

## Reviews

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### Builders of the Dawn: Community Lifestyles in a Changing World.

CORINNE MCLAUGHLIN and GORDON DAVIDSON

Walpole, N.H.: Stillpoint Publishing, 1985; [x], 372 pp., notes, bibliography, photographs, maps; \$12.95 paperback.

McLaughlin and Davidson have undertaken the task of explaining what has happened to the communal groups in vogue in the days of Haight-Ashbury. Just as Charles Nordhoff explained nineteenth century communalism to a broader community, so these authors bring to the public a view of lifestyles in "intentional" or "new age" communities. But there is a substantial difference in approach from that of Nordhoff, who was a journalist committed to providing an objective view of alternative lifestyles and beliefs. McLaughlin and Davidson are the cofounders of the Sirius Community in Massachusetts, and, as they say in their introduction, "This book offers a more personal, immediate, and firsthand account of what it is like to actually live in community and why it's such a powerful experience, eternally challenging on every level and deeply rewarding." (p. 7) Rather than seeking objectivity, they "are offering a perception of a new social phenomenon as seen through the eyes of two of its participants who clearly share many of its values." (p. 8)

The main premise of *Builders of the Dawn* is that the communes that survived the 1960's and 1970's have grown strong and are creating innovative approaches to developing a better world. They say communalism is neither dead nor in the hands of crazy, authoritarian "cults," and they seek to provide insight into some of the more innovative ideas that have emerged from these communities into the diversity of the movement. In preparing to write the book, the authors visited some

thirty communities coast to coast. While the authors purposely exclude more authoritarian or survivalist groups, they give a fine overview of communal groups interested in values like "ecological concern, personal growth, and planetary awareness" (p. 5) circa 1985.

While Nordhoff described various groups community by community, *Builders of the Dawn* is arranged topically, so that communities can be compared more easily. After a short historical introduction, the authors discuss specific elements of communal life, including chapters on economic systems, patterns of governance, approaches to relationships, sex and child rearing. Each chapter begins with an overview addressing points at which communities come together and others where they diverge. Then the authors use cases drawn from the various communities to illustrate the variety of approaches taken in addressing common problems. They conclude with a series of "Guidelines for Building Communities," (p. 286) including elements required to make a community strong and a list of resources for prospective communalists, names and addresses of communal groups, networks of communes, and books and other literature.

*Builders of the Dawn* is an important work in that it moves beyond the period of the 1960's when communes were something of a fad to a more mature and studied look at the movement. It provides a valuable update on how the values of the founders of various communities have, at once, changed and remained the same. It is not a scholarly work and appears at times to be almost an appeal for disciples. It is also flawed by its use of language. Much of the text relies heavily on a jargon that relates directly to an earlier time, and, for readers who prefer more standard English, sentences like "Eileen was told by her inner voice in meditation to stop sharing her guidance with the community" are distracting. But, even with these problems, the book is valuable for anyone interested in the present state of communal groups.

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## The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren (Volume 1: Das Grosse Geschichtsbuch der Hutterian Bruder)

THE HUTTERIAN BRETHREN (Translators and Editors)

Rifton, New York: Plough Publishing House, 1987; lxxv, 887pp.; notes; bibliography; indexes; maps; facsimiles; plans; list of place names; \$36.00 hardcover.

This version of the "Chronicle" is the final product of 450 years of scholarship starting with the original seven Hutterite authors to Josef Beck's "Die Geschichtsbuecher der Wiedertaeufer," Rudolf Wolkan's "Das grosse Geschichtsbuch der Hutterischen Brueder," and A.J.F. Zieglschmid's "Die aelteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brueder" to which must be added an abundance of Anabaptist research conducted during the last century. It is also the first volume that translates the original German texts into English and thereby makes the rich historical and religious literature of the Hutterian Brethren accessible to the English speaking individual.

When Rudolf Wolkan produced the first edition of the 'Geschichtsbuch' he discarded the orthographical authenticity of the original and translated it into modern German. His intention was to make his translation available to all living Hutterites. He attempted to produce a historical and religious 'house book' designed to serve the practical concerns of Hutterite communities in the preservation of their heritage.

The present English translation seems to follow the same principle. The translators and editors are converts to the Hutterite faith, the majority of which is not German speaking. The translation of Hutterite Church literature has become a necessity to enable this community to identify with the rich historical and religious past and experience the Hutterites spiritual roots.

As a result the 'Chronicle' continues and enhances the work of Wolkan who researched and cross referenced the personalities and events mentioned and explained the historical and geographical circumstances in footnotes. The present translators and editors carry this task much further. In fact a great deal of Anabaptist scholarship had to be produced to make this book what it is today. The 'Chronicle/ therefore, is more than a translation; it is a well researched and well referenced source of Hutterite and Anabaptist history and religion elevated to the latest level of scholarship. As such it has become more than a 'house book' for Hutterite converts, representing a genuine and significant contribution to Anabaptist research.

