
INTERNATIONAL and HISTORICAL OVERVIEW of INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

A. Allen Butcher, 1989

INTRODUCTION

“Intentional community” is a term used to describe a caring society; a society which cares for its own members and for the people outside of the community, and which cares for the environment we all share. Cooperation and sharing have always been central aspects of human culture, and there is a long and venerable tradition of people working toward a social design which concentrates upon this ideal of a caring society. This, in fact, is a common effort found among many peoples of the world, and in many historical periods.

Richard Leakey presents a theory about the origins of our propensity for sharing in the book, People of the Lake (Avon Books, 1978, p. 137);

People help each other all the time, and they are motivated to, not by repeated calculations of the ultimate benefit to themselves through returned favors, but because they are psychologically motivated to do so. This is precisely what one would expect; over countless generations natural selection favored the emergence of emotions that made reciprocal altruism work, emotions such as sympathy, gratitude, guilt and moral indignation (sic).

Through studying intentional communities in recorded history, many writers have asserted that some strong unifying force such as a religion or a charismatic leader is necessary for the existence of intentional community. Unfortunately, it is this leadership dynamic which gets a disproportionate amount of attention. Yet the truth may be more fundamental than this. Simply the experience of cooperation and mutual services among people will sustain intentional community, with the maintenance of a common focus being just one of many collective

services. The provision of mutual services alone may be sufficient to support community, for as Richard Leakey writes (People of the Lake, p. 120), “Sharing, not hunting or gathering as such, is what made us human.”

Through most of our history, human society has been based upon some form of clan or tribalism. The village or neighborhood was the secondary social group after the family to which the individual was able to identify. Today in countries with a high mobility and a growing prevalence of single-parent families, we are losing both community and extended family. Intentional community, of whatever kind, is the modern method of enjoying our propensity for sharing, and the need for community is only likely to grow through the future.

The effort today is to discover a design for intentional community which makes sense in a highly mobile, educated, industrialized, televised, processed society. Through his anthropological studies, Richard Leakey (People of the Lake, pp 110-111) gives us two “magic” numbers for the basic units of the hunter-gatherer lifestyle. 25 individuals for the local band as a necessary communication and resource limit, and 500 individuals as the “dialectical tribe,” and the smallest breeding population within which bands can operate. Compare these numbers with those which have been found to be operational in contemporary community settings.

In the Danish cooperative “cohousing” communities, the average size is 15 to 33 families sharing central domestic services such as food service, laundry, child care, recreation space, and so on. In the communal kibbutz movement of Israel it has been suggested that 200 to 300 people is the minimum necessary to maintain a full range

of age groups. The insights afforded in the consideration of these issues may have much to do with the future of the community movement.

It will always be important to study the experiences of intentional communities, historical and contemporary, yet there must also be continual efforts made to apply what we know about adapting intentional community to the changing conditions of our world.

A WORLD OF COMMUNITIES

In presenting an overview of the intentional communities movement around the world today, it is necessary to include cooperative communities in which varying levels of private property is maintained, as well as communal communities which minimize private property. Whether an organization of individuals share 99.9% of their wealth or equity, or a mere 5%, it is the act of sharing which creates the sense of community.

However; only those experiences of sharing based upon individual free will are relevant to our topic. The coercive system of state imposed collectivization such as in the Soviet kolkhoz, the Chinese commune and the (later) Tanzanian Ujamaa village programs all represent forced community. There are many examples of indigenous traditions of cooperation which do not rely upon totalitarian control. The Balkan area of Southeastern Europe, for example, developed the zadruga or household of two or more closely related families communally producing and consuming the means of its livelihood.

Historical communities are included for the purpose of presenting contemporary communities in the light of their cultural heritage.

INDIA, CHINA, TIBET

The earliest historical evidence of “intentional community” is the village ashrams in India prior to 500 B.C., and in the fifth century B.C. there were self-sufficient Taoist communes in China, both reported by Benjamin Zablocki in *Alienation and Charisma* (Macmillan, 1980).

Today there are still Hindu Ashrams in India, with many founding branches in North America and elsewhere throughout the world. Examples include Krishna communities and the many yoga community traditions, such as Aum Swarupa Community in Pune. Auroville in south India is a true “planetary village” with 500 people

from 25 nations. Mahatma Gandhi inspired the Indian land trust or Gramdan movement in the 1930s and '40s, which also has been an important influence upon the development of North American land trust communities.

Tibet has a history of at least two-thousand years of Buddhist monasteries. As the monks have been supporting the call for independence from China since 1976, their monastic tradition continues to suffer from Chinese persecution.

MONASTICISM AND OTHER COMMUNAL SECTS

The Essenes in Palestine between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. are the earliest recorded western communal sects, destroyed by the Roman conquest. About this time Christian monasticism was beginning in Egypt, later splitting between eastern and western traditions with the division of the Roman Empire. Both traditions exist today, with various orders of monasteries and nunneries existing in the west, and the Eastern Orthodox monasteries, such as at Mt. Athos and Holy Mount in Greece, representing the eastern branch. Eastern monasticism has always been far more secluded from society than the western monastic traditions.

There were other communal traditions coincident with monasticism. Manichaeism, lasting from 242 A.D. through the 1700s, was a Persian mystical tradition rejecting materialism. The Manichaeans influenced Christian heresies, such as the dualist/Gnostic Bogomils, 900 A.D., and the Cathari of the 11th to the 13th centuries in southeastern Europe, and Islamic heresies such as the Sufis. In Spain in the 1100s the Arab Sufi communities influenced the Brotherhood of the Free Spirit, which itself was an important pre-Reformation era European sect.

