," Der Herold, 6 Dec. 1917, p. 2.
- ⁹⁰ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 26 April 1917, p. 4.
- ⁹¹ [Krehbiel. ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 9 Aug. 1917, p. 4.
- ⁹² J. C. Meyer, "The Supreme Test," p. 804.
- ⁹³ Mennonite Encyclopedia, p. 496.
- ⁹⁴ Letter from J. A. Ressler to Aaron Loucks, n. d. in Loucks-Hartzler Correspondence, Peace Problems Committee 1918-1919, Box 1, (AMC).
- ⁹⁵ [Krehbiel, ed.], "Editorielles," Der Herold 9 Aug. 1917, p. 4.
- ⁹⁶ George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 175.
- ⁹⁷ [Kauffman, ed.], "Things We Have Seen and Heard--and Think," Gospel Herald 4 Oct. 1917, p. 490.
- ⁹⁸ Aaron Loucks, "The Church and War," p. 314.
- ⁹⁹ [Kauffman, ed.], "Things We Have Seen," p. 490.
- ¹⁰⁰ [Kauffman, ed.], "Our Ministers' Responsibility," Gospel Herald 27 June 1918, p. 218.
- ¹⁰¹ This observation comes from the following issues of the Gospel Herald: 1 Nov, 1917, p. 561; 4 Oct. 1917,

p. 490; 17 May 1917, pp. 113-115; 9 May 1918, p. 98; 26 July 1917, p. 314.

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[Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message Of A Mennonite Minister To His People In War," p. 4.

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[Kauffman, ed.], "Our Opportunity," p. 450.

CHAPTER EIGHT
EVALUATIONS OF MENNONITE RHETORIC

Throughout the course of the war, Mennonites were confronted with a "supreme test" vastly different than that proposed by President Wilson. For Americans, the supreme test involved fighting to make the world safe for democracy, supporting the war efforts financially, and living frugally to help the Allied forces. For Mennonites, the supreme test involved a diplomatic confrontation with the government, a defense of their seemingly "unpatriotic" ways to a hostile public and a reaffirmation of an unpopular peace position to each other. Suddenly, with the onset of war, a people who had traditionally shunned a rhetorical engagement with anyone outside the fold were thrust into a position of juggling multiple rhetorical postures. As a religious lobby, they adopted the position of a people wronged by their government. As upright American citizens, they adopted the position that they had been misunderstood by the wider citizenry. As disciples of Christ, they adopted the position that they would have to become courageous witnesses, if not martyrs, in order to preserve an historic peace position in a world at war. As moral and political authorities on the international conflict before United States' intervention, Mennonites stiffened their rhetorical challenge considerably when, in subsequent efforts, they attempted to project an

apolitical image.

Mennonites constructed a variety of appeals targeted for members and nonmembers alike in an attempt to uphold these postures. After identifying and analyzing these strategies, rhetorical appraisals are in order. From the rational perspective of the established order, the task of criticism is to weigh the cogency of arguments. From the perspective of the wider American public, critical inquiry concerns an assessment of the effect (success or failure) of their rhetorical efforts. From the symbolic perspective of an out-group, evaluation is based on an appreciation for how language functions to reveal motives.

Mennonites As Rhetorical Failures: A Rational Appraisal

The rhetorical critic operating from a rational perspective, is an objective observer-- one who, removed from the perspective of the rhetors, is in a prime position to "judge" the merits of the case at hand. Rhetoric, from such a perspective, is defined as the art of reasoned discourse or argumentation. Hence, the unit of analysis is argument, not language, per se. The critical lens of the rational perspective is so positioned as to see a rational actor--that is an actor whose choice of action can be rejected or supported on the basis of the cogency of arguments--and a rational audience--those in an empirical or timeless setting who are predisposed to respond to logical proofs more

readily than other forms of proof. The critic, as a detached observer, conceivably can place him or herself as a member of such an audience. The rhetor-audience relationship so described necessarily requires a message that has an instrumental purpose. The critic's task, then, from this perspective, is to evaluate the rhetors' use of argument, to judge how cogent, valid, and consistent arguments are in demonstrating truths and in justifying a particular course of action.¹

Mennonite rhetoric fares poorly under the scrutiny of the rational perspective. As argument addressed to an outside audience for the purpose of convincing them of the rightness of the Mennonite position, Mennonite rhetoric is rivetted with weaknesses and inconsistencies. The first, and most obvious, weakness of the Mennonite position was their support of Germany in the European crisis prior to the United States' intervention. It was a blunder for GC Mennonites to reason that there were nonresistant ways to support Germany, and MC Mennonites to reason that there were nonresistant way to support Great Britain in the war, when, later, upon America's entrance into the war, some Mennonites refused to find nonresistant ways to support America on the basis that they were an apolitical and a pacifistic people. To their fellow citizens, that sequence of arguments appeared "cowardly" and "inconsistent." When GC Mennonites supported Germany from the safe distance of American shores, and then

refused to fight for America, their actions could only be interrupted as selfish and insincere. The doctrine of nonresistance was perceived as an expedient principle designed to protect Mennonites only when they felt threatened. Moreover, GC Mennonites who had originally supported Germany created an undeserved and unfortunate situation for MC Mennonites who did not support Germany. Americans did not distinguish between Mennonite groups that had cultural ties to Germany and those that did not. To most Americans, all Mennonites were pro-German. The efforts by the MC's to deny their cultural ties with Germany fell on deaf ears. German-Mennonites compounded the fateful blunder of taking up German patriotism by voicing reluctance at adopting the English language. When Americans were being taught to hate things German, speaking German only hurt the Mennonites' efforts to appear as loyal Americans. Finally, Mennonite support of Germany in the European crisis clearly demonstrated their political naivete. Mennonites had no inkling that America would be drawn into the war. Had they been more politically astute, they might have supported Germany privately or, in keeping with the dictates of their faith, remained neutral.

A second weakness was that Mennonites failed to emphasize their historic peace stance prior to United States entry into the war. As a result, it was difficult for them to prove their sincerity as staunch, conscientious objectors. Mennonite leaders recognized

that their failure to publicize the principle of nonresistance prior to the war made it difficult to prove their sincerity to the public and to keep members strong in the faith. S. M. Grubb admitted that because there had been such a long period of peace, young members did not know the scriptural foundations for the Mennonite confession of nonresistance. The memories of past wars had faded for these Mennonites, earning them the label of the "untroubled generation." Mennonites living in the early 1900's were untroubled by war-related concerns. They were lulled into a false sense of security thinking they need not call attention to their nonresistant stance.

Since Mennonites had lived for so long in a country at peace it is little wonder that Mennonite leaders feared that young members of the faith would falter in their explanations to the public. Their unpreparedness also explains why so many Mennonite articles instructed readers on the basics of the faith. Articles entitled: "What is Biblical Nonresistance," and "What is the Position of Our Church," were essential to prepare members for the criticism from the public. However, the sudden proliferation of articles addressing nonresistance, where there had previously been very few, could only raise the suspicion of non-members as to the sincerity of the Mennonites' refusal to participate in the war because of their religious doctrine.

A third weakness in the Mennonites' self-defense

was over-extending themselves in efforts to identify with the wider American public as loyal citizens. Mennonites were so eager to affirm their Americanism that they claimed to be more loyal, more giving, and more caring than those who supported the war. For example, they could not suppress their belief that the farmer, not the man on the firing line, would do more to bring the war to an end. Mennonites also re-defined the meaning of patriotism so that their benevolent activities could be viewed as patriotic. Yet in changing the definition, Mennonites tended to pit their "constructive" form of patriotism against the "destructive" form of patriotism exhibited by their fellow Americans. Thus, instead of reinforcing their patriotic ties with the larger community, Mennonites only emphasized their differences.

Moreover, Mennonites went so far as to look at the conscientious objector's stance from the government's perspective. However, acknowledging that it must be "difficult" and "embarrassing" to deal with the Mennonites, and that the government's course of action was justifiable from the viewpoint of the state, only gave the government additional reason to believe that Mennonites were a nuisance and their demand for complete military exemption unjustifiable.

A fourth weakness in the Mennonites' self-defense was that they did not play the role of the martyr or of the Good Samaritan as well as the greater American

public. American enacted martyrdom on the battlefields, while Mennonites only talked about courageous ancestors who had sacrificed their lives for their faith.

Mennonites realized that because no Mennonite had had the opportunity to make the ultimate sacrifice for the principle of nonresistance, many Americans would be skeptical about their sincerity. In frustration at being unable to convince non-members of the sincerity of the Mennonite position, Grubb remarked that he wished there had not been an Exemption Clause so Mennonites could enact their faithfulness. But neither the government nor the public gave Mennonites the opportunity to make the ultimate sacrifice. Even in the sporadic outbursts of mob violence, no Mennonite was killed.

Although it was an uncomfortable situation, Mennonites were forced to watch other Americans make the noblest of sacrifices for their beliefs. In a feeble attempt to reduce that tension, J. E. Hartzler stated: "It is not a difficult thing to die for country; but it takes great faith and courage to live for God and our country."² This argument backfired because it contradicted a Mennonite conviction in the power of martyrdom. If it were not a difficult thing to die for one's God or country, why had Mennonites raised to heroic status those Mennonites who had made the ultimate sacrifice? The argument appears to be one made in desperation since they could not play the heroic role that would have proved their courage and their

sincerity.

