



**A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY PURITAN LIFE
(TAKING THE COMMUNITY OF
ROBERTSBRIDGE, SUSSEX,
AS A CASE STUDY)**

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A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY PURITAN LIFE,
TAKING THE HUTTERITE COMMUNITY OF
ROBERTSBRIDGE, SUSSEX, AS A CASE STUDY.

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INTRODUCTION

My thesis is a personalised view of contemporary Puritan life, taking the Hutterite colony on Robertsbridge, Sussex in England as a case study. The details of Puritan life touch a wide range of activity: the attitudes towards family; the meaning of silence; the laws of love, beards, grooming, and the blend of the old Hutterian dress with that of modified practices of today.

I also look to Amish and Mennonite life in a search for the answers to several questions which challenge their faith and have for a long time affected ours, such as the introduction of shop brought clothes and the introduction of convenience foods and appliances.

In addition, I will take a look at contemporary society's obsession with appearances and compare it with the Puritan view that one should:

"Make nothing at all for pride's sake" 1

I also intend to discuss the popularity of the Puritan look in areas of design such as fashion, and interior design and also the increasing popularity of the Puritan way of life itself.



1. Who are the Amish?



2. A Closer Look.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

In June 1988, at the age of 18 I first visited the United States. I had previously arranged to stay the Summer months with my Aunt, in a small town called Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I knew nothing about the town except its location on the map. I expected it to be like any other nerve wracking American town, dominated by billboards, McDonalds, wires crisscrossing the highway and endless honking of horns. Instead, there lay gently sloping hills and green woods.

On the drive home to my Aunt's house, speeding along the highway, we turned a corner and almost ploughed into the back of a vehicle in front. But this was no ordinary vehicle! Trotting along in front of us was what I thought in my ignorance was a hearse. "That lot are the cause of half the accidents on the roads" screamed my Aunt, "What lot?" I questioned. "Those Amish people" she retorted. "Amish?" I thought, "Who are they?" (Fig.1).

Over the next few weeks, I came across in almost every shop pamphlets and paperbacks on these people and quilt, rag rugs, made by their own hands. They trotted along in front of me while out on my bicycle and queued behind me in the post office.

Daily I passed numerous groups of them bickering in some foreign language, the men in their wide brimmed hats; untrimmed beards and trousers that always seemed too short for them, the girls in the plaits and smock-type dresses that looked like something out of Heidi (Fig 2). Daily I would see them hanging around the malls, beside a row of horses and carriages tied to the railings, specially constructed for the use of the Lancaster County Amish. I was captivated almost immediately.

One evening while in town, I browsed through a bookshop in Lancaster. Approximately half an hour later, instead of the Stephen King publication I had originally sought I left with a small paperback "20 Most asked question about the Amish and

Mennonites" by Merle and Phyllis Good (see bibliography). This is where the fascination began.

Since then I visited in November 1992, a Hutterite Community in Robertsbridge, Sussex, England whose doctrine of beliefs are very similar to that of the Amish. I have based my thesis upon this community asking such questions as: What do they believe? Are they really indifferent to trends and fashions? Has their doctrine of beliefs changed over the years? and Will they survive?



3. Claudia and Emma.



4. Busy at Work.

CHAPTER 1: LIFE IN COMMUNITY

PART I

1. A Visit to the Bruderhof *

(*Bruderhof* is a German word, for a colony or community, used by the Hutterites, who speak a mixture of English and German).

On Sunday November 1st 1992, I boarded the 10.30am train at Charing Cross Station, for the tiny village of Robertsbridge, Sussex. Approximately, an hour and half later, the train pulled into the quiet station in the village where three Hutterites stood, who seemed to have been placed in the wrong century. The introduced themselves as Claudia Hindley, her sixteen year old daughter Emma (Fig. 3) and seven year old son Ralph. As Maire Claire Magazine described them, they were dressed:

"like couples who pop out of clocks to tell you whether or not it's going to rain" 2

To find a Hutterite community in the heart of the Sussex countryside is by no means easy. There were no signposts to direct us, no indication of the community whatsoever. It certainly was no tourist attraction. The visitor would have to know where he was going. It is almost as if the Hutterites wish to remain hidden away from civilisation.

There was a ~~distinction~~ change of atmosphere as we turned off one of the back streets of Robertsbridge, into the Bruderhof. I was led down a narrow, winding path through a field down into the heart of the valley. It was then that I saw a busy little cluster of buildings, which reminded me of a hive of bees, busy at work. Children were running around full of life and vitality, hens cackling, men and women going to and fro, from the barns to the schoolhouse, from the houses to the church (fig 4).



**'We don't have
stresses that people
le have. We don't need
ays off or holidays'**

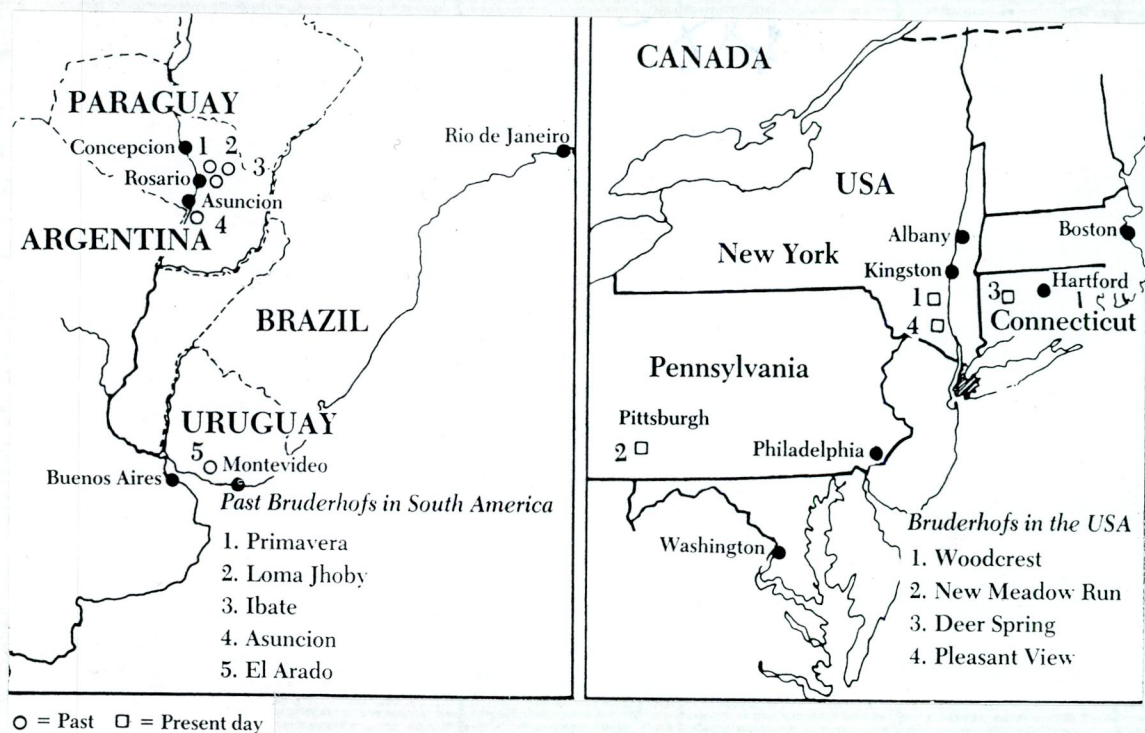
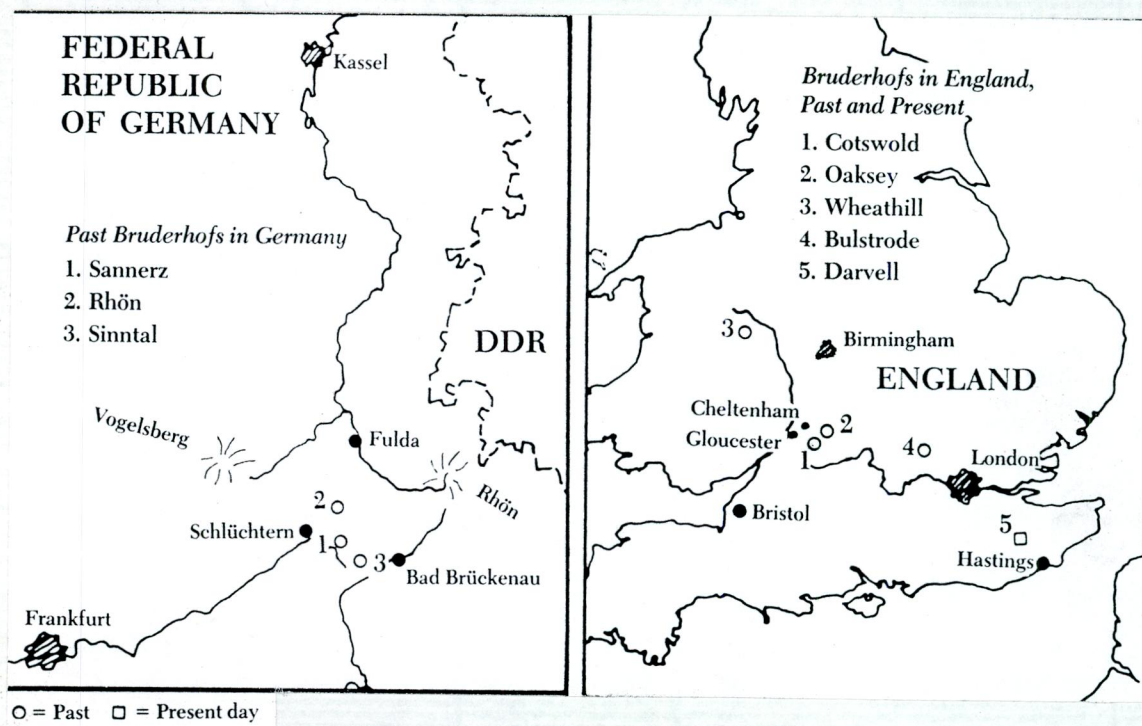
A group of young people came towards us, in coloured shirts and dresses, waving polka-dotted kerchiefs, saying "Welcome, Welcome!". "It's so good you've come" said Nancy Voll, in a jolly German accent. For the next few minutes we were preoccupied with shaking hands and smiling. At first it was difficult to react to so much joy. It felt a little superficial. However soon I realised it was all quite genuine. With all of this joy and love of life around me, I could not help but feel that I was in a home for pensioned hippies. It was really quite unique!