The Carmathians of 900 A.D. were among the first recorded communal mutual-benefit societies living on the plunder of other peoples. Their descendants exist today in Yemen in the high mountains of the southern Arabian peninsula. For over a thousand years they have practiced a full equality of women, and no inheritance of material possessions. Today they work their land communally and, reportedly, have no decision-making body other than the entire group. The model of their early lifestyle of violence and plunder through communal organization was carried on by other groups such as the

Assassins of central Asia, the military orders such as the Knights Templar of the Crusades, and the Taborites of the Hussite Rebellion.

In the 1200s and 1300s the tribal economies of west Africa had well developed cooperative institutions. Julian Ellison wrote in "Cooperation and Struggle: The African American Cooperative Tradition," Communities no. 44, June/July 1980;

The caravans carrying gold, salt, steel swords and other goods from the Ghanian, Malian and Songhai empires across the Sahara to the Mediterranean in the European Middle Ages were organized cooperatively. In the small kingdoms of the forest belt along the Gulf of Guinea there were cooperative labor exchanges and rotating credit associations known as *esuse*. These traditions were brought to the Western Hemisphere ... Caribbean *Susu*.

The Waldenses, a communal tradition of 1170 France, still survives as a Protestant sect, although the Beghards/Beguines of the 1200s and the Taborites of the 1400s central Europe failed to survive persecution and war. The 1200s also saw the beginning of the Catholic mendicant orders; the Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite and Augustinian. In the 1200s monasticism reached its height, occupying up to one quarter of the developed lands of Europe, and they exist world-wide today.

The Protestant Reformation of the 1500s encouraged the Hutterites, Mennonites and Amish, all of which exist today in North America, as well as the Jesuits which were charged with carrying out the counter-Reformation Inquisition, most successful in Italy and Spain. The Puritans, beginning in England, were the first Protestant communal sect to settle in North America (1620- 1623).

MEXICO, CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Mexico city includes a few communities or collectives, but information on them is difficult to find. *Krutsio* on the Baja peninsula, and *Los Horcones* in Sonora carry on outreach programs. *Krutsio* is a member of the North American Federation of Egalitarian Communities, and *Los Horcones* is a former member, now the primary model of the behaviorist community, a design inspired by the behavioral psychologist, B.F. Skinner.

Community movements in South and Central America today have often arisen as a result of European immigration, including monastic and other Christian traditions. Various new intentional communities are continually being formed and disbanded in South and Central America by citizens of those countries, but information about them is difficult to find as no systematic research has been made available.

Today the Christian "base communities" are being established in response to governmental and economic pressures upon both the peasantry and the middle class. Phillip Berryman suggests how extensive the movement is in at least South America in his book, Liberation Theology (pp 63-4).

(T)he base communities are a primary embodiment of liberation theology. In Brazil alone it is estimated that there are more than seventy thousand such communities with a total membership of two and a half million people. ... Church base communities may be defined as small lay-led communities, motivated by Christian faith, that see themselves as part of the church and that are committed to working together to improve their communities and to establish a more just society.

Brazil seems to have a number of communities, at least around Sao Paulo, such as the *Comunidade Zen de Sao Paulo*. Columbia also has several communities including; *Finca Los Guadales* near Cartago, the rural *La Atlantida* near Sali, the self- help housing group, *Servivienda*, in Bogota, and a land-reform community of 150 peasant families occupying government or private land, called *Bitaco*. Bolivia has at least one community, called *Agro-Artesanal*, a spiritual/naturalist group near *Sucre*. Ecuador has a spiritual/natural foods center in *Loja*, called *Paradisians*. The Dominican Republic has at least one community, named *Pandora's Box*. Other communities are created by U.S. citizens in countries south of the boarder, such as *Rio Bonito Cooperative* in Belize, and the *Osa Rainforest Reserve* on the *Osa Peninsula* and *Genesis Two Community* in Cartago, both in Costa Rica. Costa Rica also includes *Finca Madre Tierra* in San Jose.

One settlement becoming a model self-help town is *Villa El Salvador*, involving 300,000 people on the outskirts of Lima, Peru. Most large Central and South American cities have extensive shanty-towns, and like many, 70%

of Villa El Salvador's population is under 25 years old. Unlike any other, Villa El Salvador is organized into 110 residential groups of 2,500 people, each with 16 blocks of 24 families. They support communal kitchens with collective purchasing and food service, an industrial park, recreation facilities, high schools and a small college, and health facilities ("Peru's Model Self-Help Town," Christian Science Monitor, 3-16-89, p 12).

ISRAEL

The greatest amount of research in contemporary community has been done for the kibbutz movement of Israel, what Martin Buber in Paths In Utopia called, "an experiment that did not fail." The kibbutz experiment has been a strong influence upon intentional communities through-out the world.

There is a small cooperative settlements movement called moshav ovdim, 38 in 1973, and 14 moshav shitufi settlements. Half of the moshav shitufi have become associate members of the United Kibbutz Movement, although they are not as communal as the kibbutz (see: Jack Yeriell, "Moshav Shitufi — A Kibbutz by Another Name," Kibbutz Studies, Tabenkin Inst., Israel, Feb. 1988). There are also non-kibbutz communities in Israel, including; Herzlyia Commune, in Herzlyia, and Neve Shalom, a mixed Arab- Jewish community.

There are two periods of kibbutz history; 1910 to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, and from 1948 to the present. The present and future is a period of significant change for the kibbutz movement.

