

BISMARCK'S SOCIALIST LAW OF 1878 AND THE HARMONISTS

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AFTER two attempts to assassinate Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany — on the second of June 1878, he was severely wounded — the German Reichstag was dissolved and a new Reichstag elected, which passed a law prohibiting socialist associations, meetings, publications, and called for the deporting of social-democrat political leaders and agents. These events had repercussions in peaceful Economy, Pennsylvania, which will be discussed and documented in this article.

Under the date of January 7, 1879, Frau Clara Pittmann, from her place of refuge in Zürich, Switzerland, wrote the following application for membership in George Rapp's Harmony Society, which I translate from the original German:

Very respected Sir!

Unusual circumstances justify unusual steps, and so I hope that you will forgive me if I, a stranger, trustfully and without further ceremony address myself to you and the respected leaders of the congregation. The fear and tyranny of the German Government has created conditions, which, since the adoption of the socialist law by suppression of the free press are continuously being aggravated, and about which one cannot foresee the eventual conclusion. The German Reich Government depends upon its bayonets and upon the fearful measures which have been taken to shed human blood, and with this it wastes the substance of the nation, which financially since the great French war is being systematically ruined. These measures are equally directed, both to hold down the nation's striving for freedom as well as to protect it from foreign attacks; and the substance which is being pressed out of the nation serves to be able to prepare the young men of the land for the bloody business of war.

The conviction that the present conditions of property ownership of our present society are evil and condemn the largest number of men to poverty and intellectual pressure, and the courage gradually to change these conditions of ownership in order to admit men to an equal enjoyment of existence, have been made a crime, and a word spoken in this direction brings the speaker in danger.

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The uncertainty of conditions stretches out into Switzerland, which otherwise offered an asylum for those politically persecuted. Switzerland is dominated by fear for her independence, and has almost lost it already, and she is following the beckoning of Bismarck already in many things, and it is not impossible that in many cases deportation, contrary to justice and law, will be imposed.

Although this is not yet the case with my friends and me, and we for now have no reason to fear this, yet we have considered whether it would not be best for us to join a socialist community. And so we trustfully make inquiry of the congregation of New Harmony, whether the same would be inclined to accept new members. We request you to inform us of the conditions under which admission may be gained, the obligations which grow out of joining, and the conditions which grow out of that.

For the present there are only 4 of us persons who have discussed this wish together, all unmarried, of middle age, not *entirely* without means, although we have lost our wealth through the German political conditions. All of us are accustomed to activity, although in part primarily to intellectual activity. I myself grew up in the West of America, am an American citizen, and am completely familiar with American housekeeping. I became a widow very early, and then occupied myself with the raising of my two children and with studies, which led me to the conviction that only through a change of conditions of property human misery can be diminished and prevented. I am now free from obligations and am living in Zürich, because the political conditions in Germany make my stay there impossible. One of my friends is a meritorious physician, who experienced the great wars as an army doctor, and who became unpleasant to the German Government because he let fall a few words about the horrible slaughter of human beings. In addition to this he is a man of purest character and a person of practical nature, not inexperienced in gardening and caring for an orchard. We all see in selfishness, in egoism, the deadly enemy of all human happiness, of all ennoblement, and are ready to contribute what is in our power to the welfare of mankind. The thought that the example of a happy community founded upon common property and common work in the present time could have a great influence on the quiet and peaceful development of socialism has occupied me for a long time, and it seems to me to be a move of divine Providence that the noble and pious Father Rapp in his congregation established the firm and well-organized nucleus for such a community, which could serve

as a center for many noble people who for their convictions have now lost their home, where they could found a new home in the circle of comrades of like attitude.

We all believe in the power of divine and human love and are no revolutionary characters. We wish and hope for a peaceful development and solution of social conditions and would like to contribute our share.

If the respected congregation of New Harmony upon our request should decide to inform us of the conditions of incorporation into the community, we request a kind reply soon under the address: Frau Clara Pittmann, Zürich, Bâmisstrasse 44.