Sixteen year old Emma Hindley lives in the community of 300 Hutterites in an old TB hospital in Robertsbridge. The community has no television, pools their finances, work, eat and live together. They have their own educational system central on religion and are allowed no personal belongings. They are forbidden to marry outsiders and follow a closely regulated timetable. Their distinctive way of life is immediately apparent in their old fashioned dress (fig. 5). They look on one another as brothers and sisters and live in their own kingdom called "a bruderhof". Few know it exists, but they have lived here in Robertsbridge for over twenty years.

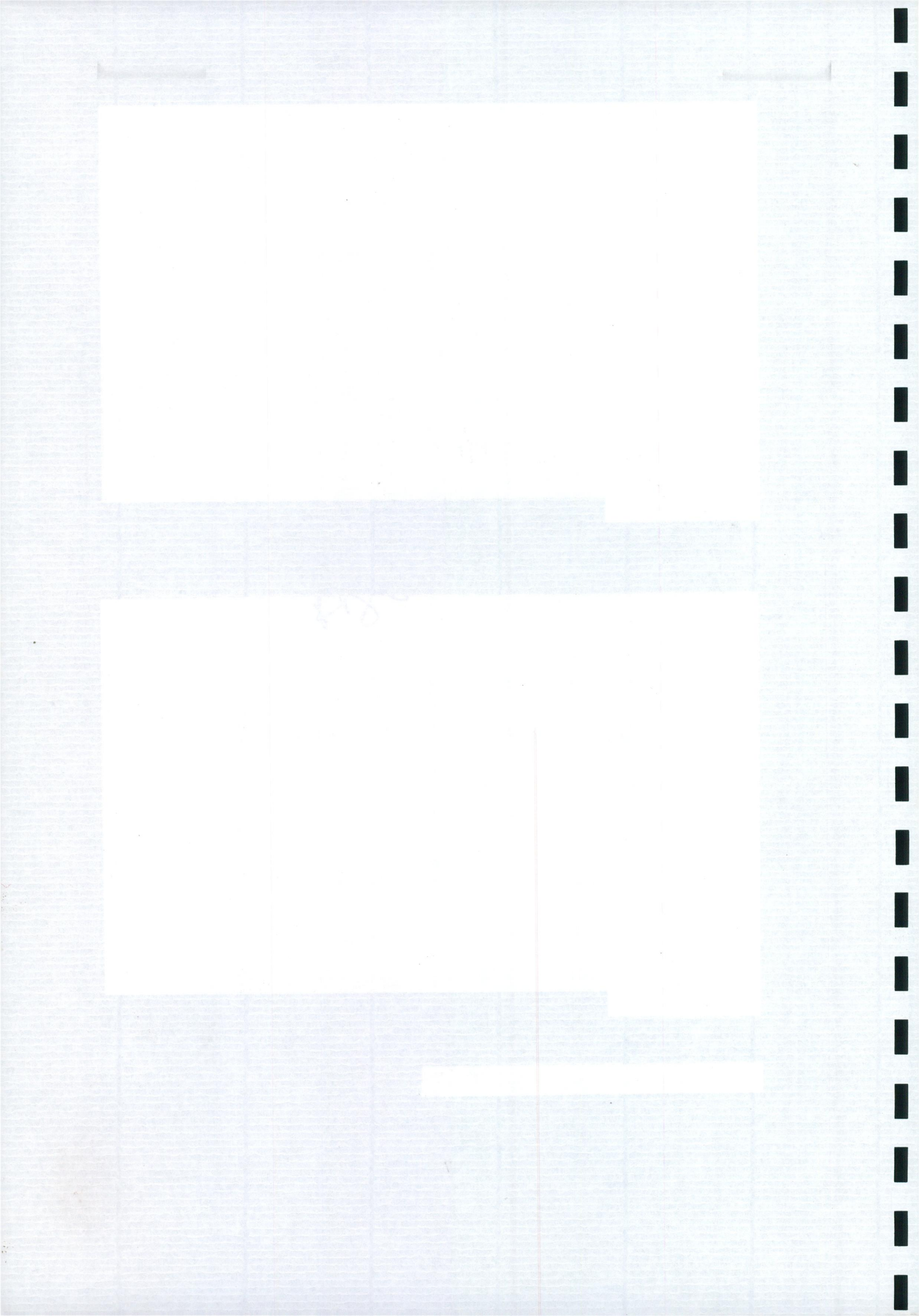
According to W.S.F. Pickering 3, worldwide there are approximately 27,000 members of the Hutterian Brethren Church (However, Scott 1986 p35 tells us there are approximately 13,000 members worldwide) or Hutterites as they are more commonly known. Although they originated in the early sixteen century at the time of the Reformation, in Central Europe, they are now found only in the United States and England (Fig. 6). The lifespans of the Bruderhof are illustrated in Fig 7.

2. Hutterite Origins

Their founder Jakob Hutter was a German Anabaptist. This is a general term given to sixteenth century groups of radical protestants, who believed in adult baptism as opposed to infant baptism. He also held that a sharing community of mutual support



6. Hutterite Colonies Worldwide.



Time Line of the Bruderhofs

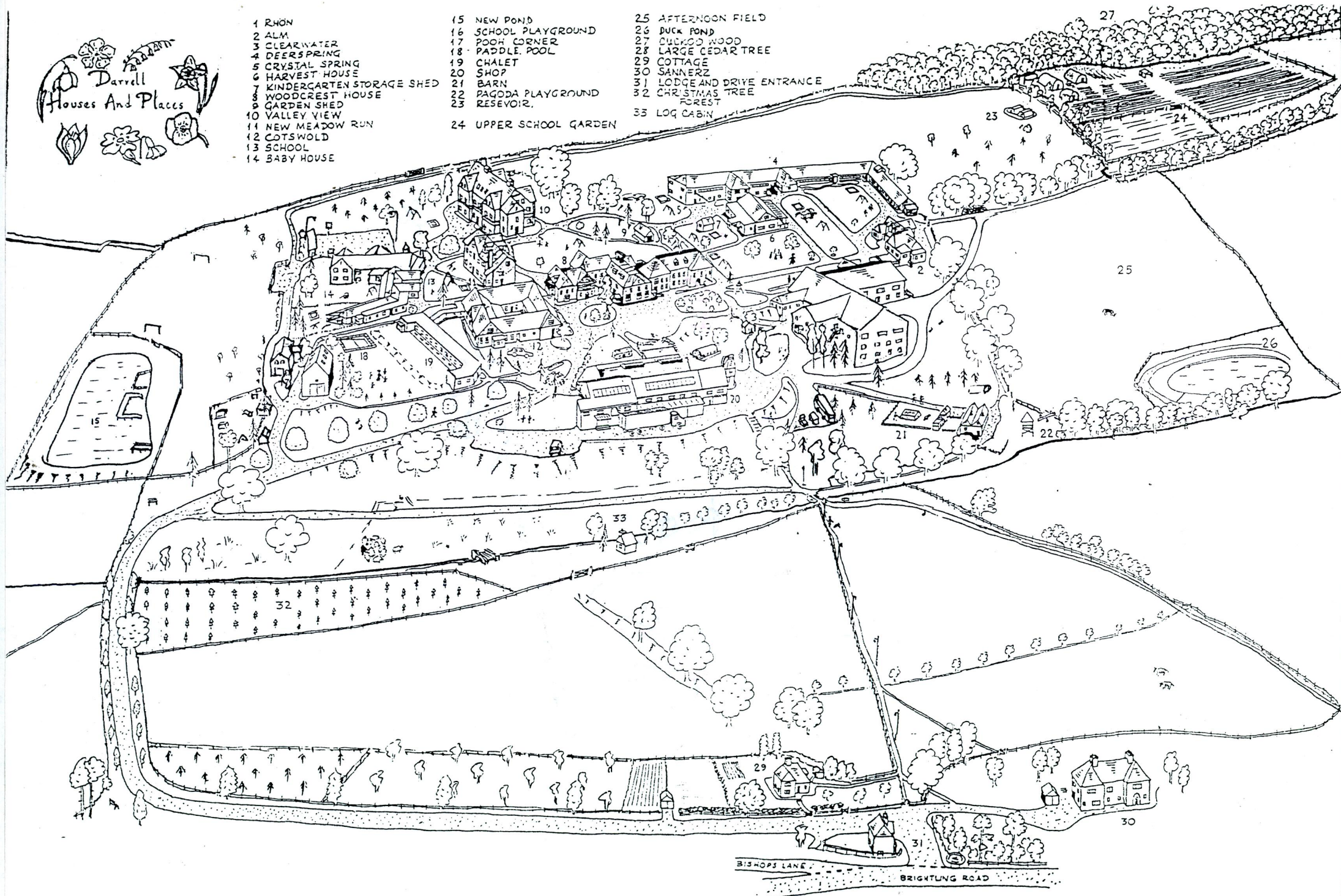
Sannerz (G)	1920_____1927
Rhön (G)	1926_____1937
Alm (Li)	1934_____1938
Cotswold (E)	1936_____1941
Oaksey (E)	1939-1941
Primavera (P)	1941_____1961
Wheathill (E)	1942_____1961
Loma Jhoby (P)	1942_____1961
Asuncion (P)	1942_____1961
Ibate (P)	1947_____1961
El Arado (Ur)	1953_____1960
Woodcrest (USA)	1954_____today
Forest River (USA)	1955-1957
Sinntal (G)	1955_____1961
(Oak Lake) New Meadow Run (USA)	1957_____today
Bulstrode (E)	1958_____1966
(Evergreen) Deer Spring (USA)	1958_____today
Darvell (E)	1971_____today
Pleasant View (USA)	1985_____today



- 1 RHON
- 2 ALM
- 3 CLEARWATER
- 4 DEERSPRING
- 5 CRYSTAL SPRING
- 6 HARVEST HOUSE
- 7 KINDERGARTEN STORAGE SHED
- 8 WOODCREST HOUSE
- 9 GARDEN SHED
- 10 VALLEY VIEW
- 11 NEW MEADOW RUN
- 12 COTSWOLD
- 13 SCHOOL
- 14 BABY HOUSE

- 15 NEW POND
- 16 SCHOOL PLAYGROUND
- 17 POOL CORNER
- 18 PADDLE POOL
- 19 CHALET
- 20 SHOP
- 21 BARN
- 22 PAGODA PLAYGROUND
- 23 RESEVOIR
- 24 UPPER SCHOOL GARDEN

- 25 AFTERNOON FIELD
- 26 DUCK POND
- 27 DUCKWOOD
- 28 LARGE CEDAR TREE
- 29 COTTAGE
- 30 SANNERZ
- 31 LODGE AND DRIVE ENTRANCE
- 32 CHRISTMAS TREE FOREST
- 33 LOG CABIN



and cooperation, which was unusual in Germany at the time.