In the first period the kibbutz movement aided the rapid absorption of many Jewish immigrants, the peak being in 1947 when the movement reached 7.2% of the Jewish population. Also, until 1948 the number of kibbutz settlements was higher than the number of other rural settlements. The kibbutz was deeply involved in society at large; the arts, the military and politics. As Baruch Kamari wrote in the article, "Involvement of Kibbutzim in Society at Large" (Kibbutz Studies, no. 27, Tabenkin Inst.), "The Zionist movement preferred the kibbutz as a Zionist instrument rather than as an alternative society."

After 1948 the situation changed. Immigration after the Israeli War of Independence was far greater than the kibbutz could accommodate. The military became more professional and more militaristic, and the government moved away from the socialist ideal to a design similar to that of the western welfare state.

The kibbutz movement today (1986, Tabenkin Inst.) includes about 269 settlements and 126,700 people, representing about 3% of the Jewish population of Israel. The kibbutz retains between one-third and one-half of its children, and in some cases is now raising its fourth generation. The kibbutz pattern of growth is now slowing as a number of new problems are being felt. One significant part of this problem is the magnitude of debt that the kibbutz movement accepted during the period when the Labor Government was in power. The New York Times (3-5-89) estimates the indebtedness to equal between \$25,000 and \$30,000 per kibbutz member. Much of this is a result of poorly managed investments in poorly planned industries. A further problem is the kibbutz' egalitarian ideal of rotation of workers, which has resulted in poor utilization of skills, and a lack of professionalism. Finally, the change from communal children's houses to family apartments involved new construction loans.

William Metcalf summarized the challenges facing the kibbutz movement today in the article; "'Crisis', Like 'Beauty', Lies in the Eye of the Beholder," International Communal Studies Association Bulletin, Fall 1988 (Tabenkin Inst., P.O. Ramat-Efal 52960, Israel). These challenges include, a "financial crisis" due to debts incurred from industrialization and the upgrading of housing, exacerbated by acute inflation and very high interest rates. A "management crisis" and "management-demography crisis" due to a relatively low population within the 25-45 year age range which must carry a heavy managerial load. A "demographic-economic crisis" and a "social-demographic crisis" involving a high proportion of the population being in their 60s and 70s, coupled with a slowing birthrate, wherein the few young to middle-aged members must support the many older members. Further, the 30 to 50% rate of retention of kibbutz born youth results in a greater dependence upon recruitment of outsiders, which involves problems of socialization. The "privatisation crisis" involves a greater demand for private ownership, control and consumption, resulting in a high economic cost exacerbating the financial problems and reducing the sense of shared communal ideals. Finally, an "ideological crisis" in which the motivations which led the older generations to kibbutz do not serve the interests of, or are not relevant to the younger generations. Thus, family life becomes more important than community life, and the kibbutz fails to adequately teach the purely socialist-communal ideals.

William Metcalf concludes with the comment that,

“relatively few kibbutzniks are aware of the problems faced by communards in other parts of the world ... if they are in a ‘crisis’ it is a state to which most other contemporary communes can only aspire.”

JAPAN

Mose Matsuba, a former kibbutz member (originally from England) who lived in a Japanese community for a number of years wrote in the Sept. 1985 International Communes Desk newsletter (Kibbutz Artzi, Tel Aviv, Israel),

The (Japanese commune) movement constitute(s) a kind of framework or roof-organization for 30 or 40 communes all over the country The communes themselves, the components of the movement, date back as far as 1905. But the Movement as such dates from no longer ago than 1962. It was conceived by Nobuyoshi Tezuka, a large-scale industrialist, generously concerned with the lives of his 2000 workers, so that he subsequently became called “the Robert Owen of Japan” (note: see Owen in the British Isles discussion below). He was deeply troubled by the plight of the declining Japanese village. ... He ... saw the kibbutz ... as the solution he had long sought for rural Japan. ... with his book, “The New Agriculture of the Kibbutz,” the Japan Kibbutz Association properly came into being in 1963.

At the beginning of 1974, the head office of the (Japan) Kibbutz Association was moved from Tokyo to a rural site ..., and its name was changed to Commune Movement because it was realized that many of the Japanese communes were not kibbutzim, but rather like moshavim ... a sort of loose co-operation in work while having private-house family economics, and it was at least desired to be inclusive.

At this point, the second leading personality of the movement must be brought into the picture. This is Professor Zenzo Kusakari, a professor of education at the Kushiro branch of the Hokkaido University of Education. He too had “discovered” the Israeli kibbutz, in his case from the educational side. ... He became associated with Tezuka-san in general

enthusiasm for the kibbutz as a whole and soon joined the Japanese organization’s governing group.

Owing to his philosophical interests he became closely connected with Yamagishi-kai at about the same time. This association, or “kai”, taking its founder’s name, is the major component in the Japanese Commune Movement, with its (20) kibbutzim, mostly miniature, but with three large ones of 100-300 population, all with joint dining halls, laundries, etc., in their completely unified economies, totaling some 1700 members in the Japanese commune scene of some 2000 in all (as of 1985).

Miyozo Yamagishi died just at the time the (Japanese) Kibbutz Association was starting, so does not in any way belong to it personally. Yet he must surely count as its third main personality ..., since his own movement has been successful enough numerically to become the largest segment of the Japanese Commune Movement as an assortment of communes today.