Mennonites also wanted to be seen as Good Samaritans. Yet those members who refused to serve in the Red Cross were upstaged by those Americans who risked their lives to save the lives of friend and foe alike. MC Mennonites contended that they could be Good Samaritans by performing good works dissociated from the military, but from society's perspective, and even from the perspective of GC Mennonites, MC Mennonites appeared not so much as Good Samaritans as callous individuals.

A fifth weakness of the Mennonites' rhetorical defense was that they presented idealistic, but unworkable, solutions for ending all wars for all time. Living in a political world demanded political answers. It was not realistic for Mennonites to identify with democratic ends and then offer non-political means of achieving those ends. After negotiations failed with Germany, the only relevant political answer to the escalating European crisis was military intervention. Proposing as J. G. Ewert did that "loving one's enemies" would solve the international conflict, was a solution without political relevance, and only further substantiated the charge that Mennonites were politically naive.

Mennonites not only constructed weak arguments, but contradictory arguments. First, Mennonites were ill-prepared to maintain two contrary identities. Mennonites had become sufficiently acculturated into the American

way of life so it became increasingly difficult to distance themselves from worldly concerns. But when they suddenly wanted to affirm their citizenship ties with the wider community, they had no expertise for such a persuasive appeal, since their people traditionally shunned world affairs. When Mennonites tried to preserve their American identity, they ultimately abandoned their Mennonite distinctiveness.

Gerald Dahlke, for example, abandoned religious justification and adopted secular justifications in his 16-page defense of the Mennonites. Dahlke argued that Mennonites should not have to support the war because they had been promised exemption from military service. Moreover, he argued that they should not be criticized for failing to join the war because they were loyal citizens who supported many other, equally important, causes. Unfortunately, Dahlke was not reinforcing the Mennonites' American identity as much as he was forfeiting the biblical rationale for the Mennonites' aversion to war. Dahlke's tract was indicative of the problem Mennonites faced in trying to reconcile their American and Mennonite identities. Mennonites wanted the best of both worlds. They wanted to keep the essentials of the Mennonite faith and they wanted to keep those characteristics of American citizenship that they thought could be reconciled with their faith. But such a balancing act resulted in the severing of one or both of these ties.

A second inconsistency in Mennonite rhetoric was indecisiveness on how to describe the war. Since Mennonites refused to keep abreast of the international crisis, they, at first, refused to acknowledge America's entrance as anything but a "horrible dream." But the war was not illusory. It was very real. The Mennonites' failure to accept the realities of war may have been psychologically comforting, but it did not make the war any less real. Battles were fought, people were killed, and cities were destroyed. Mennonites also viewed the war as a "violent storm," a "darkening cloud," and "a crisis that threatened the very existence of the church" when they were forced to explain their opposition to the war to an unsympathetic public. But this description reflected negatively on them as courageous disciples of Christ. By granting the war such domination, Mennonites characterized themselves as controlled by the situation. This description did not help members see themselves as active Christian stalwarts in the face of adversity; rather, it portrayed them as meek individuals reacting to a situation beyond their control.

Yet Mennonites later reversed this view of the war in describing it as "a day of opportunity," "a much needed test of faith," even a "blessing" in order to revitalize their image. In short, when the war caught Mennonites off guard, their immediate reaction was to ignore it, then grudgingly they saw the crisis as a serious threat to the movement because they had not

emphasized a pure Mennonite identity, then, in an attempt to re-affirm their Mennonite identity, they changed the negative perceptions of the war to positive ones in order to emphasize their stalwart discipleship and take control of the crisis. Both light and dark imagery, positive and negative views, were used to describe the situation. Holding such contrary perceptions was indicative of the fact that Mennonites were unprepared for the war.

Another pronounced discrepancy in the Mennonite self-defense were the conflicting positions maintained by MC and GC members on where to draw the line on noncombatant service. It is unfortunate that the church could not come to an agreement on what the "correct" Mennonite position should be. Failing to present a unified front on this issue damaged their credibility with the public and the government in a number of ways. It was easy to charge that any religious group that evidenced internal faction on such a key issue must not be taking the nonresistant stance for religious reasons, but for the sake of expedience. It gave the government reason to doubt the convictions of individual members. Camp officials were convinced that because Mennonites could not establish a unified front, young Mennonite draftees could be persuaded to join the ranks of the army once they were separated from their over-protective, conservative leaders. The disagreement threatened the cohesiveness of the church. When

Mennonites were being attacked for their "unpatriotic" actions, it only compounded the possibility of the church's dissolution when the two groups attacked each other for being "misguided" or "cruel." The divisiveness over noncombatant service was but another sign that Mennonites were unprepared to make a public defense of themselves.

The most glaring error in the Mennonite defense was their indecisiveness about addressing the public. At times, Mennonites desired to explain their position to the public, believing that the truth was self-evident and that once non-members heard the rationale for not supporting the war, they would be understood. This was especially true when Mennonites desperately wanted to dissociate themselves from other types of conscientious objectors. Mennonite writers were convinced that if distinctions were clearly made, "it would be but a short time until most of the present unpleasantness connected with the attitude of nonresistant people would be a thing of the past."³ Despite their enthusiasm to make their position to outsiders known, Mennonites made virtually no efforts, outside of their own literature, to acquaint the public with their arguments. Ironically, the first Mennonite to go public with a definitive defense of the church did so after the war was over.⁴ At other times, however, Mennonites were content to ignore the charges by the public for fear that any attempt at genuine argument would prompt additional attacks. MC

leaders advised their members to "avoid heated⁵ controversy with those who do not agree with us." Similarly, Grubb said warily: "I cannot see how we can impress this feeling upon our countrymen now when they are angry."⁶ Such comments reflected the Mennonites' fear that explaining their whole way of life to outsiders might backfire; Americans might become all the more hostile, and Mennonites would receive a deep psychological blow for letting their innermost convictions be set up for ridicule.

Since there was no systematic effort to make their position known to the wider public, articles in Mennonite newspapers did not serve an entirely useful purpose. Few, if any, of the Mennonite strategies to repair their standing in the community reached the wider public. It is not surprising, then, that, for the most part, Americans did not separate Mennonites from other conscientious objectors in the positive manner in which they had hoped. On the contrary, when Mennonites were singled out by the public, they were bitterly reviled.

Guilty As Charged: A Public Appraisal

With the advent of war, Mennonites promptly lost their respect as United States citizens in the eyes of the wider American citizenry. Outraged at those out of step with the crusade spirit, the American public unleashed scathing indictments against the Mennonites, along with the rest of the conscientious objectors. The

nation's newspapers became an appropriate and willing vehicle to hurl the myriad of epithets against them.

One of the most denunciatory epithets given to conscientious objectors and to Mennonites was that they were pro-German. As one World War I historian observes: "For a man of German ancestry who happened also to be a conscientious objector, America was in some areas the worst of all possible places in 1917-1918."⁷ By 1917, a full-scale assault on "hyphenism" was under way. Super-patriots, like Theodore Roosevelt cast a derogatory meaning on the word, re-defining it as "an American citizen who is really doing everything to subordinate the interests and duty of the United States to the interests of a foreign land."⁸ The New York Tribune contended that hyphenates, like the Mennonites, would rather see whole populations suffering in German slavery than to see men defend themselves with arms. "It is this strange callousness to suffering," the Tribune contended, "which sooner or later and often unconsciously betrays the pacifist into pro-Germanism; there is an affinity between his cruel willingness to see people suffer without striking back and the brutality of the German who wishes to strike the helpless."⁹ A more pointed accusation greeted Mennonites in Iowa. The Wayland News directed Mennonite ministers in the area to forsake their ties with Germany immediately and become patriotic Americans: "As patriotic citizens," the paper's editor began, "we feel

that the time has fully come in the progress of the world war, for you to take a decided stand against our great enemy, Germany, and show your allegiance to our own government." The article concluded with the curt request: "We ask you to cease your work of making pro-Germans and disloyalists out of the drafted boys of your church."¹⁰

Mennonites only fueled the cries of pro-Germanism when some members decided to flee to Canada to escape military conscription. J. A. Stevenson, a commentator on U. S. Canadian border traffic during the war, was convinced that the Mennonite migration to Canada proved that "these people were pro-German reprobates masquerading as religious objectors." Selling his story to The Nation in an article entitled: "The Mennonite Problem in Canada," Stevenson went on to contend that Mennonite churches were experiencing a great boom in membership because slackers and pro-Germans saw the escape to Canada as an easy way out of the draft. Believing that all Mennonites would eventually leave the country, Stevenson demanded that the Wilson administration halt further emigration among such "inveterate shirkers." Since the war ended two days after the publication of the article, the furror over¹¹ pro-German emigrants quickly subsided.

Journalists were not the only ones to suspect Mennonites of pro-Germanism. Camp officials, too, were convinced that Mennonites had political ties with

Germany. One camp official tipped off the Adjutant General in Washington that "[t]here is suspicion that the activity of this church is due to pro-German influence, and that it is using funds provided for this purpose by pro-Germans."¹² The Bureau of Investigation-- a government agency which conducted extensive surveillance of the Mennonites during the war also boldly asserted that "Mennonites might be a covert front for a pro-German underground [and] an international movement with ties to Berlin."¹³

In many respects, these fantastic fabrications were brought on by the Mennonites themselves. They spoke German when English had become a test of one's loyalty. They courted obscurity when Americans were paranoid about underground seditious activities. They published periodicals in German when anything German came under suspicion, and, of course, they supported Germany prior to United States intervention. All of these actions gave a certain amount of legitimacy to the cries of pro-Germanism.