With friendly greeting sincerely signed

Clara Pittmann

In my Harmony Society research I have always insisted on calling George Rapp's society an organization of Christian communists, rather than a communitarian or communal movement. The fact that the word communism has since taken on a pejorative connotation does not justify changing the language which George Rapp used in his time to express a truly beautiful ideal as found in the early apostolic church, long before Marx and his followers made it a dirty word. Yet, it is difficult in this time of educational inflation and historical myopia to write as I have written without exposing the Harmonists to the hatred and suspicions which the majority of Americans justifiably associate with communism. In this situation I am particularly fortunate in being able to present in my translation the reply of the Harmony Society to the above letter. As usual, the reply was written and rewritten several times, in this case in the clean and beautiful hand of the Senior Trustee Jacob Henrici but signed by Henrici and Lenz, two of the finest, cleanest, and most humane leaders of the society.

Economy, Penna., January 27th, 1879.

Frau Clara Pittmann,
Zürich, Bâmisstrasse 44
Dear Lady!

Your respected letter of January 7th was received today, and according to your wish we answer you without delay. We regret very much that the Reich Government of our old Fatherland finds itself compelled to call such strict measures into being to preserve itself. It

is difficult for us in the distance to decide, to what extent such strict measures are purposeful or necessary. We fear very much that the same are a work of need and yet perhaps more or less miss the purpose, and that many innocent persons must suffer thereunder. When we consider what kinds of awful and horrible deeds were perpetrated quite directly near us, namely in Pittsburgh (and in other places) in July 1877 by the modern communistic spirit, which could have been prevented by a prompt execution of the laws, then we are not surprised that Germany's government gives preference to powerful preventive and anticipatory measures rather than the far more expensive salvation measures. But without doubt many innocents must suffer thereby; which however, in the case of such outbreaks as the socialist and communist movements threaten to bring forth, would be the case in much greater measure. Great evils often require heroic means of healing. Whether those now applied are the right ones it is now difficult to decide. However, simply to let a horrible disease of the time run its own, free, undisturbed course could also not be excused.

For several years our Society has had very little, yes, practically no good fortune at all with newly accepted members. The spirit of present-day socialism is of an entirely different kind from that by which our congregation was founded by Father Rapp. And because in present circumstances it is very difficult to test, whether the new and older material can be happily blended, (which is very much to be doubted), our Society has decided to be extremely careful in the acceptance of new members and rather to dis- than to encourage applicants. You will, therefore, not blame us, if under the aforementioned circumstances, we consider it our duty, to advise you to dismiss from your mind joining our Society, because we believe, that neither your happiness nor ours could be advanced in a sufficient measure by such a costly and risky undertaking. We must give a negative reply to a great number of our countrymen here because of our honest conviction; it would, therefore, be highly unjust, to advise you in the distance to undertake such a costly risky thing.

With proper respect, Your friends
Henrici & Lenz,
Trustees of the Harmony Society
in Economy, Beaver County, Pennsylvania

This exchange of letters in the year 1879 was not the only repercussion felt by the Harmony Society as a result of the German socialist

laws of the previous year, for in view of the socialist and communist pressure in Germany for radical reform, one of Germany's most respected scholars, Heinrich Semler, came to America to gather information for his book *Geschichte des Socialismus und Communismus in Nordamerika* (*History of Socialism and Communism in North America*. Leipzig, 1880). In the preface to his work, dated San Francisco, April 1879, Semler stated that American socialist leaders were the most unrepressed and outspoken leaders in the world and that they frankly stated that the final goal of international socialism is communism. For them the old Inca Empire was the shining model. Semler therefore urges that one historian in each cultured nation make it his task to collect material on all practical socialist or communist attempts which had been made, so that on the basis of such international evidence mankind might learn which paths do not lead to temporal happiness. Because America had provided the richest field for such socialist and communist experiments, Semler came to the United States to gather and evaluate such material for the United States in order that the world might benefit by American experience. In the course of his American research trip, Heinrich Semler, of course, visited Economy and included a report on the Harmonists in that section of his book which he devoted to "Religious Communist Congregations."