As of 1987 the Yamagishi Association totaled 35 communities, with the largest being Toyosato with 500 people. They have begun offering training and study visits for 1/2 to 2 years for non-Japanese (Yamagishi Assoc., International Department, Toyosato Jikkenchi, 5010 Takanoo-cho, Tsu-sui Mie-ken, 514-22 JAPAN).

Other Japanese communities reported in The Modern Utopian (“Communes Japan”, Richard Fairfield, Alternatives Foundation, 1972). include; Itto-En near Kyoto, a religious community of 350 people. Atarashiki Mura or “New Village” is a Tolstoy/back-to-the-land community. Ohoyamato or “the religion of Japan” is in the Kyoto-Nara area. Shinkyō, 120 people was founded in 1937 as a result of four families being ostracized by their village (see: Sensei and His People, Sugihara and Plath, Univ. of Calif. Press, 1969). Two other communities were reported by Mose Matsuba as communist-connected but cooperative, rather than communal; Maemoriyama and Hokto (Communitarianity, Feb. 1983), and Matsuba’s Japanese community, “Kibbutz” Akan near Hokkaido. Additionally there is the Hutterian Church of Owa near Kurobane, Japan.

NEW ZEALAND and AUSTRALIA

New Zealand has a number of intentional communities, a few are communal, some are spiritual, others cooperative. At one time there existed a New Zealand Federation of Communities in loose form, but no report of its existence is available since its founding in 1981. A few names of existing communities are: Centrepoint, communal with spiritual leader, 160 people. Riverside, communal Christian pacifist with 60 people. Tui Land Trust, Chippenham, Karuna Falls, Wilderland, Te Whenua, and Ahuahu Ohu. Ohu is the government program encouraging community settlement upon Crown-owned rural land.

Australia also was interested in beginning a government sponsored community project in the mid 1980s. In 1983 the newly elected Labor Government of Prime Minister Bob Hawke,

... brought into public discussion the idea of diverting unemployment benefit money towards a much more constructive purpose, i.e. building new, kibbutz-modeled communities, which could give thousands of jobless young people a source of income as well as a meaningful content to their lives.

An official emissary arrived in Israel in January 1984 — Mr. John James Butler, Counsellor of the Crown, serving as a one-man fact finding commission. Butler, an experienced lawyer, saw another serious obstacle in the broad constitutional independence granted to each state and district in Australia. Communal settlements, even on a small scale initially, would require consent and cooperation of all the various local authorities.... This situation would present any minor authority unsympathetic to such a revolutionary idea, a most convenient way of ... aborting any such attempt from the outset, be it out of a narrow, conservative approach, or with the purpose of going the Socialist government, or from fear that these communes might upset the accepted rules of the game in a capitalist economy.

Yoel Darom, Kibbutz Kfar Menachem, writing in the May 1984 International Communes Desk newsletter.

Since at least the 1960s there have existed a number of

intentional communities in Australia. One of the factors which ended the government's interest in supporting a community settlement project was a report given to the government that many people who lived in community at that time relied upon welfare. This report undermined one of the express purposes of establishing communities, that of building agricultural and industrial jobs for Australian youth such as in the kibbutz experience, and ended any further governmental consideration.

Australian communities continue to exist, a few names; Wyuna near Canberra, Geregarrow near South Grafton, Tagari in Tasmania (Bill Mollison & "permaculture"), Moora Moora near Healesville, Dharmanundra in New South Wales, Yogaville in Victoria, and Coordination Cooperative/Nimbin Community in Nimbin. In the Sept. 1985 International Communes Desk (ICD) newsletter, Athol Park of the Mt. Murrindal Cooperative reported that an Association of Sustainable Communities had been established partly to act as liaison between the government and rural communities.

Bill Metcalf and Frank Vanclay of The Institute of Applied Environmental Research (Griffith Univ., Nathan, Queensland 4111, Australia) have written a book, Social Characteristics of Alternative Lifestyle Participants in Australia (1987), including the information that the average age of Australian communitarians is over 37, that 20% are professionally employed, 5% are self-sufficient, and that the unemployment rate is 8-10% for urban, 15% for small town, and 25-30% for rural communitarians. "This clearly shows that unemployment benefits, while important to participants, are far less significant to this movement than critics have alleged."

EUROPE

There are occasional reports of underground collectives in Eastern Europe which manage to evade the state socialist system, and we may have reason to hope to see positive change in this situation in the future. Some monasteries still exist in Eastern Europe, along with a few other religious societies, such as the Zen centers in Gdansk, Krakow, Lublin and elsewhere in Poland.

Southern Europe has seen significant community efforts. Communities in Italy include: the Acquacheta Valley Communities in Marradi, Green Village in Piazza Amrerina, Adelfia in Boloage, Gelso Verde in Padova, Villa Piaggia, and Damanahur, communal with spiritual

leader and 70 adults, in Canavese. France includes the communities, L'Arche in le Bousquet d'Orb, La Marchon, Las Encantatas in Festes St. Andre, Collectif du Casteru in Cadours, and the therapeutic/production communities network, Collective Reseau Alternatif (CRA). CRA includes as many as 20 communities, most quite small, including Le Coral, Las Carboneras, Le Peyre, La Chamberte and Le Brousse. Longo Mai is a network of communities which supports a strong leader who founded the organization with the concept of reclaiming abandoned farms in the French, German and Swiss Alps.

Yugoslavia today has a worker self-managed economy perhaps the closest to the anarchist model developed in Spain, although in Yugoslavia it was originally imposed from above by the state.