Another, more prevalent, criticism of conscientious objectors was that they were "cowards" and "slackers" and hence, "parasites." The Salt Lake Herald was convinced that "ninety-nine out of 100 of the young men who escape military duty on the plea of conscience are moved to take this course solely by physical cowardice." The newspaper added: "Investigation will prove that a majority of them are afraid not only of Germans but of

the dark."¹⁴ The Cleveland Plain Dealer was no less disgusted at the "cowardly" conscientious objectors. The paper singled out the Mennonites and Amish as "stubborn pacifists and probably cowards. Their cowardice [being] liberally mixed with laziness."¹⁵ Similarly, the Columbus Dispatch observed that "It is almost unbelievable that we should have living under the protection of the American flag, any sect of people, so narrow and so stubborn as to center criticism upon themselves, in a time like this, by refusing to do even the smallest thing required of them, whereby they might show just an atom of patriotism."¹⁶

The charge of cowardice and stubbornness inevitably led to the charge that C. O.'s were parasites. One angry citizen writing in The New York World described C. O.'s as "parasites" who "continue to fatten on the bread of America, to skulk behind the bodies of brave men who are sent forth to die that they may live in safety."¹⁷ An infuriated Urbana, Illinois citizen concurred. Lashing out at "the peace-at-any-price-pacifists" for being "parasites," this writer let fellow readers of the Urbana Citizen know that Mennonites "want privileges and escape from tyranny without paying the price." They are content, the writer continued, "to have their security bought with the blood of others, not with their own."¹⁸ The popular sentiment that Mennonites were "parasites" was stated most succinctly and simplistically by an Ohio citizen who wrote: "All [C. O.'s] like to do is eat and

hold religious exercises."¹⁹

Since the "peace-at-any-price-pacifists" refused to come to the aid of their country for fear of violating their religious beliefs, they were often attacked for appearing morally superior. One writer understood the religious objector's exemption status as public notice of their "superior quality" in keeping the "fine visions of humanity" and "the humanist ideals" alive. To which he responded: "This position can hardly be matched for cool and self-satisfied moral egotism," a sign "of some who think themselves heaven chosen guardians of a wayward world which still refuses to be turned aside from its sins."²⁰ Commenting on the "moral egotism" of the nonresistant a Bishop of a Methodist Church writing in The New York Times flatly remarked: "His claim to moral superiority is the wildest of absurdity."²¹ The New York Tribune also disapproved, claiming that "[t]hese pacifists usually do not recognize their own chill callousness for what it really is: they pretend superior morality."²²

What irked Americans the most, however, was that the military exemption clause implied the moral superiority of the nonresistant. One minister in Memphis, Tennessee, expressed his discontent over the government's "soft" military policies in a way that epitomized the feeling of most Americans. He said: "The clause in the draft act exempting men from military service on the grounds of religious belief is equal to

saying that our cause is irreligious. . . . I resent the implication that [our soldiers] are doing an irreligious or un-Christian thing."²³ The lenient treatment by the government only intensified the outpouring of hatred toward conscientious objectors. The public and the government perceived the conscientious objector's stance as disgraceful and cowardly. Yet in granting them exemption from combatant duty, the government had made their stance appear acceptable, even righteous. Many Americans felt that those who had failed to meet the "supreme test" had not been reprimanded enough for their unpatriotic action; they interpreted the ruling as a way for men who refused to serve their country to salvage respect.

Related to the charge that religious objectors were pretending to be morally superior was the charge that they were also pretending to be martyrs. Conscientious objectors "make their unworthy conduct a point of conscience, and then assume the role of the martyr when patriotic men and women hold them up to scorn and ridicule," stated The Salt Lake Herald.²⁴ The Washington Post was quick to remind objectors who posed as martyrs that "[r]eligious liberty, one of the fundamental principles of this republic, was purchased with the blood of Christian martyrs."²⁵ Americans were not about to perceive the "unpatriotic" nonresisters as morally superior or as stoic martyrs.

The public was not oblivious to the seemingly

inconsistent positions taken by the conscientious objectors who refused to support the war yet agreed to serve in a noncombatant capacity. The New York Times realized that the government's ruling on noncombatant service could not allow for a consistent position on objecting because the ruling "draws the line at one place--no pretense or reality of conscientiousness will enable him to get exemption from the common duty of rendering public service in one form or another." Therefore, the C. O. "will not be allowed to be really consistent in his objecting--to refuse participation in activities that even indirectly are connected with the conduct of the war. . . ." ²⁶ In addition to pointing out the inconsistency, the Times ridiculed those who embraced such an illogical stance. "What common people will never understand," the Times caustically stated, "is how a man whose conscience will not permit him to assist in the actual destruction of his country's enemies can persuade that section of his 'psyche' to let him participate in activities that are just as essentially those of war as is that of going over the top or of firing a machine gun at an advancing German regiment. Consistency and conscientious objecting do not seem to go together." ²⁷ William Hard of The New Republic carried the ridicule still further. Recounting the heroic feats of one C. O. in camp, Hard could not resist poking fun at the absurdity of an absolutist pacifist. "In Fort Leavenworth today, sometimes in

solitary confinement, there is a C. O. who is a regular professional hero, accoladed by the Carnegie Hero Commission for risking his life saving the life of a drowning girl. He did it on his own impulse." Hard went on to surmise: "I suppose that if his sergeant had told him to jump in he would have stood rooted to the spot. If you are an 'absolutist' your capacity for refusing military orders is infinite."²⁸

The Mennonite position was so incomprehensible to Americans that they were often labeled "backward," "unintelligent" people. At a loss for understanding their actions, The Columbus Dispatch inquired: "What kind of a mental process would one have to undergo to imagine he was 'worshiping an idol' when he salutes the flag?"²⁹ The Mennonites' refusal to participate in any activity associated with the military was interpreted as a sign of mental deficiency by government officials who drilled Mennonites at draft boards, in camp, and in front of the Board of Inquiry, in the hope of cracking their armor. In the psychological report on Mennonites conducted at Camp Sherman, Texas, the examining doctor observed that Mennonites had lived "a life of seclusion in communities apart from the healthy, normal social atmosphere" and, therefore, "fail to comprehend the meaning of it all [the army environment]."³⁰ Another psychological report on the Mennonites taken at Camp Dodge, Iowa, revealed that Mennonites were so mentally deficient that they really did not even understand the

tenets of their faith. "His knowledge of the creed of his Church and his understanding of the Bible are very limited," perceived this examiner, adding the evaluation that, "He has a pious attitude which does not impress one as being genuine. . . . He lacks push, moral fiber, persistence of motive and courage."³¹

Camp officials were not the only governmental figures who saw Mennonites as psychologically inferior. Walter Guest Kellogg, a member of the Board of Inquiry, whose job it was to test the sincerity of those taking a noncombatant stance, in order to determine whether they deserved to be furloughed for farm work or court-martialed and sent to Ft. Leavenworth, had little tolerance for the Mennonites' way of life. "It is difficult to realize," Kellogg exclaimed, "that we have among our citizenry a class of men who are so intellectually inferior and so unworthy to assume its burdens and its responsibilities." He continued: "I doubt extremely if fifty percent of the Mennonites examined, because of their ignorance and stupidity, ever should have been admitted into the Army at all."³² The Military Intelligence Division (MID)--a government agency assigned surveillance duty on the Mennonites--echoed Kellogg's sentiments, calling the Mennonite draftee "narrow, bigoted, pig-headed, ignorant, slovenly, and selfish" and one who was "unaccustomed to thinking for himself but follows stupidly along the lines of the traditions of his clan."³³

While the public and government officials attacked nonresisters for their illogical stance in accepting some form of noncombatant service, some government officials believed that verbal chastisement was not enough. Grand plans were launched on the state level to expose the "traitorous" element of their activities. By threatening Mennonites with the Espionage Act, officials reasoned, Mennonites would receive their "just" punishment for their lack of patriotism.

In Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, where most of the flurry of activity surrounding criminal indictments of the Mennonites took place, state officials, in cooperation with the Justice Department, worked diligently to get Mennonite leaders behind bars. R. E. Proctor, an enterprising representative of the Indiana State Council of Defense, recognized that if he were ever to secure approval from his superiors to conduct an official investigation of the Mennonites he would need concrete incriminating evidence. In September of 1918, he informed the chairman of the State Council of Defense of two disturbing instances: one in which a Mennonite minister refused to preach a funeral service over the body of a deceased soldier because the young man had died in the service of his country, and another in which Mennonite ministers were stirring up controversy for "giving spiritual advice to draftees of their sect," and for securing work for their own sons "in Belgian service or some other camouflaged work out of Philadelphia."

Proctor used these events to emphasize the storm of protest that was brewing in his district over the conscientious objectors. He warned his superior that, "Unless something is done to satisfy our committees you need not be surprised if a sort of Klu Klux Klan moves out in this vicinity some night and gives these people a coat of tar and feathers." Adding somewhat callously, "I would not endorse this action but I would not disapprove it after it was done." Proctor then included in his letter a copy of the "Yellow Creek Statement"--the MC church statement on military service that was formulated at a meeting in Yellow Creek, Indiana, in hopes that it was invincible evidence to initiate criminal charges against them. "As you can see from the inspection of the Yellow Creek Statement," Proctor concluded, "they are banding together for the purpose of advising with one another regarding [military] service." Unabashedly, Proctor went on to suggest that his superiors in the Council of Defense "write me a letter empowering me as representative of the State Council of Defense to make such investigation and require attendance of witnesses as may be necessary."³⁴ M. E. Foley, the Chairman of the Indiana Council of Defense, was sufficiently impressed by his subordinate's collection of evidence that he, without hesitation, shot a memo back stating: "I feel that it is time to report to the Federal authorities all persons who are openly opposing this war or seeking to influence young men not to do their duty in the war."