There is one, perhaps unavoidable, sad aspect to the book which is not the authors' responsibility. Given the deteriorating state of German, particularly in regard to Church Literature, in many Hutterite colonies, many individuals who have lost the ability to read and understand German tend to switch to English translations. This book will facilitate the trend. It will indeed be a sad moment, when Hutterites have lost their German and will try to understand their history and religion through English translations. What might be useful, even essential, for the non-German speaking convert, might be the loss of the native adherence to that faith.

For the student of Anabaptism or for those interested in communal experiments this invaluable source provides insights into the social, religious, and psychological dimensions of communal existence. It is indeed a living monument to the first dramatic 150 years of communal life. For anyone interested in the evolution of communalism this is the source to be studied.

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## Women in Shaker Community and Worship: A Feminist Analysis of the Uses of Religious Symbolism.

MARJORIE PROCTER-SMITH

Lewiston, New York/Queenston, Ontario: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985; (Studies in Women and Religion, No. 16); xvii, 253pp.; notes, bibliography; \$49.95 hardcover.

Reading again about Ann Lee reminds us that women have indeed had an important part in American communal societies. Their contributions have not only been underestimated, but are also sometimes difficult to understand. Marjorie Procter-Smith describes the development of the Shakers' paradoxical practices and beliefs about women and their roles in the religious community.

The paradoxes revolve around three central issues: the contrast between the key role Mother Lee played in leadership and the later domination of the community by men; the gradual development of belief in a dual god-head (God, the Father, and the Holy Ghost, the Mother) juxtaposed by the maintenance of women in traditionally subordinate work roles; and finally, a revival of women's positions religiously only as the Shakers experience the emotional period of ecstatic worship and visitations from the spirit world.

Procter-Smith puts each of these aspects into the historic context of the time period, describing the Shaker religion as a whole rather than focusing strictly on women. She does an excellent job of presenting general information about the Shakers. She includes a good section on the obscure early period of their development and describes their later shift toward a more formalized, institutionalized religion.

While this historical relativism is an important asset to the book, it leads to some repetition and to a lack of clear organization and continuity. It also overwhelms the expected focus of the book. No clear theoretical perspective is pursued in relationship to women's issues. In the

conclusion, there is no penetrating analysis of why the Shakers, so close to belief in equality for women, still ultimately failed to achieve it. She contends that the segregation of men and women (to encourage celibacy) reduced the contact necessary for each sex to learn the other's role. Further, she suggests the Shakers needed to retain some level of acceptability by imitating the gender roles found in the larger society. Yet she earlier indicates that men were responsible for taking care of the boys of the community, a non-traditional role for this time. Certainly these people were already well outside the framework of the larger society, not only in their radical beliefs about Ann as the second Christ, but also by their unconventional worship services.

This is not to underestimate the contribution made by this book, however. As religious experiences are usually emotionally based, some of these issues may not have any ready, logical explanations. *Women in Shaker Community and Worship* is well worth the reading because it leaves us with the central question: if the Shakers, believers in Mother Ann as a second Christ and a sexually dualistic God, were unable to achieve gender equality, when will it be achieved? "If not now, when? "

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## Mormonism in Conflict: The Nauvoo Years.

ANNETTE P. HAMPSHIRE

New York and Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985; (Studies in Religion and Society, vol. 11); 343pp.; notes, bibliography, index; \$59.95 hardcover.

The "Illinois Phase" of Mormon Church history has been well documented from both the Mormon and non-Mormon perspective. The major focus, however has been to either point blame or avoid fault regarding the eventual demise and expulsion of Mormons in and around Hancock County, Illinois. *Mormonism in Conflict* is a skillful study viewing conflicting points-of-view without passing judgment for or against any particular groups.

Using original documents drawn from a large number of sources, (legislative and court reports, minutes of city and county meetings, records from private lodges, newspapers, private journals and letters, scholarly works, etc.) the author combines sociological research techniques (content analysis and sociological theory) with historiography, providing a valuable contribution to both sociological theory and Mormon / Illinois history. The key to the success of this volume is in the

detached manner the author removes herself from the events using well-established sociological theory following the events to their tragic fulfillment.

Hampshire utilizes several theoretical models regarding the "sociology of conflict" to interpret what happened to the Mormon community in Illinois in its brief nine year sojourn there. The analysis, however, does not attempt to find "the" major cause of the conflict, nor does it adhere strictly to any particular cause of the conflict, nor does it strongly favor any particular theoretical model.