Pickering tells us certain radical groups in Zurich in the 1520's were concerned with reforming the religion of their time 4. They were dissatisfied with the slow pace of religious change. Persecuted by their fellow Protestants as a result of their convictions concerning adult baptism and the wish to free religion from state control, they fled to Zurich and moved in several directions across Europe.

In 1593, war broke out in the Hapsburg Empire. The Hutterites, caught in the crossfire of the war, travelled from Moravia to Transylvania in 1621. They had been invited by the Protestant Prince Gabor Bethlen (1580 - 1629) of Transylvania to escape persecution.

Once again, in 1762 the Jesuits harassed the Hutterites, and they decided to take up an offer from Russian Commander-in-Chief, Count Peter Rumianstev to go to Russia. They remained there until 1874 when Russia experienced an upsurge in nationalism and their fear of conscription forced them to flee once again, to the United States.

However in 1971 a small group of Hutterites returned to Europe and the *Bruderhof* in Robertsbridge, Sussex was founded, peopled by Americans, German and new arrivals.

3. Inside the Colony

At the heart of the colony is a central square in which a wooden bell tower has been erected, to call its members to service (Fig. 8). The buildings such as houses, schools and laundry rooms are clustered around this central square and spaced quite a distance from each other.

The large Victorian buildings of the former TB Hospital stand handsome and proud by no means exuding the air of modesty central



9. Victorian Buildings.

to Hutterite thinking. They are ornate (Fig. 9) and painted an unusual colour of turquoise and there ~~is~~ something clean and fresh, almost alpine about its atmosphere. The lawns were mowed and kept beautifully. The log piles were so orderly that not a log was awry and the walls appeared as though they had been built yesterday. There was a general atmosphere of thriftiness. It was obvious that the men and women who tend these gardens and built these walls pour their love of living into their daily lives.

In this community everything is centred on religion, they are firm believers that the demands made on a follower of Christ can be met only by living in community. This conviction isolates the Hutterites from the main Christian Groups, and even marks them off from other Anabaptist groups, such as the Mennonites and Amish. It means that they must live in a community or Brotherhood.

Part II

4. Beliefs Which Separate

Life in a Hutterite community seems restricting to the extreme to me, having been brought up in modern western society. There is no sense of that freedom found in "ordinary modern life". The notion of doing exactly as one pleases is out of the question.

During my visit I came across numerous things which set these people apart from modern society. The first being that of dress.

4.1 Dress

Immediately upon entering the colony, the visitor notices that their distinctive dress sets them apart from other Christian groups. Thus dress is in keeping with tradition and is also practical for the work they do and their outdoor activities, it will be described in Chapter 2.

4.2 Community

The second major difference is that the very structure of the church is designed to further a feeling of community, and belonging. Congregations are small, each consisting of about 50 families. Support for the sick or grieving is shared by the congregation. From birth till death they are surrounded by a support group that will go to great ends to ensure that their physical emotional and religious needs are satisfied.

Each family lives in an apartment. The first families to settle on the Bruderhof were lucky enough to acquire a kitchen and bathroom. Otherwise families share. A hallway connects all the apartments and during the day all doors, except those of the bathroom, are left open. This represents what they call "an open door policy", according



10. Working in the Kitchen.



11. In the Sewing Room.

to Fiona Hibbs, a member of the Robertsbridge Bruderhof. there is little idea of private time in which the individual may do as he or she wishes, and there is little privacy. Said 41 year old Fiona:

"You can't shut the door on a neighbour, privacy is not a priority here. It is a very busy life and everybody has to give" 5

4.3 A Timetabled Existence

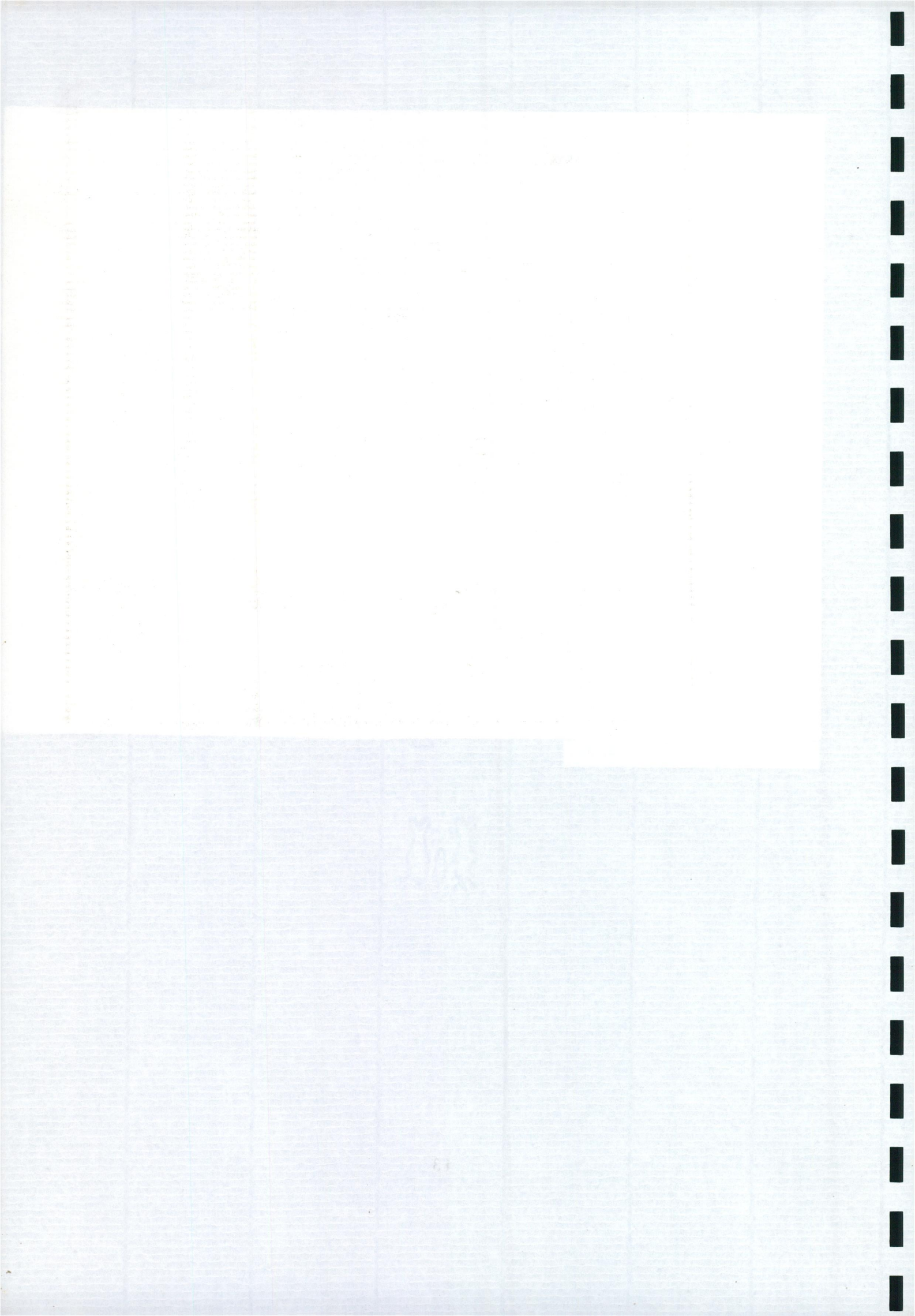
The third notion that distinguishes Hutterian life, is the notion of a timetabled existence. Life in this community is largely governed by a timetable, which I quickly learned when I was rudely awakened at 6am on Monday morning, by the sound of the bell. Breakfast was at 7am in the Hindley household. As I wandered wearily through the Bruderhof, in what seemed like the dead of the night, a young man greeted me with a cheerful "Good Morning". I mumbled something back at him and wondered how he could be so cheerful at 6am on a Monday morning? This stressed the difference between myself and these people.

The children such as Emma leave for school at 8.30am. After breakfast, the women have an hour to do personal chores before the days work begins. This work may be in the laundry room, kitchens, mailroom or sewing room (Fig. 10, 11 and 12). In recent years they have earned their living through the sale of what they call "community playthings"; wooden toys and children's furniture that they manufacture.

At 12.30 they gather together at long wooden benches for lunch and tuck in silently and swiftly, after Grace (Fig. 13). At 1.50pm the Mothers collect their children from the babyhouse to spend time with them before returning to work. Suppertime is at 7.15pm and usually communal. Wednesday is



12. In the Laundry Room.





13. Communal Meals.



14. The House Mother.

family day. After supper at 9.30pm or so, choir practice or meetings commence. Bedtime is at 10.30 or 11pm.

On Saturday mornings the girls clean out the schoolhouse and in the evening take a bath and wash their hair. The men bath and trim their beards. Domestic cleaning takes place on a Friday. Women scrub the floors, wax them and wash the windows. The individual members of the colony lead a very regimented life and do not take decisions on how to use their time, or what to do each day. The housemother gives such orders (Fig. 14).

4.4 Pooling of Resources

Another difference which struck me was pooling of finances and the sharing of a common purse. The notion of "*Gelassenheit*" (According to Pickering, 1982, p59 *Gelassenheit* is a state of obedience to God or the community.) is at the core of all Anabaptist thinking. It refers to the acknowledgement of God as the source of all power. The only way to achieve "*Gelassenheit*", the Hutterites believe, is to abandon all private property, to share all (a concept known as "*Gutergemeinschaft*") and create a colony. This notion finds itself in The Acts of Apostles:

"And all had things common; and they sold their possession and distributed them as they had need" 6

In reality, this means that the Hutterians do not earn any income individually or own property. They are given a few pounds every month as pocket money. At the age of fifteen or so, the girls are given what is called a "hope chest" in which to keep personal items, such as photographs or letters of sentimental rather than material value. Emma informed me that the content of her "hope chest" was less than ten pounds in material value but worth its weight in gold to her. If members are found accumulating wealth beyond these limits they are disciplined by the community.