A definite prejudice against religion was characteristic of German scholarship at that time, because it was felt that one could not very well be a religious human being and a first-rate scholar at the same time. This blindness was also reflected in Semler's book, because it began with Owen's notable failure at New Harmony following George Rapp's internationally acclaimed success, and relegates the Harmonists and all other religious communities — and these were the most successful of all American communist communities — to a third and isolated chapter. Both from the point of view of chronology and importance, the German-American religious communities should have been among the first, and Owen should have followed much later, as he did in fact follow them after being attracted to Indiana by the great fame of George Rapp's Harmony Society. Heinrich Semler, however, was fighting the kind of socialism and communism Henriци distrusted in his just quoted letter, and this brand of world reformers considered itself scientific and above the "opium" for the people. In any case, his reasoning amounted to the fact that he favored propagandistic communities, however great their failure, over nonpropagandistic

religious communities, however great their practical success. This is not a particularly scientific approach, but it fits into the German pattern of the time, so proud of its scientific achievements and so contemptuous of the unenlightened world of believers. In spite of these attitudes, however, Semler's report on the Harmonists makes interesting reading because it is a good record of the Harmony Society under the still loyal and devoted leadership of the last genuine Harmonists, Henrici and Lenz. It is here presented in my translation from pages 85-94 of Heinrich Semler's above-cited book:

"The Harmonists."

"In Beaver County in the state of Pennsylvania lies the congregation Economy, whose inhabitants call themselves Harmonists, because they believe, that according to their principles a complete Harmonie could be achieved in mankind. Their history, much compressed, says that the founders of the congregation were Württembergers, who in the last years of the last century separated from their state church, and, hard pressed by the intolerant government of their close Fatherland, in the years 1803 and 1804 emigrated to the United States of North America with their adherents. They first settled in Butler County in Pennsylvania, but soon moved on to the State of Indiana, where they bought 30,000 acres of land and founded the congregation New Harmony. Fever epidemics and bad neighbors induced them ten years later to sell their property and to migrate back to Pennsylvania, there on the East bank of the Ohio, 20 miles north of Pittsburg, to build their definitive home, which they called Economy. There they without interruption increased their temporal goods, although their number is in a constant state of decline. Beside the village and township Economy they also possess real estate in other places and are fellow owners of important coal mines, oil wells, railroads and factories, and the knife factory at Beaver Falls, the largest establishment of that kind in the United States, belongs to the greatest extent to these peaceful, harmless communists, whose total fortune one is inclined to estimate at 6 million marks. Certainly the Harmonists have known how, wherever they settled, to create blossoming gardens out of the wilderness and to cover desolate areas with orchards, vineyards and lush fields of grain, but still they have not been able to hold up the decline of their congregation. For this there is no more truthful proof than when one with the enthusiastic description of the Duke Bernhard of Sachsen-Weimar, who visited the Harmonists a half century ago, before one's eyes, without prejudice tests the conditions today. Duke

Bernhard says that he found the congregation in a condition of most hopeful thriving. It had 1000 members, all of their houses were inhabited, their workshops fully manned. It sounds almost incredible, that these communists — for the greater part simple Württemberg farmers — possessed a beautiful museum and a precious collection of paintings and devoted great attention to the cultivation of music. 'Sixty to seventy girls,' so says the Duke, 'were gathered around the worthy patriarch in a part of the factory and in most attractive manner sang spiritual and temporal songs. Deeply moved I observed this interesting scene. The factory areas and workshops,' so he continues, 'in winter were heated by tubes, which were connected with the steam engine and were fed by it with steam. All workers had a healthy appearance and gained favor by the warmhearted friendliness with which they greeted their chief, the old Rapp. It also made a very pleasant impression on me that I saw vases with fresh, fragrant flowers on all machines. The cleanliness, which dominated everywhere, was worthy of full praise.' So far it is from the Duke, whom we learn what Economy once was. As it now is, that is shown by a visit to this interesting colony, where, to be sure, the same cleanliness rules, of which Duke Bernhard speaks, but in which in all other respects great changes have taken place. Many houses are uninhabited, the factories stand still, neither cotton- wool- or silkwares are being produced. The museum has long since been sold, the organizations for the care of music live on only in memory, and the voices of singing girls no longer delight the ear of the visitor as at the time of Duke Bernhard. The 1000 members have been reduced to 100 and of these only a few are under 60 years of age, while several are in a very advanced age. The present patriarch of the congregation, Jakob Henrici, is 73 years of age and his substitute, Jonathan Lenz, 70 years old.