PORTUGAL AND SPAIN

Little information is available about cooperatives and communities in Portugal. An information source is, Ventos E Mares, Remedios, 2520 Peniche, Portugal. Communities in Spain include: Puertas Aberitas in Mallorca, the Lakabe Community in Navarre/Euskadi, and the Palma Zen Center in Palma de Mallorca.

In Spain in the early 1930s there arose a movement of anarchist workers and peasants collectives, many of them communal. The Spanish Revolution of 1936-39 was a socioeconomic conflict much like the German Peasant Revolt of 1525 and, to a much less extent, the Paris Commune of 1871. Over a million people died in the Spanish Civil War between the Republican Government (which supported the collectives) and the fascist forces.

Sam Dolgoff wrote in The Anarchist Collectives (Black Rose Books: 1974, p 6),

eight million people directly or indirectly participated Very quickly more than 60% of the land was collectively cultivated by the peasants themselves ... without instituting capitalist competition to spur production. In almost all the industries, ... public services, and utilities, the rank and file workers, their revolutionary committees, and their syndicates reorganized and administered production, distribution, and public services without capitalists, high salaried managers, or the authority of the state.

The Basque nationalists of northwestern Spain suffered during the Civil War as they had supported the liberal left republican government in return for its recognition of their desire for regional autonomy. Today the Mondragon Cooperatives are the best integrated and organized cooperative system in the world, involving 4% of the Basque population of two million.

As of 1989 (see; Jaques and Ruth Kaswan, "The Mondragon Cooperatives," Whole Earth Review, Spring 1989, p 8), 173 cooperatives comprised the Mondragon cooperative system, including 86 industrial cooperatives employing over 20,000 worker-members, 6 agricultural and 2 service cooperatives, 43 cooperative schools, 14 housing cooperatives, and one large consumer/worker cooperative with over 40 stores serving over an eighth of the Basque population as members.

Reasons for the success of this network include the social cohesiveness of the Basque people, their balance of rights and responsibilities for worker-members, and the four supporting institutions or second level cooperatives providing services for the first level. These include a central cooperative bank, with 120 branch offices, a technological research institute, the League of Education and Culture supporting colleges and schools, and a social security and medical cooperative.

The first Mondragon Cooperative was begun in 1956, with the history of the Rochdale cooperatives of England being a primary influence.

BRITISH ISLES

During the early part of the Industrial Revolution, concerns about the continuing exploitation of workers by the owners of capital led to the creation of cooperatives in which the workers were also the owners. Through a form of participatory decision-making, which today we call economic democracy, some cooperative businesses have been organized as worker-owned businesses, others as consumer-owned. Cooperatives have sprung up all over the world, but it is the particular design of the Rochdale Co-op of 1844 in England, and its "Rochdale Principles," which has proven the most successful, and the most influential worldwide. Robert Owen, born in Wales, was a primary influence upon the whole cooperative movement. Owen's industrial experiment, including the first "food co-op," the profits of which supported the first "preschool" (80 children, 7 teachers, non-violent discipline!) and other community projects,

began at New Lanark, Scotland, at about 1800.

COOPERATIVES AS A PERCENTAGE OF
FIVE ECONOMIC SECTORS

	Housing	Worker	Consumer	Credit	Ag.	
S. America	2%	1%	16%	62%	5%	
Oceania	47%	-		18%	20%	10%
Africa	1%	3%	14%	14%	49%	
Asia	4%	3%	17%	48%	24%	
Europe	5%	1%	65%	10%	17%	
N. America	1%	-		3%	72%	9%

Today there are nearly 700,000 legally registered co-operatives with over one-third of a billion members world wide.

From the 1984 Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Calendar, 78 Beacon St. Boston, MA 02108

Intentional communities generally always support cooperative organizations in their area, and the cooperatives are sometimes equally sympathetic. This is generally the case in the British Isles, which was estimated in the 1980 issue no. 2 of the International Communes Network newsletter as including 50-60 intentional communities averaging perhaps 20 people each.

A few British Isles communities are: Ireland — Atlantis Commune near Burtonport, An Meitheal near Burnfoot; Wales — Glaneirw Housing Co-op in Cardigan, Glynhyndod near Llandysul, Teachers in Bangor, and the Center for Alternative Technology in Powys; Scotland — Iona on Isle of Iona, Findhorn near Forres, Laurieston Hall near Castle Douglas, Shindig in Edinburgh; England — Some Friends and Double Helix both in London, the London Emissary Center, Redbricks in Birmingham, Birchwood Hall in Hereford, Redfield in Winslow, the Camphill Village network of therapeutic communities for mentally or physically challenged children and adults, the Lightmoor cooperative village project in Shropshire, the many Christian communities including the Darvel Bruderhof in East Essex connected with the U.S. Hutterian Bruderhof, and Lifespan in Sheffield connected with the U.S. Federation of Egalitarian Communities.

There have been efforts to build a close association among some British Isles communities not involved in such networks as the Christian or the Camphill Communities. The Communes Network maintained regular

meetings and a newsletter for many years. A project called "Fair Ground" sought to create a collective financial program to provide capital for movement development from internal sources, similar to the Rochdale and Mondragon models. Fair Ground got as far as incorporation, but failed to win support from more than a few communities. Its demise and the inactivity of the Communes Network appear to have happened at about the same time, around 1986-87.

FINLAND, NORWAY, SWEDEN

Finland has an extensive cooperative movement involving all types of cooperatives. One information center is Miljocentrum, Sanduddsg 10, 00100 Helsinki.