Taking care to legitimize his recommendation, Foley added: "I am sending you a copy of the Espionage Act. . . . An examination of this act will disclose the fact that persons talking against the government of the United States at this time are in dangerous business."³⁵

Mennonites were in such "dangerous business" that before Proctor and Foley could even get their criminal proceedings under way, the Justice Department had publicly exposed the illegalities of the Yellow Creek Statement. Operating on a lead from a federal agent, The Goshen News Times covered the front page of the August 19, 1918 issue with the story: "Obstruction of Draft Is Investigated: One Hundred and Eighty-five Mennonite Bishops And Minister Are Involved." The story attracted particular interest in Goshen, Indiana, because Yellow Creek was a neighboring town. Specifically, the paper explained that the Yellow Creek statement fell under suspicion of violating the Espionage Act because it instructed Mennonite draftees "that under no circumstances can you consent to service, either combatant or non-combatant, under the military arm of the government." That statement, according to Federal Agent, F. R. Fortune, of Wooster, Ohio, could be interpreted as insubordination and disloyalty to the United States, which the Espionage Act strictly forbade. The paper went on to report that Fortune had summoned local members of the church who had signed the resolutions of the Yellow Creek statement to the court

house for questioning. Fortune was interviewed as saying: "[I]f sufficient evidence is secured, an endeavor will be made to have the Mennonites who signed these resolutions indicted in the federal court at Cleveland. If found guilty," he added for good measure, "a fine of \$2,000 and other punishment is possible."³⁶ S. H. Miller, one of the ministers summoned for inquiry, feared the worst for the Mennonite Publishing Company. Writing to Aaron Loucks, the president of the Publishing House, Miller explained: "I have about twenty-five [Yellow Creek statement] pamphlets yet and a federal man is coming after them tomorrow. I think it means trouble for the [Publishing] House for sending any more through the mails."³⁷

Federal investigation did mean trouble for Loucks and the Publishing House. In addition to the Indiana case, for which Loucks was summoned, the District Court of Pennsylvania had already begun court procedures against him for another pamphlet--tract no. 153 entitled: "Nonresistance." Roger Knox, United States Commissioner issued the indictment against Loucks and the Mennonite Publishing House via the United States Marshal for the Western District of Pennsylvania. Citing the tract and its author for "committing a felony under the statutes of the United States," Knox went on to enumerate the serious charges that the tract had violated, which included:

"[T]he felony of unlawfully, knowingly and

willfully conveying false reports and statements with intent to interfere with the operation and success of the military and naval forces of the United States; and the further felony of causing insubordination, [sic] disloyalty, mutiny and refusal of duty in the military and naval forces of the United States, and the further felony of obstructing and attempting to obstruct the recruiting and the enlistment service of the United States to the injury of the service and to the injury of the United States, and the further felony of willfully uttering, printing, writing and publishing language intended to incite, provoke and encourage resistance to the United States and to promote the cause of its enemies; and the further felony of willfully advocating, teaching, defending and suggesting the acts and things herein before referred to in violation of Section 3, Title I, of the Act³⁸ of Congress of June 15, 1917.

Rhetorical overkill for a "harmless" "apolitical" statement, Mennonites must have reasoned. Under the commissioner's scrutiny, the tract was transformed from a handy Bible guide for nonresisters, to a subversive political document of the most devious kind.

Just when a mass trial of Loucks and many other Mennonite leaders appeared imminent in several states,

officials in Washington called the proceedings to a halt, explaining to various state councils of defense that the case against the Mennonites was not entirely clear, that the War Department was currently negotiating with Mennonites and anticipated a satisfactory solution to the misunderstanding, and that further publicity of the Mennonites might give them the martyred status they so desperately wanted.³⁹ Yet despite the stalled court action, the threat of Espionage violation was successful in getting Mennonite leaders like Aaron Loucks and J. S. Hartzler to substitute caution for their bold advice on how to respond to war demands.⁴⁰ This is not to suggest that the various actions on the state level were successful in getting Mennonites to recant their beliefs concerning military service, but they did dampen the characteristic verve and directness with which leaders instructed their members.

Rather than weaken the Mennonite position through the court system, the government was content to capitalize upon the discrepant positions taken by the two major Mennonite groups in regard to noncombatant duty in the hope that they might self-destruct under the pressure of their own scrutiny. The Military Intelligence Division, for instance, believed that if Mennonites failed to maintain a unified front on key war issues, individual members would be more vulnerable to the influences of the military. Working together with the Bureau of Investigation and The American Protective

League, the MID attempted to drive a wedge of fear and uncertainty into Mennonite communities in an attempt to force even the most stalwart defenders of the faith to re-evaluate the strongest of their positions.⁴¹ In hope of further widening the rift between the two groups, the MID reported with guarded optimism that "The older members--the elders--are rock ribbed in their obstinancy; the younger ones are however disposed to cut loose from the narrow prejudices that circumscribe them, and seem disposed to buy bonds and aid in many war activities."⁴² The feuding between Mennonites on whether there were nonresistant ways to serve their country gave camp officials a glimmer of hope that once the Mennonite draftee was free from his isolated community, he would become a good soldier if enough pressure were applied.

Between the treatment meted out by the public, state officials and the federal government, Mennonites found themselves in a no-win situation. GC Mennonites who went along with the President's ruling on non-combatant service were not able to prove their loyalty, but were attacked by the public for not being consistent. MC Mennonites were threatened with the Espionage Act by state officials for remaining consistent in their position. Both groups were targeted by the Federal government as potential converts to the military as evidenced by their vacillating position on noncombatant service.

Although the government spared few derogatory

remarks for conscientious objectors, threatened them with criminal indictments, and placed extreme pressures on them to conform to the law, officials did not deal as harshly with the C. O. as the greater American public would have liked. Consequently, citizens proposed their own "just" solutions for dealing with such "slackers." Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, a staunch militarist and one of the most vocal public figures who denounced C. O.'s, suggested "testing the c. o. by placing them on mine sweepers or by allowing them to dig front-line⁴³ trenches." One minister writing in The New York Times proposed that the C. O. should go off to some desert island and live by himself, for nowhere else can he remain without taking advantage of conditions that were brought into being by men who did not hesitate to fight for what they wanted."⁴⁴ Another penalty devised for C. O.'s was subjecting them to a special tax. Perhaps in remembrance of the way Mennonites were treated in the Civil War, this citizen suggested that: "It would only be fair, that those of our otherwise eligible citizens who secure exemption because of their consciences should each pay \$300 into the public treasury."⁴⁵ Finally, one writer, who lost all sense of democratic justice, wrote to The Cleveland Plain Dealer that "a dose of Prussian medicine would be timely, appropriate prescription. . .⁴⁶

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Mennonites incited the anger of many patriotic Americans by refusing to participate in the "righteous

crusade." Such anger was fueled by the government's "soft" treatment, which made Americans who supported the war look less religious. The scathing criticisms from the public were damaging enough to Mennonites struggling to maintain two identities, but when the public began to express its anger in more visible ways, Mennonites were faced with a serious problem. Mob action occurred primarily during the drives for the Red Cross and Liberty Bonds. The unfortunate results of these exercises in intimidation has prompted historian Frederick Luebke to observe that "No group of Germans in America suffered more because of the Liberty Loan campaigns than members of several Mennonite sects."⁴⁷ Homes, businesses and churches were regularly streaked with yellow paint with such expressions as: "You love the Kaiser."⁴⁸ In Pennsylvania and Ohio, Mennonite churches and homes of church leaders were decorated by flags placed there by hostile neighbors. Worshipers of the Oak Grove Church near West Liberty, Ohio found paper flags pasted on every window of the church.⁴⁹ Some Mennonites were threatened with vicious ultimatums. Citizens of a small Kansas town were greeted by a sign placed prominently in the public square which read: "Speak the American Language. If you don't know it--⁵⁰ learn it. If you don't like it--move out." Mennonites of Little Rock, Arkansas were confronted with the threatening notice: "Any man or woman in this town, who does not take all the Liberty Bonds that he or she

possibly can buy, is in exactly the same class with those wretched creatures of feeble brain and feeble spine, those cowards we call 'SLACKERS'. Such men and women are not fit to live in this community, or anywhere else in America. They are not fit to live at all."⁵¹

Mennonites in Jasper County, Missouri, were sent a letter by the "All American Strong Arm Squad." This intimidating group issued the warning: "You have been reported to the All American Squad as a person who has failed in your obligation. YOUR COUNTRY IS AT WAR! This committee does not tolerate SLACKERS. Do your full duty to your country NOW! Or get out of Jasper County or suffer the consequences." The consequences were sometimes a humiliating and painful tar and feathering, a yellow paint job, or destruction of private property.⁵²

Mob action was visible enough that President Wilson felt compelled to address the subject. In a national address devoted to the denunciation of mob violence, Wilson stated: "No man who loves America, no man who really cares for her fame and honor and character, or who is truly loyal to her institutions, can justify mob action. . . . Every mob contributes to German lies about the United States."⁵³ Yet while the President urged citizens to refrain from mob violence, such action did occur sporadically throughout the war. Even on Armistice Day, one Mennonite in Burton, Kansas, suffered such bruising punishment at the hands of a mob that he

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nearly died.