"No Americans live here, so upon entrance to Economy the visitor tells himself involuntarily, for the architecture of the houses, their immediate environment and the human beings who live there, make a strange impression on him. If the visitor is a German, however, then he believes to have been transported back to his old Fatherland and believes to be seeing a piece of Germany before him, so thoroughly German the Harmonists always have remained in their life and work. But whether one is German or not, one likes to linger in the friendly and regularly laid out village, whose streets run at right angles with the 'beautiful Ohio.' Green grapevines surround the neat houses, but the streets are shaded by ornamental trees and magnificent avenues

run along the bank of the river. Every house has its garden, for common use, however, there is the 'community garden' ["Gemeindergarten"] which might better be called park. Here one finds beautiful flower beds, carefully tended, winding paths, a fountain, ornamental and fruit trees and in the center, as the shining point of all, a grotto, which certainly shows a rough, unpainted outside, but in its inner part contains a neat, friendly temple. With that one wanted to symbolize, that man's heart is better than his outward appearance. One sees, the Harmonists are optimists, they belong to those happy people, who in spite of all inconsistencies believe in a fund of virtue, which is to slumber in every human breast. A further ornament the village possesses in its roundhouse, which is so carefully hidden in a labyrinth, that the visitor for hours can wander along and search along the paths, surrounded by high hedges, which cross everywhere and lead forward and backward, before he reaches the center point, that is the roundhouse. Here in the labyrinth as in the park the Harmonists at the time of their greatness and flowering amused themselves. Those who live in Economy now do not ask for joy and entertainment, only aged men and women have remained, who in serene calm speak of their soon impending journey homeward. Unpretentiously and simply these millionaires walk about: the men in blue trousers and jackets and wide-rimmed hats, the women in short, many-folded dresses, large shawls and high caps — hence a costume such as we often meet with in south German villages. In a friendly manner they greet the stranger and in most dignified manner they bid him welcome in hospitable Economy. One is pleasantly touched by this politeness, which is true because it comes from the heart and this pleasant impression is heightened by the observation that the most treasured virtues have established their domicile in this quiet little village. Thrift, industry, strictest rectitude, hospitality, charity, chastity in word and deed, these are inviolable characteristics of the Harmonists, for which they deserve unrestricted praise. They possess a quiet of character, a surrender to God's decisions and a rock-of-ages-firm faith in his wise care for mankind, such as one rarely finds among those who have the command over millions.

"The Harmonists are, as said, industrious, but none is overburdened with work. The women, who formerly went out into the field with the men, now only work in the gardens, but the men keep busy in house and field, yet most of the work must be done by hired help because the few workers whom the aging Harmonists can still

provide no longer suffice for the management of the large domain. A common laundry, in which excellent machines are used, and a common bakery, save them much housework. Twice a week fresh bread and daily their need for milk and meat is brought to them — always in quantities according to the number of house inhabitants. In a store they receive their other needs, which are small, for wealth has not been able to influence their simplicity. They have become rich although they by no means look upon the acquisition of temporal goods as life's purpose. The salvation of our souls, so they say, is the object of our life, and so we should not be at all surprised that among these people we find a deep religious conviction which nothing whatever can shake. The Bible is the sole source of their faith, and like so many sectarians, they also believe in the imminent return of Christ. Rapp, the founder of the congregation, believed he would still live long enough to be able to be witness to this great event. He had to depart disappointed, but his adherents continue to hope, to wait. We believe that God has called us and has given us the truth, and we shall wait to the end of our life, so they answer every suggestion to modify their faith. They do not claim to be a strictly separated religious sect, and they have no separate ecclesiastical organization. Any source of faith different from the Bible they do not recognize. They believe in a complete regeneration of the heart, which is possible through the grace and help of Jesus. The community of all temporal goods they consider to be one of the most essential demands which Christianity makes of its confessors. They firmly believe in a rebirth of the earth into its primeval, paradisiac conditions, over which then Christ and the saints would rule for a thousand years, as has been prophesied in Revelation Chapter 20, verse 4, 5. In many respects their religious views agree with those of Böhme [Semler writes "Böhn"!], Bengel and Stilling. Their simple divine service, which follows the protestant ritual, they hold in their small church, while their three large festivals — foundation day, harvest festivals, and Lord's supper — are celebrated in a large hall especially built for this purpose. On these occasions there is singing, preaching, and feasting. But before this a complete reconciliation of all members with each other must take place.