Norway has several intentional communities, some cooperative, some communal, but none of large size. All of the following include between 4 and 10 people: Solliakollektivet in Reinsvoll, Frilund Gard in Bjorkelamgen, Tranoy Gard in Vangsvik, Ekrasamvirket in Gammersvik, Ananda Marga, Gatevisa and Karma Taski Ling all in Oslo (Stein Jarving, Holmen Gard, 4580 Lyngal, Norway, 1979).

A few communities exist in Sweden, three are Comunidad in Stockholm, Ljusbacken in Delsho, and Skognas in Ramsele. Sweden, of course, has many housing cooperatives, as well as the kollektivhus or "housing with services," a model first developed in the 1930s, often in high-rise buildings such as the 33-unit, nine-story, Stacken outside of Goteborg.

**SWITZERLAND, GERMANY,
AUSTRIA, BELGIUM**

Very little information is available about communities in Switzerland. Communaute in La Chaux-de-Fonds (reported in 1976) and the Swiss branch of Longo Mai in the northern region (also reported in the 1970s) is the only Swiss community information available.

A number of communities exist in West Germany, although they have not been as active in networking as those in the British Isles. Niederkaufungen near Kassel, Fabrik Commune in West Berlin, Mandala-Verlag in Katzeneinbogen, Indianerkommune in Nuremberg, ASH Krebsmuhle in Frankfurt, the Laurentius Konvent in Diemelstadt a Catholic monastery, and Greuth Hof in Kimratshofen connected with the Findhorn network. The Integrated Community has several branches in

West Germany and Italy, and a project in Tanzania. They are a Christian community of several hundred people based in Munchen. The U.S. Hutterian Bruderhof also have a community in Germany, the Waldfrieden Bruderhof near Bonn.

In Austria the Actions Analysis Organization, somewhat inspired by Wilhelm Reich's theories, is a large network of communities founded during the 1960s, with many today through-out Europe.

Belgium, is one of the European countries with the most extensive housing cooperative and community traditions. La Poudriere, La Cite, Le Chateau, La Molecule, Fraternites Terre Nouvelle, Communauté du Seneve, all in Brussels, Les Moxhons and Communauté St. Nicolas-aux-Mouches in Liege, L'Arche in Muno, and Tuilergaerde in Hasselt. There is also an important networking organization in Hasselt called International Ontmoetingscentrum Basisgroepen Mouvement D'Animation De Base (IOC-MAB, Kuringersteen weg 35, 3500 Hasselt, Belgium).

NETHERLANDS

Saskia Poldervaart of the University of Amsterdam and Tony Weggemans of Katholieke Universiteit, Brabant report through the International Communal Studies Association conferences and publications that 0.3% of the Dutch population live in a "communal" household. Communal is defined in two categories: woongroep or "living group," numbering 7000 houses in 1981, grown to 8500 in 1986, and centraal wonen or "central living," also called "cohousing communities," 30 of which exist with about 40 in planning (Cohousing, McMamant & Durrett, Habitat Press: 1988, p 148).

In their article, "Woongroepen in the Netherlands," in the Sept. '85 International Communes Desk Newsletter (Box 1777, Tel Aviv, Israel), Weggemans and Poldervaart characterize woongroepen as involving: 6 adults, each with a private room, members are 25-35 years of age, 20% of the houses include children, all are common households with equally shared tasks, 50% hold regular meetings, most all have jobs outside with no income sharing, 40% consist of single adults, 85% have higher education, 15% are unemployed, 48% are studying, 67% have low income, 70% are in university cities, 10% in rural villages, 10% of the houses are owned by the group, 20% owned by individual members, and 64% of the houses are rented (4/5 by individuals, 1/5 by the group as

a whole). As for group intentions, 43% have a personal growth purpose, 32% an economic purpose, 22% a political purpose, 17% a social work purpose, 8% an artistic purpose and/or a religious purpose (5%), and fully 40% reported no particular reason for being!

The central women communities involve clusters of four to eight households usually sharing a common public space, kitchen and dining area. The first Dutch cohousing development was named Hilversum, completed in 1977, and it was they who organized a national organization of "centraal wonen." Hilversum has 50 housing units, with a central social or recreation facility, but with no kitchen. The cluster kitchens (for 4-8 households) provide semi-private, shared space, but reduces the potential advantages of cooperation on a larger scale.

A short list of communities in The Netherlands includes: Ons Klooster in Ottersum and De Refter in Nijmegen-Ubbergen, both former monasteries, Die Kleine Aarde, Hobbitstee Community in Biddinghuizen, and Centraal Wonen (Bentismaheerd 19, 9736 EA Groningen, The Netherlands).

DENMARK

Tore Jacob Hegland of Aalborg University Center wrote in "Origin and Perspectives of the Danish Communal Movement" (Communal Life: An International Perspective, edited by Gorni, Oved, Paz, Tabenkin Inst., Efal 52960 Israel, 1987), that beginning in the late 1960's a "vigorous communal movement" has grown to include 50,000 to 100,000 people (.006% to .012% of the Danish population), either sharing individual houses or involving multiple housing units in cooperatives and communes.

There is an estimated 10,000 collectives and cooperatives in Denmark, including 80 production or worker-owned cooperatives involving 800 members in light industry, trade or service. The folk-school movement is similarly extensive, including the Tvind Schools — 8 to 10 educational communities with 100 teachers and 1000 students. 100 to 150 therapeutic communities exist involving 1,500 people, half of which are "clients" — mentally or physically challenged persons, or substance abusers (see also; Hegland, "Social Experiments and Education for Social Living," Kibbutz Studies, April 1984, p 32).