Both the verbal and physical abuse directed at the C. O. substantiated the fact that Mennonites did not defend themselves satisfactorily to outsiders. Steering a middle course in an attempt to preserve two conflicting identities was not an option in the public's mind. As The Goshen Democrat simply put it: "There is no middle road, you are either for your country or against it."⁵⁵

Mennonites were closely scrutinized by the public and the government for weaknesses and inconsistencies in their actions. Americans expected super human consistency from those that objected to the war.

Mennonites were well aware that the public expected an infallible witness from them, even though Mennonites had never claimed to be perfect in their actions. Daniel Kauffman, writing in the Gospel Herald, explained:

"Personally, we have never laid claim to infallibility, and our imperfections are apparent in times of peace as well as war."⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Mennonites were judged severely for ostensible blunders.

Yet despite the Mennonites' inability to repair their tarnished image in the eyes of the greater public, not all Americans let the spirit of militaristic patriotism cloud their sense of justice. There were some Americans who believed that conscientious objectors were subjected to undeserved verbal and physical abuse. One newspaper that attempted to set the record straight on the historic peace stance of the religious object was

The St. Louis Globe Democrat. The paper explained:

"There are some religious societies in America that have long made opposition to all warfare one of their cardinal tenets. The Society of Friends and The Mennonites are among these. They preach the doctrine of nonresistance, and as a rule practice it in their private as well as public relations."⁵⁷ Although the Globe did not condone the Mennonites' practice of nonresistance, the facts were reported objectively. The New Republic also cleared Mennonites of suspicion on charges of insincerity. "Being a Mennonite, you are a member of a sect which has existed ever since Conrad Grebel thought of it at Zurich in 1525," the magazine explained, adding "As a Mennonite, you are readily beyond suspicion."⁵⁸ One citizen went so far as to defend the Mennonites as upright American citizens. He wrote: "I have known . . . a big majority of the older members of the Mennonite Church for most of their lives and I know that we have no better men, nor more useful citizens in this country. . . . You have only to know them and enjoy their open, friendly hospitality, to be convinced that they are honest, sincere and safe."⁵⁹ The Detroit Free Press also made a point of differentiating the sincere religious objector from the insincere objector. The paper argued that Mennonites were "a different class from those who merely use the cloak of a new-founded conscientious objection to evade service." Dissatisfied with the unjust treatment that sincere

conscientious objectors were receiving from the public, the paper reminded Americans that they were "ignor[ing] the very basis of the religious freedom which cradled our country and upon which our Americanism is built."⁶⁰

Mennonites were also defended by a few Americans as not being pro-German. One citizen, writing in The Topeka Daily Capital, explained that Mennonites, "while speaking German are really immigrants from Russia and wholly out of sympathy with the Kaiser and his policies."⁶¹ There were even those who defended Mennonites as patriotic citizens. The New York Times, which typically voiced disapproval of the Mennonites, wrote: "The C. O. who does well his duty as a stretcher bearer need never fear to be accused of cowardice and he will not lack opportunities for the display of heroism." Finally, the Times commented: "The moral difference between being a soldier and serving a soldier is not obvious, but then none of us is logical all the time, and it would be absurd, unjust, and cruel to expect a super human consistency from the conscientious objector. If they are willing to do anything but direct killing-- and if they are not too numerous--the country will manage to get along well enough."⁶² This surprisingly calm, objective, even sympathetic, attitude coming from a non-member was a rarity.

Far more typical, when the Mennonite position was given even an ounce of legitimacy by non-members, it was with grudging recognition at best. When it became public

knowledge that many Mennonite draftees had returned their military earnings to the government, one Indiana resident summed up the still smoldering bitterness of many when he wrote: "The return of the money because they feel they did not earn it is perhaps their stammering tribute to the boys who did. In any event, it merits respect. And that is something which hitherto⁶³ has been a little difficult to accord them."

While there were a few Americans who attempted to discredit the unfounded accusations about Mennonites, members of the faith cannot take credit for these rare demonstrations of objectivity and compassion, because their rhetoric did not reach the wider American public. Americans who came to the defense of Mennonites did so because they were knowledgeable about the church's history and the government's obligation to uphold religious freedom, and they wanted to rectify a grave injustice.

From the standpoint of the public, the government, and the critic operating from a rational perspective, the Mennonite attempt to get non-members to understand biblical nonresistance and to find grounds for identification with their fellow Americans was an abject failure. However, before hastily labeling Mennonites as inept rhetors, it is important to understand that the outside evaluation of them as rhetorical failures was all but inevitable given the psycho-social, historical, and ideological obstacles discussed in chapter four.

These were formidable problems to rhetorical effectiveness with the wider American public. Moreover, a recognition of the rhetorical difficulties tempers a harsh evaluation of the Mennonites' rhetorical competencies. To be sure, Mennonites did not purify their image to the wider American public, nor prove themselves as seasoned negotiators to the government, but, Mennonites constructed rhetorical postures that did not conflict with the dictates of their faith. As a result, they were able to show remarkable resiliency through an otherwise debilitating and humiliating experience.

Mennonites As Rhetorically Inventive:

A Symbolic Appraisal

It did not take a critic scrutinizing the argumentative cogency of Mennonite rhetoric to recognize that contradictoriness was commonplace. The average citizen understood all too clearly that "consistency and conscientious objecting do not seem to go together." The Mennonite position against war was perplexing and peculiar to non-members. Through Mennonite eyes the war was both "a violent storm" that threatened the very existence of the church, and "a day of opportunity to shine for the Master." Mennonite leaders wanted both to publicize their defense in order to "make our position clear" and to shun public exposure and give out information "in a quiet and unassuming manner."

Mennonite rhetors defended themselves by presenting both doctrinal justifications for political issues and secular justifications for their own biblical image. Members of the faith expressed both a willingness to "go the extra mile" to identify with American people and an "abhorrence to compromise" to identify against American policy. Gerald Dahlke's "Defense of the Mennonites Against Recent Attacks Made Upon Them" and Aaron Loucks' "Nonresistance" serve as "representative anecdotes"⁶⁴ -- selective rhetorical reflections-- of these polarized, yet compatible views. The latter tract, a secular defense of a biblical people, viewed the crisis situation as an opportunity for an outpouring of benevolence, aimed to clear up misunderstandings about the Mennonites to outsiders, and overextended itself in identifying with loyal Americans. The former tract, a faith statement to help members survive a chaotic world, viewed the war as evil, destructive, and the work of greedy, barbaric leaders, aimed to strengthen an unpopular position among members of the faith, and magnified the chasm between Mennonitism and militarism.

By all appearances there is little that coheres among these disparate rhetorical choices. One might be inclined to shrug off the contradictions by invoking Burke's dictum that "man's responses are normally of a contradictory nature" and that "contradictoriness of response is basic to human psychology. . . ."⁶⁵ While this may be true, a critic's task from a symbolic

perspective, as Burke himself has written, is to view the rhetoric on the rhetors' own terms in order to unravel the apparent oddities and peculiarities. A symbolic, or dramatistic, analysis "shifts the critic's attention from argumentation to language as its most fundamental assumption is that rhetorical discourse influences by changing verbal behavior, a consequence of defining man as the symbol-using or signifying animal."⁶⁶ Moreover, because a dramatistic perspective is interested in how rhetors describe situations in order to determine what view of the world rhetors want their audiences to accept; it does not presume a single audience or purpose, nor for that matter an external or instrumental purpose. In short, a critic operating from a symbolic perspective is not so interested in the effects or the efficiency of discourse, as he or she is in fleshing out that which is rhetorically inventive or aesthetically pleasing about discourse.

To understand the aesthetic qualities of Mennonite rhetoric requires knowledge of the "frames" from which it operates. "Reference frames," as coined by Burke, are the symbolic structures by which human beings impose order upon their personal and social experiences. A. Cheree Carlson expounding upon Burke's discussion of frames suggests that "[f]rames serve as perspectives from which all interpretations of experience are made. In their broadest sense, Carlson continues, "frames are applied as a chart for social action, because they

constitute attitudes and motives."⁶⁷ In essence, the frame from which the Mennonite church operated determined its form of symbolic action.

Frames of reference, as they apply to groups removed from the larger social order, are of two sorts according to Carlson. Rhetors of out-groups will operate from either a tragic or a comic frame.⁶⁸ Comedy, as Burke succinctly explains, deals with man in society; tragedy with man in the cosmos.⁶⁹ When applied to Mennonite rhetoric, however, Carlson's dichotomy is flawed. Since Mennonites enacted a biblical paradox--a dictum requiring that they be in the secular and the sacred world--their perspective was neither tragic nor comic, but peculiarly tragi-comic. An understanding of the rhetorical choices that contributed to both the tragic and the comic dimensions of Mennonite rhetoric reveals how members attempted a precarious enactment of this tenet of their faith.

Rhetoric of a tragic frame, according to Northrop Frye, is characterized by a sense of inevitability, a belief that individuals have nothing to do but sit and wait for what is destined to occur. It is the discovery of limits and the story of an isolated rhetor.⁷⁰ Burke adds that the tragic frame pursues a ritual called "the cult of the kill" wherein social problems cause guilt, guilt requires redemption, and redemption takes the form of a sacrifice. Rhetors operating from this perspective must purge their guilt through sacrifice because it is

only through suffering and death that we can be atoned for our guilt. Social change is not possible in the tragic frame without some form of violence. Hence,⁷¹ tragedy tends to magnify a single devil figure.