"If new members apply to be admitted, a completely open and unreserved presentation of life up to that time is demanded of them, just as with the Shakers and Perfectionists. Upon reaching majority the young members are given the choice: either to become regular

members of the congregation (provided that their character entitles them to this), or to remain in the congregation and to work for wages, or to go abroad, there to fight through the fight with changing fate, unprotected by a friendly hand. Miraculous, but not inexplicable is the fact, that almost all the young people have entered upon the latter path, which, they know, robs them of the protection of the congregation in which they could live a careless life. That also is the main reason why the Harmonists are facing extinction, a fact of which they are well aware. But it is curious: strangers worry more about the fate of Economy than the Harmonists themselves, who, unperturbed by the changing phenomena of daily life, await the coming of the Lord. If one draws comparisons between the Harmonists and other communistic congregations, one finds several characteristic marks applicable to the former which must be emphasized:

"1) The outstanding abilities of their leaders. George Rapp, the founder, was a man of strong character, a patriarch in the best sense of the word, who maintained his position as chief of the congregation for four decades and even preached two weeks before his death in his 90th year. He was of imposing appearance, industrious and ambitious, available to all, witty in conversation, a fiery orator, deeply religious and extremely simple in his living habits. But he is also said to have had tyrannic inclinations, a characteristic which he held in common with all successful communist leaders and without which Economy would not have become what it was and is.

"2) The relations between George Rapp and his adoptive son Frederick Rapp. Both supplemented each other in the most fortunate manner: the father was predominantly religious, the son a friend and promoter of arts and sciences. The first was the founder of a new social order, the second gave this order form, which made life within the same attractive and had to ennoble heart and mind. Frederick Rapp was not only the business leader of the new royal empire, but also its architect and councillor who gave it beauty. He laid out the villages in symmetric order, he drew the building plans of the houses, he sought to bring everything which the congregation possessed into harmony with the laws of beauty. He promoted the sense for music and arts, he founded the museum, he established the park and the labyrinth. Without George Rapp there would have been no Harmonist congregation, but without Frederick Rapp it would have been bare of everything which gave it such a great charm in the eyes of its members.

"3) Their migrations. Nothing in their history illustrates better

their complete submission to and unreserved subjection to the will of their patriarch. One must be astonished, when one calls to memory, that at the order of their prophet several hundred families left their Fatherland, to cross the ocean and to settle in distant Pennsylvania. Several years later they must break up again to found a new home in the wilderness of distantly situated Indiana, to which at that time as yet no railroads led the way. After a decade of work rich in toil they have built a village, made stretches of wilderness arable, planted orchards and vineyards, and after all this had been completed amid unspeakable privations, they, because their leader wills it, must sell their property at great pecuniary losses and migrate back to Pennsylvania, in order to begin anew the hard task of turning a wilderness into a habitable place for a home.

"4) The introduction of celibacy. It was in the year 1807, when that fanatic movement which the Americans call revival seized the congregation and which in the case in hand began with this that the Harmonists accused themselves of not having served God earnestly enough. They would have to forswear the pleasure of the senses — so especially the younger ones believed — completely, and to reach this goal they believed to find no better means than the acceptance of celibacy by making the well-known view of the Apostle Paul about marriage their own. Since that time celibacy has become the rule among the Harmonists, and they were so serious about their determination, that it was not deemed necessary to separate the sexes and up to the present day men and women live in the same houses, for it is left to them to respect the self-applied prohibition and to protect themselves against temptation. Only through the acceptance of families into their organization have the Harmonists since then received an increase in young members.