**'We don't have
the stresses that people
outside have. We don't need
days off or holidays'**

CHAPTER 2: DRESS

1. A Distinctive Dress

As I entered the colony their distinctive way of life was immediately apparent in their old fashioned traditional dress.

Contemporary Hutterite women (Fig.15) wear a modified German peasant outfit. Checked shirt or dress, a basic shift tope , with a white blouse underneath. In winter they may wear a cardigan or sweater over this outfit. Shoes are practical and usually black. Hutterite women are famous for their black and white polka dotted kerchiefs which they wear at all times.

Hutterite men wear dark trousers, usually black, grey or brown. The colour of their shirts also varies but it is often checked. Shoes are again practical. Generally they wear a beard but no moustaches. Moustaches are frowned upon because of their historical association with the military; they are also considered unclean (Fig. 16).

The Hutterite childrens clothing mirrors adult styles in almost every detail. Their dress proportionately replicates that of their parents (Fig. 16 and 17). Thus they look like mini-Hutterites except for the fact that the younger girls (Figs. 17) wear bonnets, usually blue, instead of headscarves.

The Hutterite communities have a very good reason for clinging to a type of dress that goes back some three hundred years. We are all aware that the way people dress symbolises their ideals. Their styles of grooming and dressing are an expression of their beliefs.

As Quentin Bell says in On Human Finery:

"Custom is not to distinguish but to classify" 7



16. Young Hutterite Men.



17. Hutterite Bonnets.

In almost any society, clothes tell us of the sex of the wearer and usually classify men and women into adults and children. Further distinctions of class, occupation, faith and rank are common to most cultures. Where costume is a matter of custom it is in its very nature, opposed to any kind of eccentricity, which is itself considered a breach of custom.

According to the Hutterians, simplicity is of the essence and adornment of the body frowned upon. They do not decorate their hair but wear it neatly pulled back in a bun or plait. They forbid the wearing of jewellery, with exception of a wedding ring. Modesty is biblical. Simplicity and practicality are a blow against fashion. Hanna Hindley told me of how she once went to the theatre and was mistaken for one of the cast of "The Sound of Music".



18. Contemporary Quakers.

2. Who Else Dresses That Way?

Plainness of attire was long characteristic of numerous sects, who were often grouped together as "the plain people". According to The Mennonite Encyclopedia II, 1956, this category once included Quakers, but now only includes the Mennonites, Amish, Hutterites and Old Order River Brethren. ⁹ These groups today and in the past have followed a doctrine of non-conformity to worldly ways. They exist "in" the world but attempt not to be "of" it. This is a result of their literal interpretation of the Bible passages such as II Corinthians 6:7, which states:

"Wherefore came out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord" ¹⁰

Puritanism rests its beliefs on self reliance, cleanliness and decorum of dress. It manifests itself in the moderation of bodily indulgences. Puritan groups like the Hutterians, Amish and Mennonites stress that belief must result in practice. According to Matthew 7:20:

"By their fruits ye shall know them" ¹¹

Therefore, emphasis is on lifestyle and dress. The common view is that:

"The old is of the best and the new of the devil" ¹²

Thus they tend to moderate worldly influences on their personal lives and values. As a result, they are cautious of technology, worldly concepts, such as fashion and general involvement with the world.

I learned from Sheila Pim of the Quaker Museum, Dublin, that the Quaker costume of the seventeenth century, imported from England by the American Quaker's, had considerable influence on the costume of other plain sects ¹³. However the Quakers gradually

but completely lost their plain attire. Sheila also told me that today, most Quaker "Friends" as they are commonly known, continue to dress sensibly, in simply cut clothes of restrained colour but have abandoned the distinctive trademarks of Puritan dress. Joan Kendall tells us that:

"stylized plain dress only lingers now within certain groups of "friends" in the United States" 14 (Fig. 18)

3. Development of Plain Clothing

In the sixteenth century, in areas of Europe when the Anabaptists were found, laws were imposed on society regarding dress. Men of low estate were forbidden to indulge in ostentatious finery. The aristocracy reserved this privilege for themselves. This immediately posed restrictions on dress from the commoner. Also a very real poverty amongst the Anabaptist, who were largely peasants prevented any display of purchasing power. It is therefore understandable that their background strengthened their religious convictions against finery of the dominant upper classes.

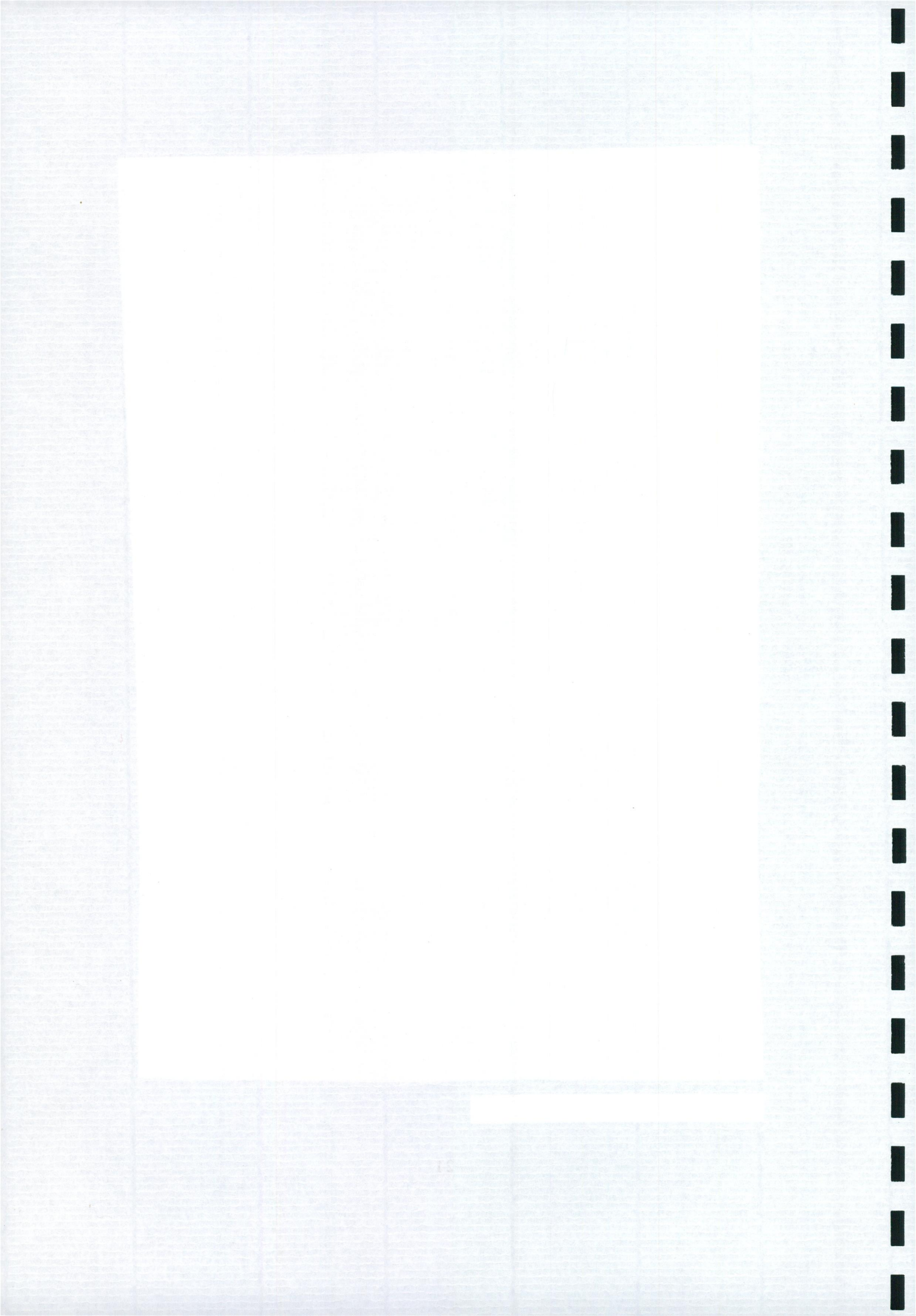
Since the very early Anabaptist days, the doctrine of separation from the world worked powerfully to produce a distinctly non-worldly costume and to restrain the sect from following changes of fashion. Thus it is believed that plain costume may well be merely a carry-over from this common peasant dress, which they subsequently adopted and froze into an unchanging religious costume. A description of the Swiss Anabaptist of the very first days in 1525 by Johannes Kessler says:

"They shun costly clothing, despise expensive food and drink, clothe themselves in coarse cloth, cover their heads with broad felt hats. Their entire manner of life is completely humble." 15 (Fig. 19)

When fashionable ready made clothing became inexpensive and



19. Hutterite Dress in 1588.



available in the nineteenth century, most country people gladly accepted it and became part of the fashion merry go round. A clear distinction became immediately apparent, as the non-plain people began to follow rapidly changing fashions while the simple styles of the plain people clung to, changed little over the years.

The Anabaptists soon began to make specific regulations on clothing; for instance, the Strasbourg Discipline of 1568 included the following:

"The Anabaptists and seamstresses shall hold to the plain and simple style and shall make nothing at all for prides sake." 16

As contact increased with urban culture in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Mennonite leadership became concerned not only with simplicity but also uniformity. No less than two hundred and thirty resolutions were passed on non-conformity in dress by the Old Order mennonite church between 1865 and 1950, according to The Mennonite Encyclopedia II 17. The following is a summary list of costume regulations applied at one time or another, in Mennonite history. 18

"Headdress: For women, kerchiefs or bonnets have been required, and hats forbidden or a specific type of broad beaver or straw hat required; for men requirements have been black hats, broad brim, without crease in crown , or with a flat crown, or caps instead of hats.

Hairdressing: For women bobbed hair has been forbidden, a centre part required; for men, short cut hair has been forbidden.

Overcoats: For women, coats have been taboo in favour of shawls, or only half length coats

allowed; for men long overcoats with capes have been required.

Pants:

For men knee britches or broadfall type (sailor type) have been required.

Dresses:

A prescribed cut (cape dress) has been required, and unfigured cloth of solid colour with full length sleeves, and the dress quite long.

Aprons

Have been required for women, or for wives of Ministers alone.

Coats for men:

Collarless, divided tail or frock coat have been required.

Fasteners:

For men and women buttons have been forbidden, hooks and eyes required for men, pins for women.

Corsets:

Have been forbidden.

Stockings

for women;

Silk forbidden, black colour required, anklets forbidden.