Strains of resignation and inevitability are evidenced in Mennonite rhetoric in an effort to downplay the significance of the present and focus on the church's tumultuous past and its predestined future. Rhetors reminded members of the faith that their's would always be a "suffering church." They would always be "sheep among wolves," just as their Anabaptist forebears had described themselves. GC Mennonites observed that the problem of coping in a sinful world "is rising before us once again." Their hope was that the world crisis signaled the Second Coming. They could take comfort in knowing that "life here is a little thing compared to life over yonder." In a world of inevitability, there was little room for rhetorical influence.

In order to purge their guilt of failing to be a positive witness to their fellow citizens, Mennonites attempted to redeem themselves by playing the role of the martyr. By stoically accepting the physical and verbal abuse from outsiders, and by expressing a willingness to give their lives if need be to demonstrate their faithfulness to the principle of nonresistance, Mennonites appealed to the power of martyrdom. Some Mennonites were frustrated that

Americans did not give them the opportunity to fulfill this role. Since Mennonites were unable to sacrifice their lives (the most eloquent of sacrifices)⁷², they had to settle for silently enduring "false" charges.

As a way to emerge from the crisis with their faith principles intact, members chose to magnify the differences between Mennonitism and militarism. Loucks' tract polarized the two world views as a conflict between good and evil, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man. In distancing themselves from the crusade mentality, Mennonites placed the antagonism between competing scenes, and not between agents. Hence, rhetorical exchanges, which we presume occur between people, became of secondary importance.

A final element of tragic consciousness in Mennonite rhetoric was that they chose to become isolated rhetors. Presenting apologetic statements to themselves accentuated the rift with the larger community. Yet in constructing arguments designed for non-members that were, in actuality, addressed to members of the faith, Mennonites gave witness to the importance of symbolic action. For instance, it appeared ridiculous for Mennonites to argue that the public was currently misinformed on the Mennonite position and would assume an entirely different attitude once they knew the facts about them, and then refuse to make these facts known to the broader community. But from a Mennonite standpoint, it was not important that they act

on these words; it was important for Mennonites to make such statements because it re-affirmed among members that the truth of their position was self-evident to anyone willing to examine it. For Mennonites, their rehearsal of arguments sufficiently refuted the charges from the wider public. Rhetoric functioned as an end in itself; the symbolic act was the whole act.⁷³ That symbolic action functioned as the entire act also explains why it was not important for Mennonites to find ways to implement their "idealistic" solutions to the world crisis. It was enough that Mennonites proposed an alternative way to solve the problem that reflected their image as a people of the Bible.

Second, rhetorical isolation prevented Mennonites from becoming the focus of attention and the center of controversy. Mennonites realized that if they publicized their righteous stance, they would be telling Americans that participating in war was sinful. Sensing that they could only alienate themselves further from the wider citizenry if they roused the wrath of militant patriots, Mennonites displayed caution and skepticism in expressing their views to non-members. The fear of becoming the center of controversy outweighed their desire to refute the false charges publicly and, ultimately, outweighed their desire to be understood by non-members.

Third, rehearsing arguments symbolized the willingness of Mennonites to suffer in a truly

nonresistant way. Passively enduring unfounded verbal abuse against themselves was a way to prove to non-members that they were sincere in their devotion to the doctrine of nonresistance. In Burkean terms, they "deflect[ed] attention from scenic matters" [the charge that Mennonites were cowards and insincere] "by situating the motives of an act" [nonresistance] "in the agent" [unconditional peace advocates].⁷⁴ In enacting a silent, but stoic role in the face of damaging accusations by angry citizens, Mennonites demonstrated that nonresistance demanded concrete behavioral affirmation, and was a permanent way of life, not merely an abstract belief in a set of dogmas that was conveniently adopted when the war broke out.

Finally, in rehearsing their self-defense, Mennonites preserved their view of the world. Since they did not engage in debate with Americans who could only define loyal citizenship in relation to the Great Crusade, they were not forced to choose between their two identities, a move that the wider citizenry demanded of them.

Each characteristic of the tragic frame, an outlook marked by inevitability, the purgation of guilt through sacrifice, the magnification of a devil figure, and the isolation of rhetors, found its application in Mennonite rhetoric. Through this perspective, Mennonites could uphold Christ's command to be "strangers" and shun the things of this world. To be simultaneously "Good

Samaritans" in the world required the comic frame to be superimposed upon the tragic.

If comedy deals with man in society, than rhetoric, by virtue of its essential function of using language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation, is comedic. In Burke's words, rhetoric is a moralizing process whereby "the individual person striv[es] to form himself in accordance with the communicative norms that match the cooperative ways of his society." Identification, is the titular term in the lexicon of rhetoric from a symbolic perspective, because in viewing humans as actors, one is also viewing how they act⁷⁵ together. This means how they act together with friend and foe alike. Carlson stipulates that identification with the enemy is an essential comic strategy for social change. Members of a group identify with their opponents even in the act of⁷⁶ resisting them. From a comic frame, individuals accept human beings as human and therefore imperfect. Because humans are considered error-prone, a rhetor operating from a comic perspective will "note his own foibles," and "have charity for the enemy." In sum, "conflict exists, but it is humanized by the actor's consciousness of his own foibles."⁷⁷ Since the aim of rhetoric from a comic frame is to minimize conflict by finding points of identification, a key strategy is transcendence--a desire to resolve the conflict between persons by discovering a larger generalization that will encompass⁷⁸ both ends of the conflict. The rhetor's ability to

transcend conflict, to make language work for him or her is an important element of the comic frame because, as Frye notes, a rhetor must give the impression that he or she has control over the situation.⁷⁹

Mennonites yearned to match the cooperative ways of their society, and, thus, they strove desperately to identify with their fellow citizens. Their persistent negotiating efforts with the government stand as clear testimony to that. For an apolitical people to besiege Washington with letters, form three committees as official liaisons with the government, use the right of petition, reject emigration as a viable solution as it might hamper negotiating efforts, and convey a sense of understanding the government position while couching their demands in gracious tones, demonstrated unequivocally that Mennonites wished to establish communicative bonds with civil authorities. Moreover, Mennonites viewed themselves as successful negotiators because they were able to devise a clever strategy to diffuse the conflict with government officials. That strategic move was to encourage Mennonite draftees to register and report to camp. Since provisions had not been made for non-combatant service when the first men reported to camp, Mennonites might have refused to enter a military system that had no definite policy for non-resisters. But Mennonite men did report to camp--a move that had significant ramifications for government-Mennonite relations; for in reporting to camp,

Mennonites helped the government meet their goal of getting all American draftees through the draft boards as quickly and efficiently as possible. In bowing to the demands of the government in this situation, Mennonites had a better opportunity to make exemption demands later. More importantly, Mennonites removed the conflict with the government from their communities to the army camps. Had Mennonites failed to report to camp, they would have had to deal with the government in their own communities, which would have attracted much more hostile attention to them. Mennonite draftees protected the majority of the faithful at home from becoming the focal point of heated controversy.

That Mennonites drafted apologetic statements further suggested that they sought understanding and even approval from their accusers. To be sure, Mennonite rhetoric of self-defense was unique in that the target audience (outsiders) was not the immediate audience (themselves) and rhetors inhibited any medium of transmission. But its very existence indicated that Mennonites desired to repair their image as loyal American citizens. By dissociating themselves from other conscientious objectors, denying charges of pro-Germanism and insincerity, and identifying with the American values of patriotism, peace, and sacrifice, Mennonites gave notice to the ways in which they intended to cooperate with the wider citizenry.

In accordance with a comic perspective, Mennonites

took control of the unpleasant situation by redefining American values in order that they might identify with them. Expanding the meaning of patriotism to include benevolent activities was one way in which Mennonites transcended the conflict. If a patriot were viewed as a Good Samaritan than both the soldier and the pacifist could be perceived as one. Mennonites further demonstrated their mastery over a threatening crisis by interpreting the war as a challenge, as a test of faith, even as a "day of opportunity." This was a day to "shine for the Master" and to, perhaps, attract new members to the faith. Mennonites voiced optimism that the test of faith "had already got people to thinking."

Accompanying these symbolic efforts at inducement, were behavioral changes. Mennonites tried to accommodate the demands from the public by adopting the English language, flying the American flag, serving in the Red Cross, contributing to Liberty Loan and Red Cross Drives, serving in noncombatant capacities, living frugally, and contributing their own farm products to Americans in need. These were important outward signs of identification with the "enemy."

Mennonites were able to identify with those who did not believe in nonresistance because they recognized their opponent's right to be treated fairly and with a full measure of respect. More crucial yet, they recognized their own shortcomings. Der Herold encouraged its readers "to respect those young men who have

volunteered [for military service] because they thought it was their duty." The Mennonite cautioned its readers to avoid lecturing outsiders on the rightness of the nonresistant position when "they are angry and smarting under unprovoked injuries imposed upon them by a devilish foe." H. D. Penner went so far as to acknowledge candidly that Mennonites, too, were misguided sometimes, and not superior to non-members. In his July 4, sermon, Penner philosophically observed:

The fact that the state often misuses its power or its authority is not argument to go against the state. Even the Holy Scripture is misused without even half trying. We sometimes use the words in the Bible with the wrong interpretation. And that causes people to doubt. So when the state officials put forth certain efforts and they fail, it isn't up to us to hold it up against them--to criticize them the rest of their lives--on account of it.
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These brave, far-sighted admissions were evidence of a comic consciousness in the face of intimate danger to their church's very existence.