"5) The self-denial of the enjoyment of tobacco. At the same time as marriage was declared to be sinful, all male Harmonists freely and solemnly bound themselves forever to refrain from the 'Virginian weed.' Only in a congregation inspired by such an enthusiasm is it possible to outlaw the enjoyment of tobacco, a measure which, supported by the banning of spirituous drinks, did not in a small measure contribute to the possibility of each year recording considerable surpluses in the administration of the congregation.

"6) Their great schism. This occurred in the year 1832 for the following reasons. One Bernhard Müller, who called himself Count de Leon, had joined the congregation with 40 adherents, for he had

known how to convince the Harmonists, that their mutual religious views basically were in complete agreement. But soon he took off his mask and proved himself a true parasite, who knew how to sow the seed of dissent with such cleverness that even after a few months a third of the members stood on his side and demanded a separation of the congregation. The same had to take place: 250 Harmonists withdrew from Economy and took along a property value of 420,000 marks. The dissenters settled in Philippsburg, not far from Economy, but they soon had dispersed their means and with that their young empire also collapsed. This epoch in the history of the Harmonists confirms the fact observed innumerable times in world history, that the Achilles-heel of all autocrats is their easy susceptibility to flattery. The bogus-count and religious cheat needed only to send a letter full of praise and flattery for Rapp to Economy, which sounded all the more appealing when Müller claimed to be an ambassador and anointed of the Lord from the stem of Judah, the root of David, in order to be invited there and to be received with royal honors. Müller sent one of his adherents ahead as herald, and since Rapp in his sermons had prepared the simple Harmonists for the expected great event, the colony found itself in an indescribable excitement when the coach stopped before the guesthouse of the village and their Count de Leon in a shining military uniform, girded about with a sword, got out in company of his minister of justice. In his honor a music band had been set up in the church tower, which greeted him with the finest melodies, when Rapp led him to the pulpit, from which he spoke to the highly attentive congregation. This was the most important of all the meetings since the founding of the congregation and from now on all worries would be taken from the Lord's people, so preached the wolf in sheep's clothing. But Rapp was not long in doubt about the new acquisition. Weekly several meetings were held by the leaders of the two parties, in which Müller read from his 'golden book.' The more he read, however, the more convinced Rapp and his adherents became that between their and the Müller-concept of religious striving and duties there yawned a deep abyss. Only sympathy moved Rapp not to expel the Müller party at once, for winter had begun, and thus they allowed them out of human kindness to await the start of spring in Economy. This respite the slick-tongued cheat used to undermine the congregation, and when the breath of spring blew through the land, it was difficult to say whether the old or the new party would keep the upper hand. The day of decision finally had to come: the general vote

showed that there were 500 who loyally held to Father Rapp, but that 250 wanted to follow the new prophet. The tail of the dragon drew the third part of the stars from the heaven and cast them upon the earth, so old Rapp called out when the result of the count was announced to him.

"7) The voluntary destruction of the record of their property. In the original constitution it was determined, that the property contributed to the common treasury was to be returned to each member which would want to withdraw from the congregation, and a necessary consequence of this clause was that an exact record of all property of the individual members had to be kept. But in the year 1818 Rapp, who had contributed the most significant part of the common property, suggested: for the purpose of bringing about a greater Harmonie and equality between the original members and those newly admitted to membership, the record of individual contributions to the common treasury should be destroyed, and amid the unanimous approval of the congregation the book which until then had been carefully guarded, was given over to the flames. With that they wanted to burn the bridge behind them, so that no one could turn back to the egoistic, sinful world. Eighteen years later the constitution was also changed to the effect, that property which new members bring in should become absolute property of the congregation and that no backslider could claim anything 'as a matter of justice.' But thereby the trustees were not to be prevented from dealing smoothly according to their own estimation with departing members and to give them a present, which might be judged by the length of membership and value of the services performed. One should have thought that the provisions of the constitution, which was signed by all members must have made a judicial lawsuit for the sake of return of property impossible. That, however, is not the case: the Harmonists have had to fight several long-lasting and expensive lawsuits; but they have established a precedent, with their suit at the same time they have defended the cases of all communist congregations, and for that the latter thank them to this day. This case of precedence was brought on by Joshua Nachtrieb and carried to the highest tribunal of the United States, which decided it against him. In the November term 1849 Nachtrieb pleaded his case before the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western District of Pennsylvania that he had unjustly been expelled by the Harmonists and been robbed of his part of the estate, and he therefore begged that by judicial decree his part of the congregational