Neckties:

For men forbidden, or required to bow ties instead of four-in-hand.

Suspenders:

For men have been forbidden in whole or in part.

Shoes:

Buckle, lace and button shoes have been required or forbidden, boots required by preachers.

Shrouds:

White has been required. Wedding Dress: floor length and white colour have been forbidden.

Colour:

Bright ~~of~~ light colours have been forbidden, for all items of costume from hats to shoes, both men and women, and black and grey required.

Clothing material:

Silk has **been** forbidden, and home woven cloth required.

Home made

Clothes:

Have been required, rather than store clothes." 19



20. Amish Lack of Colour.

PART II

4. Contemporary Hutterite Dress

This particular Hutterite community in Robertsbridge seems not to have clung rigidly to the traditional modest dress of their ancestors and Amish counterparts.

4.1 Colour

I was surprised to find how liberal they are towards the use of colour in dress. For reasons of simplicity and humility the Amish, whom I visited in 1988, to this day prohibit the use of printed or patterned fabrics in dress (Fig. 20). In contrast, almost all of the Hutterite's womens dresses carried a brightly coloured floral print or check (Fig. 21 and 22). Emma informed me that young girls such as herself are actually allowed to choose from fabric, which is largely brought from a wholesaler in London. 18

Having visited both communities, the visual contrast is striking between the two. To the Amish use of pattern and colour is more of an issue, despite the two sects almost identical origins and beliefs. Thus use of muted tones of blue, brown, purple and green has resulted in a sombre austere palette of colour.

The dark primary colours specified by the "Ordnung" (the Ordnung is a doctrine of rules laid down by the Amish in the early nineteenth century govern behaviour) also dominated the hand knitted products of the Amish women. The knitted ladies socks known as "Wedding Socks" are the only evidence in Amish dress of a fondness for colour or decoration. Plain dress does not allow "fancies"; thus they devised borders above their high shoes only when their dresses were raised, to get in and out of carriages. Otherwise they were hidden.



Colourful Prints!



Chair-hill
pink!

Fig 416

~~Chair-hill~~
~~pink!~~

Fig. 15

Chair-hill pink!



**Children create new combination
to ride, slide, climb, balance,
push and steer . . .**



24. An Amish Quilt: A Daring Contrast of Colour.

Not so amongst this particular community of Hutterites; their fondness for colour and pattern seems not to be an issue. Amongst the Plain People any colour or pattern could be deemed worldly and subject the wearer to criticism and accusations of proud behaviour. According to Fiona, the issue has never raised any questions or doubts as to the strength of their faith. 5

Their Amish counterparts have carried the taboo against printed fabrics so far that it has had a significant effect on their textile arts, particularly their quilts. Because they do not use pattern for shading and contrast, they have been forced to accomplish this effect through the use of colour. The result has been quilts marked by the use of daring contrasts of colour (Fig. 24).

Sheila Pim of the Quaker Library, Dublin 13 told me that in the eighteenth century Quaker dress also prescribed the use of drab colour in their dress. Their colour palette consisted of muted tones of brown, grey, pale green, beige and cream. The library possesses a square of beige fabric from the wedding dress of Irish Quaker Lydian Mellor, who married in 1779. Also in the library are two plain brown maternity dresses which unfortunately have no dates attached.

4.2 Aprons and Black Hats

Pickering spoke of Hutterian dress in 1982 and said:

"The men usually wear black trousers supported by braces. The colour of shirts ranges, but it always white on Sundays. The women wear old-fashioned (but today hardly so long) skirts, blouses and large aprons. Hutterite women are famous for their attractive black and white polka dotted kerchiefs which they wear at all times.... for Sundays there are "best clothes"; which for men include



25. Amish Aprons (1991).

black trousers and a black felt hat" 20

The question which I immediately longed to ask on my arrival at the Bruderhof was "Where is the apron that is considered such a fundamental item of Puritan women's dress? What happened to the men's black felt hats which I expected to see? The ankle grazing skirts? The men's suspenders and the predominance of white on shirts on Sundays?"

In public, the Amish women of Lancaster I came across still aprons like that in (Fig. 25) Sarah Stoner, an Amish friend of my aunts still fastens a triangular apron to the back of her dress. This apron is still an important part of the Amish women's dress, in safeguarding her modesty. The cape disguises the contours of her breasts, while the apron appropriately conceals her abdomen.

Photographic evidence exists (Fig. 26) showing that Hutterite women once wore aprons to cover their abdomens out of modesty, at least until the 1920's. However in recent years they have chosen to discard this fundamental item, possibly out of practicality. Fiona Hibbs, who joined the Bruderhof in 1989 informed me:

"I've never seen any aprons; not as dress, only is someone wears one at home and walks out in it. I think they are not worn any more to cut down on laundry. The Old Hutterians used to have one day a week when they washed and ironed only aprons" 5

On the black and white shirts and ankle grazing skirts she says:

"The men don't wear hats, maybe in Winter on Sunday. Some wear their skirts at calf length, instead of the old rule of no more than 8cm above the ankle. The men





27. Baseball Caps and Rubber Boots!

wear white shirts sometimes on Sundays" 5

4.3 Small Scale Fads and Fashions

I was further disappointed to learn from the housemother at Robertsbridge that despite denouncement of worldly fashions, it is not uncommon for small scale fads and fashions to surface in the community. At one stage in the Seventies, embroidery on womens shirts and childrens dresses became so popular that the children began to beg their parents for new dresses. Said Fiona:

"Oh yes, we're all human. People have their likes, etc. Our highschoolers obviously run into fashion as they attend the local school. I would question some of the footwear, but it's not my department." 5

Fig. 27 shows Hutterite children wearing baseball caps and rubber boots. Crochet also had its fashionable period, in baby blankets and hats. The children are taught to crochet at school on the Bruderhof. However the upsurge interest was stamped out when it came to the attention of the elders.

In 1988, while in Lancaster I discovered two of my friends were actually Amish, whom I only met at weekends. They stored their leather jackets and jeans in friends' houses. On weekdays they donned the traditional Amish costume, cooked and sewed, while at weekends they slipped away quietly to meet their boyfriends and hit the clubs!

5. Suggested Reasons for the Decline in Traditional Dress

5.1 Persecution

One reason I was given by Johnny Robinson 22 for the change in Hutterite dress in recent year was that of persecution.

Rejection of adornment served as a means of symbolically tying the Hutterian community together all over the world. Agreement on bodily indulgences reinforces a common consciousness and course of action. As a result of the refusal during World War II to do military service in the United States they faced restrictions over their purchase of land. Throughout the war, they felt that they were becoming an increasingly conspicuous group and thus the object of much hostility and subject to violence. During the years that followed the could hardly be told apart from the everyday commoner, until 1974 when they reunited with the American Hutterites. It was then that the subject of dress again became an issue. However they never regained the strict dress code they had lost.

5.2 Practicality

Although Hutterite clothing is practical in the light of their work it was evident to me, that in this particular Bruderhof, practicality is emphasised, more than amongst other plain groups, such as the Amish. In fact members feel that their contemporary mode of dress has evolved out of a combination of practicality, comfort and convenience, more than modesty alone. I could not help feeling that in recent years convenience and economic factors have influenced their style of dress. I was left with the distinct impression that they were drifting away from the fundamentals of modesty, once at the very core of their existence.

In recent years, it was become standard practice that fullness be incorporated into the young girls skirts to allow for movement when playing "Speedball" (a combination of football and rugby) and climbing trees. Woollen garments are deemed too difficult to handle in the laundry room. So to is poly-viscose, which has a tendency to shrink and needs special treatment. Cottons and poly-



28. Wearing Trainers!



29. A Selection of Footwear.

cottons are favoured as they retain their shape, need minimum ironing and can be put straight onto the hangers.

5.3 Economic Puritanism

On this Bruderhof the Puritan philosophy of "self reliance" seem's to have given way in some instances to twentieth century economic thinking. This became apparent as I came across members wearing trainers (Fig. 28 and 29). They were not Reeboks or Nike but a less expensive, unbranded trainer. Nonetheless this displayed to me a weakness in the philosophy they seemed to pride themselves upon. I also learned that not all clothes are manufactured in the sewing room. In fact most of the mens clothing and womens shirts are purchased in department stores such Marks and Spencers (Fig. 30, 31 and 33). The head of lead of the sewing room informed me that the making of these garments proved time-consuming and a fruitless task when similar items could be purchased for less money and time. I also witnessed the wearing of shop-bought cardigans and teenagers wearing sweatshirts with "Yale" and "Harvard" plastered across their chests. Also corduroy trousers are worn and shop bought anoraks (Fig. 32), the reason given for their wearing is that of warmth!

6. Decline Amongst Other Plain Groups

The Mennonite Encyclopedia II claims that plain clothing has declined rapidly in the Mennonite Church as well as amongst the Quakers since the 1950's 22. Most women in many communities have abandoned head coverings and no other distinctive dress is apparent (Fig 34). In the 1960's and 1970's most Mennonite congregations in Eastern America dropped dress regulations altogether. However the Old Order Mennonites, like the Old Order Amish, born before the 1940's still continue to observe old standards .



30. Tracksuit and Jeans!



31. A Variety of Shop Bought Shirts.

22

"Hawaii 1891"



32. Shop Bought Anoraks.

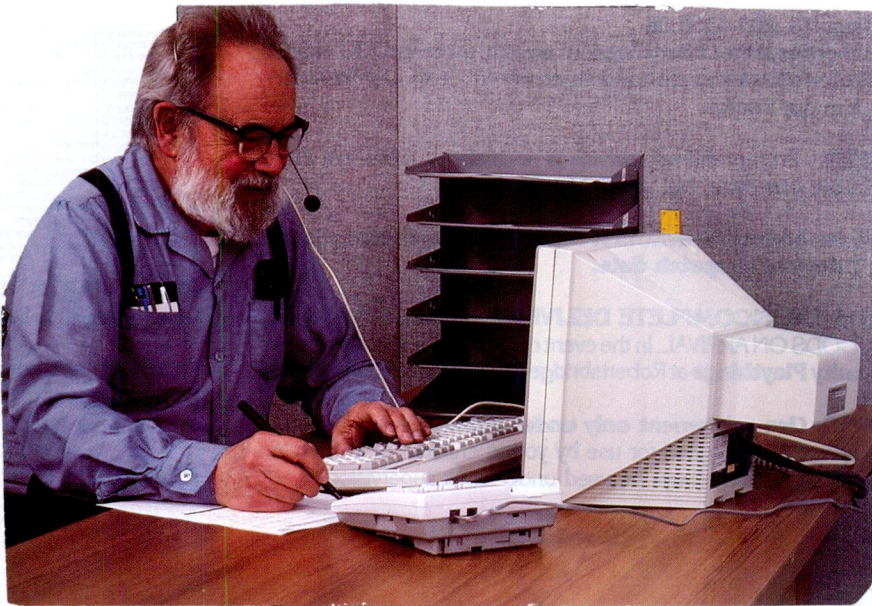


33. Contemporary Hutterite Childrens Clothing!





34. Two Mennonite Women (1967) at the Mennonite World Conference, Amsterdam.



At the Computer!