When viewed through a comic lens, even the Mennonites' strategy to isolate themselves rhetorically, if not socially, from the wider community, had comic overtones. For in defending themselves to each other, members preserved the belief that if Americans knew the

real facts about them, they would not be hostile toward them. Mennonites withstood the scathing criticism by believing that their fellow citizens were being misguided by the vicious lies circulated in the press. Americans were really "well-meaning people," as Daniel Kauffman and Gerald Dahlke had described them, who had been led astray about the "real" Mennonite position. In failing to publicize these strategies, Mennonites could, in their own minds, preserve ties with the wider community, and strengthen their ties with the church. Dahlke, for instance, would not have been able to construct the exaggerated account of Mennonite civic loyalty with any serious intent of convincing outsiders of their worthiness had he not harbored the belief that outsiders were mistaken, not vicious.

Finally, Mennonites were able to identify with outsiders because they diffused the tension between an us versus them mentality. By envisioning the conflict between Mennonitism and militarism, Mennonites defined the dispute as one between scenes, not agents, thereby deflecting the confrontation. Resistance vs. nonresistance was at stake, not Mennonites versus Americans. Burke's idea that movements will "materialize the spiritual," and create an identifiable devil figure, fails to account for a comic view of the opposition. Mennonites did not want to foster antagonism by projecting the image of a despicable foe who would be easy to rally against. Even in Dahlke's magnification of

the accusations against the Mennonites, not once did he attribute the "barbaric" actions to specific individuals.

Both the tragic and the comic dimensions of Mennonite rhetoric explain its inventiveness and its apparent contradictoriness. The Mennonite allegiance to the church required that their rhetorical strategies for dealing with the war and the backlash from the wider citizenry be consistent with the tenuous task of being in the world but not of it. While the war ostensibly forced Mennonites to make a choice between two conflicting identities, Mennonites refused to make that choice, believing instead that it was possible to remain loyal to God and country. As people in the world, Mennonites could be Good Samaritans, but as people apart from this world, they could not be soldiers or do good works in connection with the military. From a Mennonite perspective, there was no discrepancy between arguing that they "must set their sights on higher things" and arguing that they "must do more toward relief and reconstruction than can possibly be done through military avenues." Mennonites did not think that their attempts to identify with loyal citizens were inconsistent. Mennonites believed that they were patriotic, even though this meant expanding the meaning of patriotism. Mennonites thought that if they supported democratic ends, they could be considered good Americans even though they could not support military means.

Mennonites believed that if Americans knew that they were industrious farmers, they would not be looked upon as parasites, even though many of them would not serve in the Red Cross or donate to Liberty Bond drives. Moreover, when Mennonites vowed to "go the extra mile" and do more for those in need than those who supported the war militarily, they did not think that this argument proclaimed their moral superiority; they thought it was an appropriate response since they would not fight in America's battles. To Mennonites these were persuasive strategies. When Mennonites enumerated all the ways that they were "doing their bit" for their country while remaining faithful servants of the Lord, it was proof that Mennonites were not shirking their responsibility to be in the world but not of it.

For a people untrained in public address, Mennonites demonstrated surprising adeptness at synthesizing a tragic and comic perspective. Yet even Mennonites recognized the fragility of combining these two frames of reference. As Mennonites watched the European crisis with increasing interest, it was not long before they dropped all pretense of neutrality and openly supported one side or the other. Deliberative rhetoric from an apolitical people was a shocking recognition of just how much national loyalties were important. In the comfortable years before U. S. intervention, Mennonite abandoned their Mennonite identity temporarily to express their cultural identity.

In the process, they also abandoned tragic consciousness. When C. Henry Smith went so far as to proclaim that "Mennonitism and American democracy were overlapping movements of the common people," he lost sight of the foundations of Mennonitism as a suffering church separated from the world. Mennonite theologian, J. L. Burkholder further explains why the biblical paradox by which Mennonites live is so very difficult to uphold:

Discipleship demands a return to a disciplined and socially separated church of true believers. It demands complete withdrawal from the relativities of the passing order. It means a new social order living eschatologically in accordance with the 'new age.' This answer has been clearer in theory, however, than in practice. It has been clearer theologically than sociologically. It has seemed more likely for small minorities than for majorities. It has been clearer to the first generation of Anabaptists than to their descendants. It has seemed more reasonable in a political order conducted by a nobility than in a democracy in which everyone is theoretically responsible for the political order.

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American Mennonites who lived through the Great War wrestled with how they could make the concept of a suffering church relevant in a country that cherished

religious freedom. Maintaining the tragi-comic consciousness, so essential for upholding Christ's dictum to be in the world but not of it, was, in these times, a daunting task.

While Mennonites did not always succeed in maintaining tragic consciousness, they did survive the test of war with minimal losses precisely because they were sufficiently able to isolate themselves from the outside world, recall their separatist tradition, and emphasize other worldly goals-- important strategies of the tragic perspective. First of all, Mennonites showed remarkable resiliency in the midst of this crisis because their church, not unlike an "enduring movement," embraced broad, idealistic goals that were not attainable in the near future. Therefore, it had a greater chance of surviving tumultuous times than a movement that embraced specific, short-term goals.⁸² Not only were Mennonites able to withstand the test of war because their goals could not be realized in this lifetime, but the tumultuous history of the church provided members with renewed strength to face the crisis. Members had throughout the centuries become hardened to the threats from the outside world. Similarly, Mennonites living during the world war were willing to endure harsh treatment and resist great pressure to conform to a militaristic patriotism in order to preserve their rich religious heritage, which included the idea of a suffering church.

The church's survival and the persuasiveness of its rhetoric for members, in spite of negative evaluations from non-members, is, according to Roberta Ash and Mayer Zald, a function of the fact that the enduring movement "is less constrained by the definitions of reality of the broader society."⁸³ Since the church was not dependent on society for its survival, Mennonites constructed what sociologist Joseph R. Gusfield calls their own "paradigm of experience" by which events were judged to be right, just, and proper.⁸⁴ Members formulated their own interpretation of which world events were worth highlighting, of what acts could be considered patriotic, and, ultimately, of what it meant to affirm an American and a Mennonite identity in war time. Anthropologists Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine explain that it is important for movements to operate from a distinct reality base in order to "reinterpret even what objectively is failure as redirection by God,⁸⁵ . . . or a temporary testing of devotion and courage." During the war, the church was perceived as illegitimate by most Americans, but members did not accept this status. Rather, Mennonites believed that the war gave them the opportunity to test their dedication to God and to re-affirm the legitimacy of their church. Since the established order perceives the world in a different light, Gerlach and Hine note, "It characteristically misjudges the ability of the movement and its members to persist in the face of setbacks."⁸⁶

The Wilson Administration misjudged the ability of Mennonites to endure the presence of military life. Mennonites did not become "fairly good soldiers" as Newton Baker had assumed. Similarly, the public misjudged the Mennonites' ability to withstand the threats of mob violence and the barrage of unfounded accusations that were perpetuated by the press. That Mennonites maintained tragic consciousness during the war by operating from a distinct reality base explains how Mennonites could see successes in ostensible failures.

Conclusion

Mennonites were relieved when Wilson announced on Armistice Day that it now became America's "duty to assist by example, by sober, friendly counsel and by material aid in the establishment of just democracy throughout the world."⁸⁷ Mennonites enthusiastically affirmed this challenge, since their benevolent activities were once again in conformity with peace time norms. As soon as the war was over, Mennonites stepped up their peace witness. The Mennonite Central Committee, which still functions as a world-wide enterprise to help those in need, was created. Many Mennonites felt that, having refused army service, they should do equal time in reconstruction. This helped to reinforce the positive witness that Mennonites could give to the world. As one Mennonite remarked: "It did a great deal to quiet

criticism and help me in my standing in the
community."⁸⁸

Mennonites could take comfort in the fact that their standing in the wider community did improve substantially after the war. As quickly as Americans adopted the crusade spirit, they returned to the task of picking up where they left off. The most rabid of war supporters now became more understanding and even sympathetic of the conscientious objector. The New Republic, which had condemned C. O.'s during the war, pleaded their case by 1919. When in June of that year, and many C. O.'s still in prison for violation of the Espionage Law, the magazine stated emphatically that "The Espionage Law . . . has certainly no more reason for remaining on the statute books than war time prohibition." It further inquired why Baker had delayed action, responding argumentatively: "Is it mere inertia?" In indignation the magazine concluded: "[M]en are being held out of their liberty; they are being denied the opportunity to share in the work of the world, and never was there more work to do."⁸⁹ The press also made amends for their distorted coverage of the psychological testing of the conscientious objector by reporting the accurate findings. One editor remarked: "Many people who were familiar with the kind of newspaper comment on conscientious objectors that was current during the war will probably be surprised to learn that fewer than 18% of political objectors and 19%

of religious objectors fell below the "average" in intelligence. [which] excelled the percentages of both the drafted and enlisted men."⁹⁰ One reporter laid to rest the fear generated by army officers during the war that "the C. O. would make the worst possible kind of criminal," by publicizing the statistic that "only six-tenths of one percent of C. O.'s have served prison terms." Adding for good measure, "It does not seem likely that we need to fear much from the future criminal activity of conscientious objectors."⁹¹ For the most part, in the years immediately following the war, the American public did not harbor hostility or resentment against Mennonites and other conscientious objectors. The Mennonites' decision to assist in the work of reconstruction, no doubt, healed their relationship with the outside public considerably.