The sociological perspective employed is... neither a rigid nor a closed one. Each chapter introduces the particular concepts which will be employed at each stage of the conflict. It is not the intention to uphold or to smash any particular sociological models or ideas. What is intended is to use sociological concepts to help unpick the situation; to ask more searching questions of the primary sources material, to move more effectively away from the citation of causes towards the explanation of process: in short, to use sociology in an effort to write better history, (pp. 8-9).

Communalism was not practiced by the Latter-day Saints during the Nauvoo phase of their history. However, many of the problems producing mistrust and antipathy between the Mormons and their gentile neighbors are parallel to the problems of many communal groups today, especially the more reclusive bodies, which experience opposition from their neighbors. It is the conclusion of the author that in order to avoid external conflicts, groups should:

... not be elitist, clannish or separatist; should not seek wealth or be immoral; should not be fanatical in their beliefs, or too energetic in their attempts to convert others; their form of collective organization should not be so autocratic as to deprive members of individuality and/or self-determination, (p. 277)

Students of contemporary communal groups such as the Hutterian Brethren, Unification Church, Hare Krishna movement, fundamentalist Mormon communities, or similar groups which isolate themselves from the society at-large, either by their social behavior or by removing themselves from the physical proximity of the larger systems, should benefit from the insights Annette Hampshire provides in her careful analysis of Mormon/gentile conflict in the 1840s.

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## The History of the Kibbutz: Communal Education, 1904-1929.

REUVEN PORAT (JOSEPH R. BLASI, English Editor; Appendix by DAVID MYERS)

Norwood, Pennsylvania: Norwood Editions, 1985; (Volume 10, Kibbutz Studies Book Series [Yad Tabenkin Institute]); xlvii, 209 pp.; bibliographic references, appendices; \$25.00 hardcover.

Reuven Porat's work is best assessed in terms of his framework for analyzing an innovative educational system: (1) examination of the infra-structure of a society in the process of consolidation; (2) identification of a group who, while operating within the larger society, seek to introduce new values and educational elements into that society; (3) examination of external movements and ideological trends that affect local developments. The infra-structure that the author examines is that which the Jewish immigrants to Palestine created during the cycles of immigration from 1904 to 1929, referred to as the "four Aliyahs."

The people who founded the kibbutzim and developed their educational agencies were young Jewish immigrants, many from Germany and eastern Europe who wanted to create the "new Jewish man and woman." Often disenchanted with the traditionalism that characterized their childhood homes, they were motivated by a combination of the Zionist quest for an independent Jewish state and socialism's emphasis on the dignity of labor and human equality. While the larger context included trade unionism, democratic socialism, and Marxism, the founders of the kibbutzim were unique for their communal vision. Shared goals, aspirations, and productivity were part of their plan to create a new Jewish man and woman who would be rural, agricultural, and communal rather than urban, middle class, and entrepreneurial.

Major external events such as World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the appearance of independent nations in eastern Europe all affected the number of immigrants and their motivation in coming to Palestine. However, the liberalism and progressivism of the "New Education" had a significant impact on the emergent communal education of the kibbutzim. "New Education" was often used to identify the progressive theories and schools in the United States and western Europe that developed from 1900 through 1930. The kibbutz educator, David Idelson, developed a philosophy for communal education that incorporated the ideas of the New Education in a format appropriate for cooperative agricultural settlement. Idelson's work-oriented school rested on a theory that stressed labor-related learning activities, the development of the senses and the body, the study of the immediate natural environment, and agricultural projects.

Relying on primary sources such as diaries, letters, and reports, Porat casts his conceptual analysis into a consistently well-documented and a generally readable but occasionally dense narrative. While providing a generally useful account of the history of kibbutz communal education, the narrative at times becomes a rather tedious account of political and

ideological controversies that generated splits within the kibbutz movement. To avoid being lost in the various ideological shadings of the movement, it is necessary for the reader to keep recalling the major generalizations the author seeks to develop. The book is enhanced by Joseph R. Blasi's comprehensive overview which establishes the context for Porat's study and the indispensable appendix by David Myers that identifies and describes the many organizations and persons mentioned in the text.

One in a series of Kibbutz Studies published by the Institute for Kibbutz and Labor Movement Studies, the book is a scholarly work which would be most appreciated by a reader who already has some background in the subject. It is a definite contribution to the history of education and comparative education in that it provides an indepth treatment of the origins of kibbutz education. Those interested in the history of communal societies will find the book useful for its insights into the ideological nature of the Israeli kibbutzim and for its treatment of the relationship of communal education to the status of women in the kibbutzim. While the book does treat childhood in the kibbutz, a more extensive commentary on its founders' attitudes to children and child-rearing would add to the pedagogical analysis.

The book has a useful bibliography but lacks an index.

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