8

This loss of identity is apparent in many other areas of Hutterian life. I came back from a walk through the Bruderhof, only to find Ralph Hindley experimenting with his £300 Yamaha synthesizer keyboard. The use of computers is not uncommon either (Fig 35 and 36) Ralph also revealed, to my astonishment that he had spent most of his week playing computer games on the main office computer. Furthermore, for breakfast I was served Rice Krispies, followed by toast and instant coffee.

It seems that powers of contemporary society have overwhelmed their ability to remain separate from the world. This has resulted in a loss of a sense of mission and unfortunately a partial surrender of basic Puritan doctrine. This loss of sense of spirituality may be due in part the loss of a sense of separation from the world accompanying cultural and religious assimilation. Within the last century the availability of cheap factory clothing may be partially responsible for the loss of weaving and clothing manufacture at home. The movement of many groups from rural to urban communities may also be a factor, coupled with the growth in higher education and the introduction of radios, television and mass media. Also, perhaps the relaxing of traditional authority and the various forms of enveloping modernity are partial responsible.

CHAPTER 3

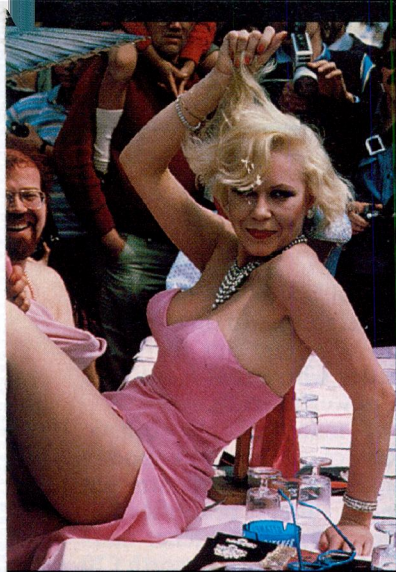
1. Contemporary Society's Obsession with Appearances

Even this morning on my way to college the word "style" appeared again and again. I came across it in the newsagent, on numerous magazine covers, ranging from fashion and cars to interior design. It flashed by me on the side of several buses, and stared down at me from billboards over building sites and apartment blocks.

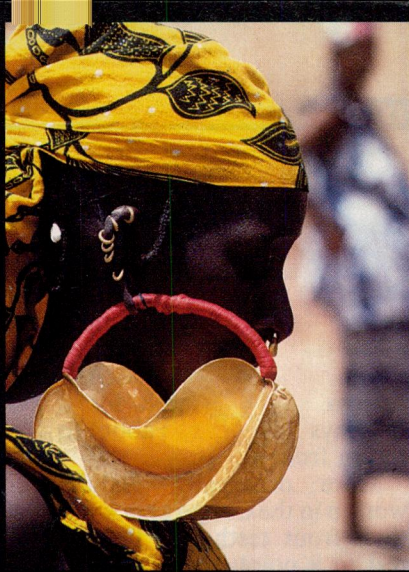
Design of one sort or another is affixed to almost every conceivable commodity: clothing, cars, furniture, even tins of peas and handed out to the public through various media forms. Even grocery shopping is now a question of which product is most attractively packaged. However the industry of fashion is the worst culprit of all.

The fashion industry in Western society encourages us to adopt certain styles of beauty and I believe it has been taken too far. As a designer, I see how the media of fashion offers us extraordinary methods of achieving the ideal form, such as liposuction, collagen lip injections, right through to the wearing of six-inch stiletto heels. This image is seen in stark contrast to the plain people's view of modesty in dress and decorum at all times.

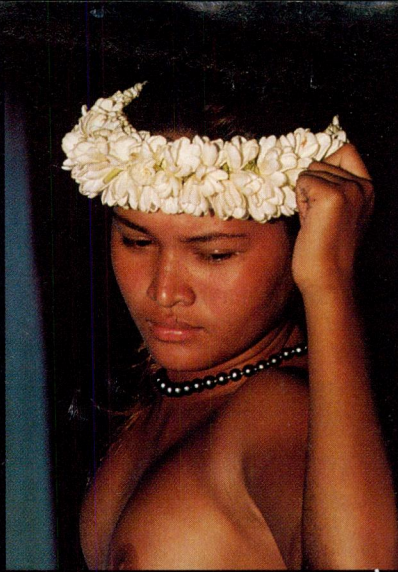
This obsession with appearances spans the globe. According to Marie Claire magazine 23 the Tuareg people of Saharan Africa overfeed their daughters to increase their weight. Their ideal weight is 23 stone, for a height of five foot five. If a Tuareg girl remains thin she jeopardises the social position of her family. In Papua, new Guinea most European women would have no fear of sexual harassment as the Papuans see us as ugly, since our breasts are firm and high. There sagging breasts, dangling to the knees are considered beautiful.



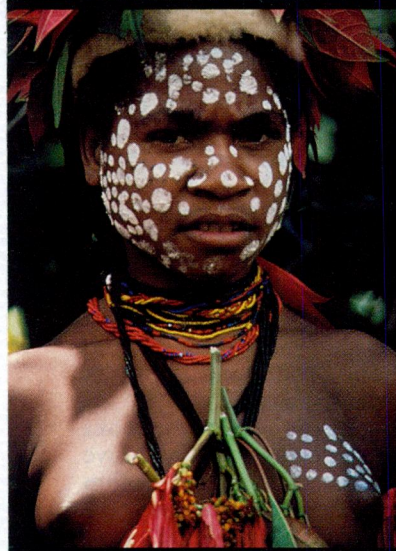
Curvaceous in Cannes



African adornment



Garlands in the hair, Polynesia



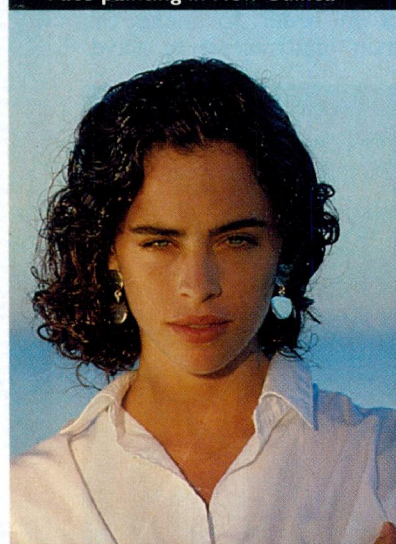
Face-painting in New Guinea



Nose-beading in India



Japanese-style punk



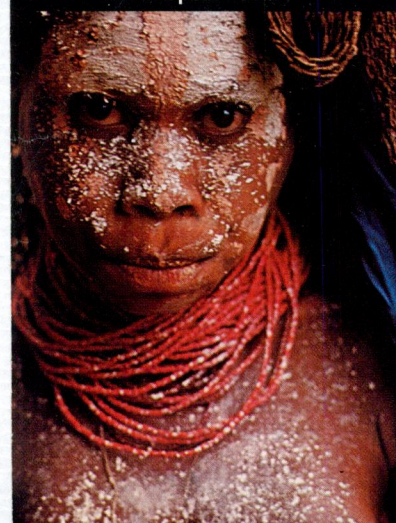
A European ideal



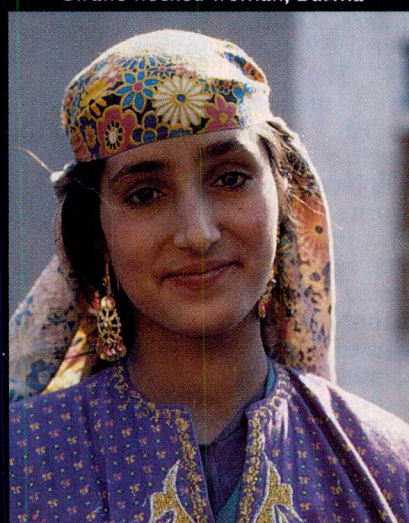
Giraffe-necked woman, Burma



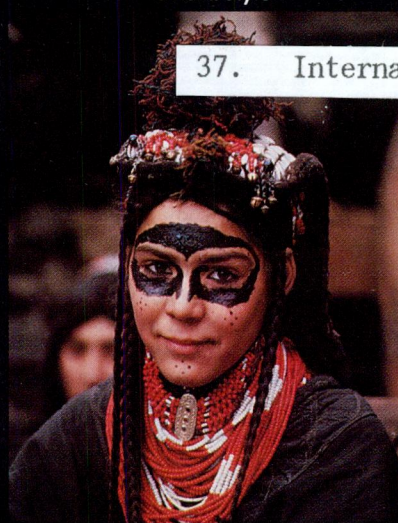
Geisha style



Mud-flecked woman from New Guinea



Middle Eastern perfection



Ornate Kalash adornment

The concept of beauty varies from society to society., and the ugly duckling of one is considered the swan of another (Fig 37) women from Nonivak Island, Alaska wear on their lower lips what looks like a beard but is in fact a fringe of ivory beads. The Wodaabe women from Nigeria wear facial tattoos and Baluba women from Congo knock out their front teeth.

However European women tend to alter their looks more superficially and more expensively. According to a survey in Marie Claire magazine 23 the British spent £15.5 billion on cosmetic toiletries in 1989. In the United States every shopping mall has several false nail salons where the local beauty queens have their acrylic nails serviced weekly. But why this obsession with appearances? Surely it has gone too far?

2. Why This Obsession?

No matter how far we go back in time, we come across tribes who delight in dressing up. It is by no means a new phenomenon. Even the American Indians as a form of decoration wore feathers in their hair. The main reason why we dress up, I believe, is to fortify ones self esteem through the attraction of admiring glances as a result of decorating the body. Men have chosen their lifelong partners throughout history on the basis of their attractiveness. Thus it is our duty as fashion designers to make women and men appear as attractive as possible, but how far should we go?