estate be granted him. The lawsuit lasted seven years and was fought by the most outstanding lawyers of the country. The claims of the plaintiff were represented by Edwin M. Stanton, Abraham Lincoln's famous secretary of war during the Civil War. The decision of this court was in favor of the plaintiff, and by the decree the congregation at Economy was ordered to set up an exact record of the property and income for the 27 years that the plaintiff spent as member in the congregation. In this manner it was determined that the part of the estate due the plaintiff amounted to \$3890; but this sum was not paid out, because the decree concerned was inhibited by the appeal to the highest court of law in Washington. Here in the December term of 1856 the decision of the lower court was reversed, because in a very clever proof the well-known Judge Campbell pointed out that Nachtrieb had signed a document in which he declared that he had withdrawn from the Harmonie Society and that he had according to agreement received \$200 as a present. With that he had obviated all further claims. Once more Elias Lemmix tried a lawsuit to compel payment of property; but after a duration of three years this ended the same way. Since that time departing members have convinced themselves of the futility of such a lawsuit.

"Has the oldest of the communist congregations — so we must ask at the end of this section — accomplished a noteworthy or encouraging success? Yes, in the piling up of riches; No, in propaganda for communism. For seventy-five years it has constantly been true to its principles, but it has not been able to exert an attractive power, and now its days are numbered. With Rapp they also lowered their genius into the grave, with him the creative force of the congregation was extinguished, and with his journey home the process of disintegration began which continues to the present day."

Semler's interesting and very valuable account of the Harmonists shared with all others the shortcoming that he was unaware of the prophetic Biblical force which directed all migrations both of Rapp and his people and of Count de Leon and his followers. As I have shown in my books on the subject, it was the faith in the verbally inspired word of God, especially in its prophecies, which guided both Rapp and his people as well as Count Leon and his people in all their moves. The incredibly excellent timing of Leon's letter to Rapp and not flattery was the reason why Count Leon was so overpoweringly convincing. Both of them had quite independently used the same basis

of calculation of the Second Coming of Christ and had chronologically reached the same conclusions. Rapp's various moves would never have been possible if he had not had the solid backing of the Bible and the faith of his followers in that Bible to support his leadership. He was to his people what Moses was to the Jews, and both had their troubles, too. Semler overlooked the many persons who withdrew to populate America, and if all the descendants of Harmonists who withdrew would know that their ancestors once were members of this glorious group of pioneers and would then have bought my two books on the subject, these would have been best sellers. These people were a most fertile race of people and Frederick Rapp himself said that the rate at which they were reproducing at Philippsburg proved that all the claims of enemies of the society stating that members had to be emasculated to maintain celibacy were base slander.

Semler is in error when he states that George Rapp had contributed most of the money to the common treasury. By his own admission that credit goes to two German-Americans, Schreiber and Neff, who were quite rich in this country in their own right before Rapp came, but were persuaded to sell all and put it into the common treasury. In the case of Schreiber this resulted in lawsuits and appeals to the Pennsylvania legislature when upon old Schreiber's death one of his sons took out letters of administration and demanded a share of his father's estate, which he did not get. There were also considerable donations from rich widows in Pennsylvania who found peace and company in the Society in return for their donations.

Another error in Semler's story is the date of the Leon schism. Leon came into the Society at the right time when there was much discontent about celibacy because Rapp had allowed Hildegard Mutschler and Conrad Feucht to return to the society and copulate after they had eloped and been married. This display of favoritism raised the cry: "If they can do it, why can't we?" and Count Leon provided the spark that caused the explosion. He also provided the funds for outside lawyers, to which no Harmonist had access. As early as January 25, 1832, the Rapps were deposed and Count de Leon elected in their place by what turned out to be a minority. All this constitutes a complicated but highly interesting chapter in the history of Western Pennsylvania and the entire United States which I hope to document fully in the next volume of my *Documentary History of George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1916*.