Svanholm Manor and Mejlgaard Castle are two examples of Danish "production communes" which involve both

housing and industrial programs in the same community. Both occupy former estates. Svanholm has 750 acres and 140 people. Christiania is on an even larger scale, representing a “parallel society” of 1000 people occupying a former military base including 170 buildings on 22 hectares in Copenhagen. The “Free City of Christiania” was occupied in 1971 by anarchist squatters soon after the military abandoned the site. After years of negotiations, protests, civil disobedience, city wide strikes, publicity and court battles, Christiania is gradually becoming more stable. Demolition of the worst buildings and rehabilitation of the best has been carried out, a number of businesses are based in the “Free City,” and Christiania enjoys significant popular support in Copenhagen (Christiania Fristad, 1407 Kobenhavn K, Denmark).

Networking organizations in Denmark include: KAMBA, the central wholesale for the food cooperative federation, SAPA, the Association of Production Communes or worker-owned cooperatives, and KOKOO or Kollektive Koordination, a community networking center providing referral and information services (KOKOO, Radhusstraede 13, 1466 Kobnhavn, Denmark). KOKOO’s office is provided by the city council, with a full time worker doing alternative work to military service, paid by the government. Such is the Danish support for the alternative lifestyle!

It is from Denmark that a cooperative housing movement began that is now spreading throughout Northern Europe, and is beginning to be applied in the U.S. and elsewhere. Its Danish name is bofaellesskaber or “living communities,” translated as “cohousing.”

Anthony Ramsay of the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland described in a paper for the 1988 International Communal Studies Conference the origins of the cohousing model. As a result of Danish reaction to the high-rise architectural design of the 1950s and ’60s, and the broader political movements of the time, the Danish National Institute for Building Research (SBI) held a design competition in 1971 for medium-density, low-rise housing, with child play areas an important feature. Skraplanet, 138 people in 38 units, and Saettedammen, 100 people in 27 units, both north of Copenhagen were two of the first cohousing communities.

Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett in Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves (Habi-

tat Press, Berkeley, CA 1988) report that in 1988 75 cohousing communities exist, with 38 planned or under construction. The largest underway is a long term project to build one new housing development in a Copenhagen suburb to accommodate 1,200 units in 48 cohousing communities, each of 20 to 40 dwellings. Each of the 48 communities would have one central food service center, and a number of other collective services.

The cohousing design involves clustering dwellings near a common building. This frees more land for agriculture, ponds, park-like or wild areas than would a normal subdivision with a comparable population. Currently 8 cohousing communities, with more being planned, have glass-covered courtyards and streets running from the common building to all of the housing units. A trend is toward closer clustering and smaller private spaces as the balance between privacy and community is maintained. One important design feature is the “soft-edge” or semi-private/public space between the dwelling and the common street or courtyard.

Cohousing design features include: vehicle parking at the periphery of the site and pedestrian friendly design, child activity areas outdoors and within the common building, including a “pillow-room” and a teen-room. Flex-rooms and guest rooms are provided, offices and community bulletin board, laundry, household supplies co-op, maintenance facilities, and other services.

Each dwelling usually has a kitchenette, while most evening meals are provided in the common building, with various labor and monetary contribution schemes. Although the cohousing design could work as a communal community, all of those in Denmark are cooperative, some with rental units.

Cohousing communities in Denmark enjoy limited government support, as many are organized as limited equity co-ops with government sponsored loans. Current trends include the beginning of the integration of income work and businesses within the communities, some of the children returning to this housing design to raise their own families, local networks of cohousing communities are forming, and the communities are becoming more integrated in their surrounding areas, becoming active in local political issues. One high-priced cohousing community, Sjolund, shows how this housing design is becoming more popular. One architect explained (McCamant & Durrett, Cohousing, p 147) “people want

some kind of community, or they wouldn't pay so much money to live so close together.”

“The Danish Building Research Institute and the Building Development Council have both recognized cohousing as one of the few residential models to address the demographic and economic changes in western industrial societies” (Cohousing, p 146).

CANADA

43% of the Canadian population holds membership in some form of cooperative. In Quebec, more credit unions exist than branches of banks or trust companies. “In spite of this, co-ops lack any substantial clout in the national economy as a whole.” (George Melnyk, The Search for Community, Black Rose Books, 1985.)

Canada has a number of intentional communities, including spiritual retreats, religious communities, land trusts, appropriate technology centers, cooperative and communal communities. British Columbia is home to one of several Emissary communities in Canada, 100 Mile House. Krishna, Zen, Buddhist and Yoga communities have branches in Canada, along with Hutterite and various other Christian groups. The Federation of Egalitarian Communities has a branch, Dandelion, in Ontario.

Canada also has its share of historic communities, including a number of Negro communities in Ontario before, during and after the American Civil War, including: Dawn, Wilberforce, and the largest and most successful, Elgin with over 1000 people (see: William and Jane Pease, Black Utopia, Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison WI, 1963). In every case these communities were set up in order to aid Black people in joining White society — thus, success meant eventual dissolution of the community.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Today about 20% of the U.S. population holds membership in some form of cooperative, although it may be only a cooperative memorial society or a telephone co-op. Roughly 1% of the U.S. population or 2.5 million people live in some form of housing cooperative, collective household, or intentional community. 1.5 million or more of this total are members of registered housing cooperatives (see; Finding Co-ops, The Cooperative Information Consortium, 1984).