The war experience also brought MC and GC members of the Mennonite church closer together. Members of both conferences joined together to send petitions to the Wilson Administration, to serve on committees for war concerns, and stepped up their correspondence with each other. Though the two groups had differed on the issue of non-combatant service, it is easy for a non-member to attach undue significance to this fact. Mennonites such as H. P. Krehbiel saw the conflicting stances, not as a major flaw in their self-defense, but as "a slight difference in method of attack." The GC position was in agreement with the MC position "in all essentials,"

Krehbiel concluded.

Perhaps, most importantly, the war strengthened the faith of members. The war was, as Mennonites had argued, "a test of faith." The majority of Mennonites survived the test and emerged from the war with a renewed commitment to their faith. Yet in strengthening their faith commitment, the war also proved to be a harsh lesson that taught Mennonites to emphasize their peace stance even in peace times. Never again would Mennonites be lulled into a false sense of security that America would not disturb their isolated communities or demand total commitment to a cause that violated their religious freedom.

In retrospect, the Mennonite experience in the world war was not a heroic moment in their history. Nonetheless, Mennonites must be admired for surviving a no-win rhetorical situation. As the Military Intelligence Division aptly stated: "The Mennonites have furnished the material for a very interesting chapter in the history of the war."⁹² For government officials and American citizens alike, Mennonites exhibited a peculiar witness that was unacceptable in war time. Courting obscurity and calling for biblical nonresistance in the midst of a righteous American military effort was a position that could never be comprehended by the greater American public as anything other than grossly irrelevant. Walter Guest Kellogg, a member of the Board of Inquiry, expressed a common impression when he wrote:

"They remain a curious and an alien survival of an old-world people, an anachronism amid the life of today."⁹³

Mennonites of the untroubled generation probably would have been satisfied with Kellogg's characterization of themselves. For Mennonites had survived the supreme test without forfeiting the essentials of a 400-year faith. They had been purified by the fire of war, as H. P. Krehbiel envisioned. And they had emerged from the heat still proclaiming their Mennonitism and their Americanism.

Notes

¹ Characteristics of the rational perspective, or "traditional rhetorical theory" as it is called by some critics, were gleaned from the following sources: Karyl Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, 3 (1970), pp. 97-108; Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Radical Black Nationalism: A Case Study In Self-Conscious Criticism," Central States Speech Journal 22 (1971), pp. 151-160; Donald Polkinghorne, "Human Action," Methodology for the Human Sciences, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), pp. 195-199; Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1969).

² J. E. Hartzler, "Are Mennonites Slackers?" Gospel Herald, 13 Dec. 1917, p. 683.

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⁴ "The Real Facts About The Attitude of The Mennonite Church On The Issue of The Late War," The Elkhart Truth, paid advertisement, 20 Jan. 1920, n. pag. rpt. in Mennonite Yearbook and Directory (Scottdale, Penn.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1921), pp. 21-28.

⁵ "Mennonites On Military Service: A Statement of Our Position on Military Service As Adopted By The Mennonite church, Aug. 29, 1917," Gospel Herald, 6 Sept.

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[S. M. Grubb, ed.], "What Is The Message of A Mennonite Minister To His People In War Time," The Mennonite, 18 April 1918, p. 4.

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Allan Teichroew, "World War I and The Mennonite Migration to Canada to Avoid The Draft," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, 45, (1971), pp. 227-228.

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"Final Warning Given Preacher," Wayland News, n.d.: n. p., Newspaper clipping located in J. E. Hartzler Collection, Box 1, (AMC).

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Records of the Adjutant Generals Office, Selected Papers W. W. I. Letter from Commanding General 88th Division to Adjutant General, 7 March 1918, Reel 186, (BCLA).

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Chief A. Brice Bielaski, Malone Report, Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Record Group 165, File 10902-18, National Archives as quoted in Allan Teichroew, "Military Surveillance of Mennonites In World War I," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, 53 (1979), p. 99.

- ¹⁴ "Make Them Section Hands," Editorial, The Salt Lake Herald, 23 Oct. 1918, n.p.
- ¹⁵ "Pacifism or Laziness," Editorial, Cleveland Plain Dealer, 12 March 1918, n.p.
- ¹⁶ "Complains of Those Who Refuse To Salute Flag," Columbus Dispatch, n.d.: n.p., Newspaper clipping in J. E. Hartzler Collection, Box 1, (AMC).
- ¹⁷ L. H. Leech, "Pacifist Sedition," Editorial, The New York World, 27 March 1918, n.p.
- ¹⁸ "Parasite Pacifists," Urbana Citizen, 23 June, 1917, p. 4. col. 1.
- ¹⁹ "Pacifism or Laziness," Editorial, Cleveland Plain Dealer, 12 March 1918, n.p.
- ²⁰ "Parasite Pacifists," Urbana Citizen 23 June, 1917, p. 4, col. 1.
- ²¹ "Consciences Strangely Perverted," Editorial, New York Times 30 July 1917, p. 8, col. 4.
- ²² "The Callous Pacifist," Editorial, The New York Tribune, 26 Feb. 1918, n.p.
- ²³ Rev. William E. Clark, "Do Not Deserve Respect," Editorial, Memphis, Tennessee newspaper, untitled, 29 April 1918, n.p. Newspaper clipping in General Records of the Dept. of Justice, Records Relating to Mennonites in World War I, Reel 185, (BCLA).
- ²⁴ "Make Them Section Hands," The Salt Lake Herald, 23 Oct. 1918, n.p.
- ²⁵ "Conscientious Objectors," Washington Post 12 July 1918, n.p.

²⁶ "Fighting or Working His Choice," Editorial, New York Times, 3 June 1918, p. 10, col. 5.

²⁷ "Setting The Pacifist At Work," Editorial, New York Times, 23 March 1918, p. 12, col. 5.

²⁸ William Hard, "Your Amish Mennonite," The New Republic 1 Feb. 1919, p 13.

²⁹ "Complains Of Those Who Refuse To Salute Flag," Columbus Dispatch, n.d.: n.p., Newspaper clipping in J. E. Hartzlzer Collection, Box 1, (AMC).

³⁰ Adjutant General's Office Files. Letter from Capt. Sanitary Corps, Geary F. Arks, (AMC).

³¹ Adjutant General's Files, "Special Report From Chief Psychological Examiner 88th Division W. S. Miller to Surgeon General U. S. Army, Camp Dodge, Iowa, May 1, 1918, Microfilm 1, (AMC).

³² Walter Guest Kellogg, The Conscientious Objector (New York: Boni and Liberright, 1919), p. 41.

³³ Malone Report as quoted in Teichroew, "Military Surveillance of Mennonites in World War I," p. 127.

³⁴ Letter from R. E. Proctor to J. D. Oliver, 24 Sept 1918; Letter from Proctor to M. E. Foley, 22 Oct. 1918, Peace Problems Committee, Mennonite Church in World War I, G. F. Hersberger Research Box 45, (AMC).

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(Scottsdale: Penn.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1921), p. 150.

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⁵⁰ Ray H. Abrams, Preachers Present Arms (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1933), p. 116.

⁵¹ Abrams, p. 87.

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⁵³ Woodrow Wilson, "Every Mob Contributes To German Lies," 26 July 1918, in The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson Ed. Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd, vol. I New York: Harper, 1927, p. 238.

⁵⁴ Juhnke, p. 105. Juhnke and others note that physical abuse against the Mennonites was infrequent. Mennonites endured far more verbal abuse.

⁵⁵ "Editorial," The Goshen Democrat 18 March 1918, p. 4, col. 1.

⁵⁶ [Daniel Kauffman, ed.], "The Real Issue," Gospel Herald 11 Oct. 1917, p. 514.

⁵⁷ "The C. O.," Editorial, St. Louis Globe Democrat, 1 July 1917, n.p.

⁵⁸ William Hard, "Your Amish Mennonite," The New Republic 1 Feb. 1919, p. 11.

⁵⁹ Thomas J. George, "Believes In A Square Deal," Editorial, no newspaper title cited, General Records of Dept. of Justice, Records relating to Mennonites in W. W. I, Reel 185, (BCLA).

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- ⁶¹ James A. Ray, "'Kaiser School' Charges Knocked Into Cocked Hat," Topeka Daily Capital, 16 Sept. 1917, p. 8, cols. 1-2.
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- ⁶³ "Objecting Again," Editorial, The Goshen Democrat, n.d. 1919, in Loucks and Hartzler Correspondence Peace Problems Committee 1918-1919, Box 4, (AMC).
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- ⁶⁶ Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Radical Black Nationalism," p. 155.
- ⁶⁷ Burke, Attitudes Toward History vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959); A. Cheree Carlson, "Gandhi and the Comic Frame: 'Ad Bellum Purificandum,'" Quarterly Journal of Speech, 72 (1986), p. 447.
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- ⁶⁹ Burke, Attitudes Toward History, p. 53.
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- ⁷³ Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Radical Black Nationalism," p. 159.
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Note: At both the Archives of the Mennonite Church (AMC), Goshen, Indiana and the Bethel College Library and Archives (BCLA), a "collection" constitutes the personal library of a Mennonite church member. The collections range in size but generally include numerous files of official and personal correspondence, diaries, sermons, newspaper clippings, and other materials.

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