The essential purpose of modesty is utterly opposed to this notion. it tends to abstain from emphasising our attractiveness and refrain from drawing attention to ourselves. The modest Hutterite of Amish women is one who does not use her bodily excellences for the purpose of drawing attention to her sexual attractiveness. Instead she covers her hair with a bonnet (Fig 38) or headscarf (Fig 39) only to be seen by her husband, and Amish women cover their midriff with an apron. She is utterly against the wearing of beautiful clothes, too few clothes or



38. Amish Bonnets.



39. Hutterite Scarves.

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27
1/10/68
SCOTT

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form-fitting garments, which may reveal rather than conceal the body's curves. They aim both at the prevention of desire and the prevention of disapproval. The Puritan stand on the matter is a protest against the use of clothing for such purposes and is utterly condemned. The prophet Elijah speaks of the morality of women who continually try to enhance their attractiveness.

"Moreover the Lord saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes..... The Lord will smite with a scab of the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion..... and it shall come to pass that instead of a sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent and instead of well set hair baldness" 24

When asked about modesty in their dress, Claudia informed me that the Hutterites believe that if we look to the Bible, the Genesis story of Adam and Eve tells us the fundamental reason for the wearing of clothes is modesty 25. The couple make themselves aprons from fig-leaves, having found themselves naked. It has also been noted by many historians that loincloths were the first appearance of clothing. People began to tie pieces of cloth around their midriffs. And for what other reason then modesty?

3. Suggested Reasons for this Obsession

3.1. Fear of Anonymity

The first suggested reason for society's obsession with appearances may be that of fear of anonymity. We cannot ignore that an ongoing lament over the past century has been that of aloneness in the world. This desire to be noticed and appreciated has turned into a desperate thirst for recognition.

"The function of clothing as a badge of social rank is

enormously expanding" 26

Our natural desire to be noticed can be compared to a minor desire for fame.

"You will be seen, you will be noticed. The symbols you display your most valuable possessions, will permit you to stand apart from the crowd" 27

The so called Yuppie syndrome of the 80's (Young Urban Professional) is a direct result of this desire for recognition. These young professionals surrounded themselves with the latest in designer clothing and other commodified symbols of the good life. Hanna feels genuinely sorry for those individuals who "are so insecure in themselves that they wish only to be noticed for their position in society. She says they seem to think they will "be someone if they wear this or have that" 28 She once caught sight of a woman with her six inch stiletto heel, caught in a grate on the platform, about to board a train at Robertsbridge. She laughed as she recalled what a pathetic sight it was.

3.2 Style as a Tool for Constructing Personality

Alongside this fear of isolation, style is also understood as a tool for constructing personality. Style or appearance is a method of saying who one is, or wishes to be. We are constantly reminded that dress sends out signals about our personality, lifestyle and sexual availability. The current market in stylized goods provides us with a vast palette of symbolic meanings to be juxtaposed in the assembly of a public self. We wield and bend this public self to attract potential partners, gain new friends, even to jump that supermarket queue.

3.3 An Essential Ingredient for Success

Another major contributing factor to our preoccupation with image is due to the fact that matters of dress have become essential for success. Our income goes into our clothing out of all proportion with other things, but if social advancement is our aim then it is a must.

During my visit to Lancaster, a friend of my aunt, who had left the Amish community some years before, told of the problems she faced when searching for a job. She found she had no luck until she eventually wore a short skirt, make-up and heels, all of which she was totally unaccustomed to.

Harriet Beecher Stowe claimed that:-

"The exterior of life is but a masquerade, in which we dress ourselves in the finest fashions of society, use a language suited to the characters we assume:- with smiling faces, mask aching hearts / address accents of kindness to our enemies, and often those of coldness to our friends. The part once assumed must be acted out, no matter at what expense of truth and feeling"
28.

3.4 An Identity Crisis

This 20th century obsession has resulted in a war being waged on both body and mind. An identity crisis has arisen which has placed us on an insecure footing in society. Society seems to have forgotten who they are, according to Fiona of Robertsbridge.

"They focus on their external qualities and seem to forget about the beauty inside. We don't have the stresses that people outside have" 2

To the Hutterite women I spoke to the notion of a fashion designer such as me "making a living from other peoples

weakness" as Claudia put it, seemed utterly ridiculous and pitiful. What has come to fruition is a society in which stylized goods are functioning as a personal identity kit. It has resulted in a class primarily defined in consumptive rather than productive terms. As Ewan puts it in "All consuming Images"

"One of the most hazardous consequences of suppressing bodily experiences and themes in adult life, may be a diminished ability to /who and what we are. The expansion of our actual identity, requires greater recognition than our sense of internal space, as well as the space around us." 29



40. A Shaker Inspired Interior.

A

CHAPTER 4

PART I

1. The Increasing Popularity of the Puritan Look

In almost every conceivable area of design from interior and product design right through to fashion and music, we see evidence of an increasing popularity of the "Puritan look". In such magazines as Interiors and House and Garden we constantly come across rooms sparsely furnished with sturdy Shaker and Amish artifacts. Front rooms are marked with versions of the quaint slat back chairs of the Shakers and the intricate quilts of the Amish (Fig 40). Although only a handful of the Shaker community survives, in the United States the boom in Quaker artifacts has sparked off reproductions of the sturdy spartan furniture.

If we flick through any issue of Vogue or Elle magazine we stumble across innocent waif-like models clothed in pretty pinafores and plain shirts (Fig 41). So where did this popular image come from?

2. Development of the "Amish/Puritan" Look

Today, as in the past, Puritan homes such as those at Robertsbridge reflect their commitment to a simple and honest life. The walls are painted white or pale green and devoid of decoration except perhaps for a calendar, a painting by one of the children, or a keepsake given by someone close. In recent years it has become popular to cover the floors with linoleum. However in the past, floors were of polished wood. Carpet is not accepted. The floors are so clean and the walls so white that on entering the room the glare would almost blind you. Homemade rag rugs often grace the floors. The windows are so clean it appears that there is not glass in them. The curtains and table linens are spotlessly white and furnishings are simple and modest. The living room furniture usually consists of comparatively few upholstered chairs, a rather uncomfortable

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41. The Puritan 'Look'.

46

looking sofa, a long wooden table with plank seat chairs or perhaps benches. All the apartments I visited had something of the air of a chapel about them, the walls all white, the windows all clean.

This Puritan ideal of modesty has fostered a way of life in which its members aspire to happiness through self fulfilment, family and friends. They are cautious of technology and the gathering of materials is seen as an act of pride and thus to be avoided. This restraint and austerity of the "Plain" way has brought about the evolution of a unique decorative culture. Their relative isolation from the outside world has retarded the pollution of their Art forms such as quilting, tapestry and the production of rag-rugs. Also their way of life had provided plenty of spare time for the production of such crafts. As a result of this situation they could ignore the decorative trends of the world and experiment with their own colours, patterns, and motifs. This in turn resulted in a decorative material culture that is neither over decorative nor over austere but reflects the lifestyle of these people and the harmony they experience with nature.

According to Daniel McCauley

"What is now recognized as an "Amish" or "Puritan" look began to emerge in the late 1800's in the decorative art forms of the North American Amish." 30

Around the 1850's there was a growth in the numbers of the Amish community in the Eastern United States. As a result the community became more self-sufficient, and could afford to utterly reject worldly influences. This withdrawal from the world caused their Art forms to take on a more distinctive "Amish look". A unique use of colour, pattern and motif began to become apparent in their quilts, rag-rugs and door-towels.

Around the some same time the Shakers of North America also

developed a definite culture of their own, for much the same reasons. They were also a people withdrawn from the world and its influences who became increasingly independent and thus developed a distinct culture based upon their own code of ethics. Their philosophy of "usefulness" runs through all Shaker design. Carpets and picture frames gather dust and pictures were deemed useless. These people were strict utilitarians. In all they did, their first inquiry was "will it be useful?".

3. Suggested Reasons for the Popularity of the Puritan "Look"

3.1 Trustworthiness

One reason, I believe, for the increasing popularity of the Puritan look is the fact that all of their images of simple, functional furniture, plain tunic tops and simple linen pinafores are associated with trustworthiness. In the nineteenth century the Shakers were spoken of in their neighbourhood as

"honest, truthful, fairdealing people..... Their outdoor deacons are by no means dreamers in their worldly affairs, they know how to make a bargain always getting the highest prices for their products which are generally of the best quality." 31

Likewise, the Amish are known as the "gentle people" and their handicrafts are equally respected. Interior designers leapt with enthusiasm onto the minimalist style in the late 1980's and there has been an upsurge in interest ever since. Nothing but faultless craftsmanship was tolerated. The Quaker Philosophy, according to Demming, is that of

"Usefulness above all else, no excessiveness, in either line nor mass, restraint always, strength

proportion - the most assiduous care that the essential function of the piece should be insured."³²

Many fashion designers have produced collections inspired by the Amish look. Irish designer Mariad Whisker produced a Spring/Summer collection in 1988 inspired by the Amish film "Witness" (Fig 42). According to Mariad:

"My collections have always had a simple unstructured and uncluttered basis, and I felt that the Amish look was quite easily translated into the type of style I like to produce." ³³

Paul Costello and John Rocha also produced Amish inspired collections in 1988 and (Fig 41) well illustrates how fashion magazines continue to style fashion pages based on the Puritan look.

3.2 Representation of an Honest Life

A second reason I feel, for its popularity is the fact that these images represent an honest life, striving for the pure and simple in life. This image is in stark contrast to the reality of the world we live in. I feel it is a reflection of the social consciousness of the world. Perhaps we feel guilty at the sight of our overstuffed living rooms and bulging wardrobes, and it represents a small step towards repentance. It gives us a little comfort, in fooling ourselves that we may be on the right road to getting our priorities right, no matter how superficial. We like to think we are humbler than we really are, less greedy than we really are. I believe it is a step back towards old spiritual values. If the Eighties were about excess, then the nineties are concerned with form and function. Mariad Whisker feels the spirit of the nineties has become less capitalistic and more environmentally caring. Thus she feels:



"The Amish and Mennonite philosophy which has always reflected a respect for all aspects of life, would obviously be the attitude to be expressed by those who care in the nineties" 33

It is this strength and simplicity of Puritan design which appeals to the masses. As Tim Lamb from The Shaker Shop in London puts it:

"All Quaker things have meaning to them and although it sounds strange in this day and age, that really is a lot of their attraction." 34

This revival looks as though it will last, as the high quality reproductions of contemporary carpenters such as Lawrence Mackler are built to last. According to New Yorker Steven Werther, owner of the chain of "Portics" country furniture stores, the Shaker construction ethic was to:

"Build it to last a thousand years but as though you might die tomorrow." 35

CHAPTER 4

PART II

4. The Increasing Popularity of the Puritan way of Life.

In our society where materialism and notions of personal style are rampant, not only has puritanism had its influence on interior design and fashion but the puritan way of life itself has become increasingly attractive to many. So attractive, in fact, that Hutterites in Robertsbridge estimate that a new Bruderhof will be needed ever three years to accommodate newcomers.