Intentional community history in the U.S. begins with the Puritan's theocratic communalism in 1620 to 1623. Many followed including Quakers, Shakers, Moravians, Harmonists, Icarians, Mennonites, Hutterites, Janssonists, Catholic monastic movements, and others. Secular community traditions included Perfectionists, Associationists, Mutualists, Cooperative Socialists, Sanctificationists, Anarchists and others. The government experimented with setting up cooperative “green-belt towns” in the 1930s, and many cooperative “back-to-the-land” communities were started then and later in the 1960s and '70s.

In Rosebeth Moss Kanter's book, Commitment and Community, The New York Times is quoted in 1972 as estimating there to be two to three thousand communities in North America. Today in 1989 the number may not be much different. There exists a list of 800 Christian communities alone.

A basic overview of North American communities would include the many urban collective households and urban networks, and the rural networks of back-to-the-land homesteader communities, land trusts, macrobiotic, Rainbow and other cooperative communities. There are Black, Hispanic, Native-American, Earth Religion, Neo-Pagan and “Occult” communities, Sufi, Zen, Yoga, Krishna, Jewish, and Mormon communities. We have Catholic, Quaker, Seventh-Day Adventist, Bruderhof, Hutterite, Amish, Mennonite, fundamentalist, monastic and new age Christian, religious and spiritual communities of every hue. There are feminist separatist communities, polyfidelity and gay communities, holistic health centers, extrasensory/paranormal centers, retreat and conference center communities, social service, alternative technology, philosophical societies, anarchist, survivalist and political communities of numerous persuasions. There are also other communities comprised of various assortments of all of the above, those that defy description, and others that are not even aware of the concept of intentional community.

The Catholic monastic orders are well represented in North America, including the Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, Jesuits, Cistercians and others. Following World War II there was a surge of interest and of population in all of the Catholic monastic orders, followed by a decline in recent decades. An anecdote to this history is that today the Kripalu Yoga Ashram in Massachusetts occupies a former Jesuit Seminary built after the war, but never fully utilized for its original

purpose. An aging population and constricting finances are contributing to the decline of the monastic orders. An example is the Trappists, a sub-order of Cistercians, which increased from three monasteries in the U.S. in the 1940s to twelve by 1960. Their population grew to more than a thousand, then declined to about five-hundred today (Colmon McCarthy, "In Search of Solitude," *New Age Journal*, May/June 1987). This decline is in spite of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council of 1962 which eased the strictness of the cloistered life, and despite the interest in the writings of the Trappist's best known member, Thomas Merton.

The Hutterite Colonies, begun during the European Protestant Reformation and settling in the plains states and provinces in the late 1800s, have been experiencing significant change in recent years. As land has become more expensive and less available, the rate of establishment of new Hutterite Colonies has slowed. The colonies have always been agriculturally based, but new technologies and monocropping have reduced the available work roles for young men, resulting in social status being more difficult to achieve. Jobs taken outside of the colony return spending money and other unwanted influences, including an increase of youth leaving the colonies. These trends have resulted in marriages being delayed four or five years from the average of just a generation ago, causing a decreasing birthrate (Frieda Shoenberg Rosen, "The Role of Women in communal Societies: The Kibbutz and the Hutterite Colony," *Communal Life*, Transaction Books, 1987).

Reduced family size will provide new options for Hutterite women. Less need for communal domestic services may result in more focus upon one's own family. Alternatively, less time spent filling traditional women's roles may result in new roles in governance, or in the new industries replacing the Hutterite's traditional mixed farming economy.

Today the Hutterites include 170 colonies and 20,000 people, and the affiliated Bruderhofs count 5 colonies and over 1500 people.

Although the Catholic monastic and the Hutterite movements are becoming increasingly challenged, there appears to be a renewed growth in the more recently established North American communities, including the Bruderhofs, formed in the 1930s. Among the "new wave" North American communities, or those formed since the 1960s, there is a renewed sense of purpose as

many continue to reinforce their communal ideals through expanding collective services and, in a few cases, some increase in population, as at Twin Oaks, Yogaville, Kerista, Kripalu and others. At the same time there is a continuing trend toward greater privatisation, or of lessening of communal designs in favor of the cooperative, such as at The Farm, Renaissance, The Builders and others. The greatest rate of growth among North American communities is among those which may be termed "economically diverse." These include land trust communities and their networks, including rural and urban land trusts, and the communities which have both a communal and a cooperative or private sector, such as the Emissary communities, Yogaville and others.

Networking among some North American community traditions has always been part of their growth strategy as many traditions have inspired multiple communities. In some historical cases, communities of different traditions have carried on cooperative projects on various levels.

From about 1965 until the early 1970s there was a massive cultural interest in intentional community among North American youth, with the New York Times estimating 100,000 communities in 1968, the "summer of love." Many of these attempted to form local or regional networks. Today several communities, including Sirius, Shannon and Alpha are beginning to work to reestablish these loose regional networks in New England, the Central Atlantic area, and the Northwest. There are also a number of structured networks involving various mutual aid programs, including those among various Christian communities, Eastern religious communities, "New Age" spiritual communities, Women's communities, Pagan communities, Black, Native American and other minority communities, Emissary communities, land-trust communities, and the Federation of Egalitarian Communities (FEC). Finally, the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) attempts to create a networking structure that will be inclusive of much of the diversity of the North American intentional communities movement.

A NOTE ON SOURCE MATERIALS

Material for this paper was assembled from many sources found in the Twin Oaks Community Library and Communities Magazine office. Additional material came from the 1988 International Communal Studies Association Conference at Edinborough and New Lanark, Scotland, attended by the author, and other sources identified in the text.