In 1989, 41 year old Fiona Hibbs, her husband and 2 children (Bernard and Oliva) saw the sign outside the Bruderhof in Robertsbridge whilst passing one day. Fiona, a former nurse, admits she had no desire to live in community, but had read a book on Jakob Hutter (the founder of the Hutterites) and was curious. When asked about their move by Sky Television, the told them:

"The first time we same for a week we sold our house and the bulk of our possessions. It was an absolute joy to get rid of all the possessions we'd got. I mean we'd got enough to outfit another community almost." 36

Her husband commented with:

"My wife sold the lawnmower, a brand new lawnmower for five pounds, about three hundred pounds worth." 36

They came back for nine weeks, went back outside for sixteen months and finally came back to join officially in 1989.

What attracts people to this lifestyle is the fact that they can be free from the stresses and strains of ordinary life. It was at 6am on that first Monday morning, upon meeting the cheerful

young man that I first realised how fulfilling this lifestyle really is. Fiona explains:

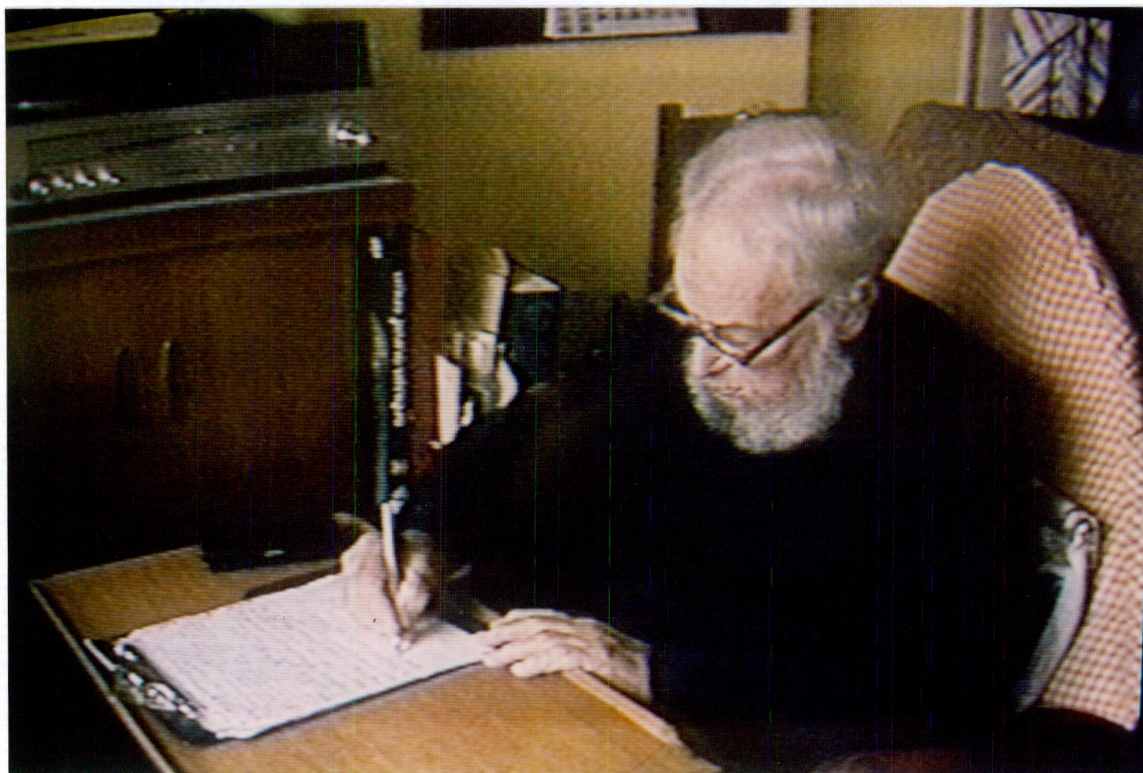
"We don't need days off or holidays, we want to be here..... a holiday is something you have because you want to escape your work We don't have a need for that here. In fact you have a couple of days off and its good to get back to work." 2

There are few people in modern society who do not feel the need for the occasional day off, no matter how dedicated.

5. Suggested Reasons for the Increasing Popularity of this Way of Life

5.1 The Importance of Family

Even the most casual of observers realizes that the 20th century family is in serious trouble. There has been in recent years a serious increase in numbers of failed marriages, abused or neglected children and broken families. Society's response to this dilemma seems to be that institutions such as schools, day care centres and youth programmes should take the place of the family. They are expected to teach sex education, drugs and Aids education and to be almost wholly responsible for our childrens development as human beings. Along with the demise of the family, other influences such as M.T.V. and cinema contribute significantly to the corruption of our young. Cinema and television in particular tell our children that sex is expected of them, and alcohol is acceptable. Sellers of cars, and clothes spend millions each year to entice children. A Calvin Klein executive once said that his advertisements are designed to directly challenge parentental control 37.



43. Controlled News.



44. Emma at Choir Practice

One of the main attractions of this lifestyle is that on the Bruderhof children are not subjected to such influences. There are no televisions, one radio and one computer supposedly for office use only. At night the community is quiet, for here there are no pubs, or clubs, no fast food restaurants or police stations. Of the many buildings, on the Bruderhof, not one is foul or noisy. A happy quiet reigns. Johnny Robinson feels:

"There is lots of rotten stuff on the T.V. I would want the children to have free access to it." 36

News is also controlled. Johnny reports the news from the outside world, having listened to the news bulletins on the radio and edited it. (Fig. 43).

"You heard people murdering each other and that short of thing. Naturally I wouldn't want to report it" 36

While most twentieth century teenagers on a Saturday night are flirting with all kinds of damaging influences, sixteen year old Emma plays scrabble, attends choir practice, or plays speedball in the yard. (Fig. 44)

Amish Mennonite and Hutterite communities all hold family and inter personal relationships in high esteem. Family life is the core of the community. Community life is fostered through frequent visits to relatives and friends within the community. This extended family provides much of the structure and support needed to children to develop into healthy, responsible citizens, without the damaging effects of the likes of television and cinema.

5.2 Security

Another reason for the popularity of this way of life is that communities such as these have no fear of unemployment

or retirement as work is plentiful. They do not accept the old age pension or unemployment benefit from the government. This sense of security is another reason for the attractiveness of this way of life. Housing, food and clothing are all provided for from the common purse.. They are ensured enough for a simple existence. Any member who falls into difficulty is looked after by the community. However this way of life should not be used as a hedge against inflation or recession. Says Jerry Voll:

"If people come from that then they're on the wrong track." 36

Equally it is not intended as a form of retirement or a haven from the troubles of life. Says Johnny:

"We came because we couldn't see the answers in any of the other things we were doing outside, and not because of financial difficulty." 36

5.3 Crime

Hutterite colonies have been as free from crime as they have from poverty.

"No one has ever been known to have been murdered, nor has there been any case of rape. Only one or two people have been known to commit suicide, and a tiny number have been found guilty of embezzlement of funds."38

Pickering also claims that there is relatively little schizophrenia, (common in today's society) found amongst the Hutterites. Few suffer from loneliness or delusion. However psychologists report that the illness they ²ten to suffer from is that of "*Anfechtung*" (*Anfechtung* is a state of depression

arising from guilt, experienced often to religious groups). Amongst a congregation as large as these, their record of illnesses is remarkable and can only be attributed to their stress free life.

CONCLUSION

What of the Future?

Certain changes have begun to appear in Hutterite life in recent years that would challenge the traditional picture. The likes of the instructions of shop-bought clothing and Yamaha synthesizers all raise the question of their future and doubts about their faith. However the one remarkable characteristic of the Hutterites is that they have continued to survive without splitting into splinter groups, unlike the Amish and Mennonites, who have split many times.

The future of the Hutterites, I expect is a positive one. Population growth is rapid with many such as Fiona Hibbs joining from the outside. Also the average family on the Bruderhof consists of about ten children as the doctrine of birth control is similar to that of Catholic church. Thus the colonies are brimming over with young people. Johnny Robinson estimated that approximately 45 per cent of the Bruderhof at Robertsbridge is under seventeen years of age 21. Thus between those born into the community and recruits from outside their survival at least in numbers is inevitable.

However the Hutterites do not seem shrewd enough to realise that large numbers joining from the outside could threaten their moral structures. Those unaware of the finer details of Hutterian life could do more harm than good.

Another consequence of the population growth is that as they grow in numbers the Hutterites will need either to acquire more land to extend existing Bruderhof's or we may see new colonies venturing into new parts of the world. Within the last five years a small Amish settlement has based itself in Dunmore East, Co Waterford.

There is also the possibility that they may begin to adopt some

form of birth control, in a way that is advocated for Roman Catholics. However an official policy on the legitimacy of birth control unlikely.

In contemporary Amish, Mennonite and Hutterite life, there seems to be a general understanding of what is accepted and what is not. In many colonies no formal doctrine exists to guide its members, and they have witnessed the subversion and influence of outside forces. Young Amish boys have been known to get drunk while in charge of a horse and buggy, while the girls have been known to swap their aprons for a swimsuit on the beach. There seems to be a recognition amongst parents that if they are too strict on their children they may leave. However I believe other factors make it difficult for them to leave: friendships, close family ties, financial security, the attraction of being given the farm or business by their fathers, the supporting framework of a community and their limited education. All of these social pressures funnel them into remaining Amish or Hutterite.

With the numbers recruited from outside, those born into community and the increasing attractiveness of this way of life, I have no doubt that they will survive. Perhaps they will become increasingly less strict but they will survive. Everything fits together, the people, the colourful flowers, the friendliness, the sound of laughter. I could imagine heaven being like this, at least a small heaven. One could perhaps compare the atmosphere there with that of a holiday camp where old and young holiday together.

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