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*United We Suffer: Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism
and Twentieth-Century «Auslandsdeutschtum»
in M. V. Rubatscher's «Das Lutherische Joggele»*

Abstract

The sixteenth-century migrations of Anabaptist communities within Europe, particularly Tyrol, becomes an important literary theme for the Austrian novelist Maria Veronika Rubatscher who draws parallels between the relocated fellowship and the German-speaking minority in Italy after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Discussing the portrait of Tyrolean Anabaptism in her novel *Das Lutherische Joggele*, this paper shows how the author utilizes the movement's history as a means of expressing her nationalistic identity.

Introduction

Anabaptism, a radical reform movement originating during the sixteenth-century European Reformation, sought to attain discipleship to Christ by a separation from the religious and worldly powers of early modern society. As alternative reformers seeking to establish an ideal Christian community, characterized by believer's baptism, non-resistance, and the refusal to participate in civil government, the Anabaptists were perceived as dissidents and heretics by the dominant society. Both secular and clerical authorities persecuted followers of the faith group and harried them out of the land. The story of sixteenth-century Anabaptist persecution and forced migration within Europe, particularly Moravia and Tyrol, was rediscovered roughly 400 years later by Maria Veronika Rubatscher, an Austrian novelist and schoolteacher, who drew parallels between the relocated fellowship and ethnic Germans in the interwar period.

A member of the German-speaking minority in North Italy herself, Rubatscher developed an interest in the fate of migrating Anabaptists. She was part of the German-speaking population in the province of South Tyrol.

Before the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, this area belonged to the Austrian County of Tyrol. After the 1919 dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Rubatscher and other South Tyroleans found themselves living outside the newborn Austrian Republic as minorities in the enlarged state of Italy. In most of her novels from the 1920s and 30s, the author fictionalizes historical subject matters that relate to the situation of fellow Austrians in the excluded part of Tyrol. As Anna Leitgeb has asserted, Rubatscher seeks historical material, «in denen sich die gegenwärtige Not wiederholt, so daß ein Modell errichtet werden kann, das der Gegenwart nützt (Lebenshilfe)» (86).

The novelist first discovered the history of Anabaptism while doing research on her ancestry and local history. When tracing her family's genealogy all the way to the Ladin influences on the region of Tyrol, she came across accounts of the persecution of the sixteenth-century brotherhood. In her essay «Ahnen und Heimat» (1937), she asserts:

es kam das 16. Jahrhundert mit seinen erbitterten Glaubenskämpfen. Überschattet von allen Schrecknissen blutiger Verfolgung erblühte hier zwischen Germanentum und Romanentum ein Gottesfrühling, ähnlich dem der Katakombenkirche. Heliandgeist, deutsche Tapferkeit und Glaubensinbrunst kämpften ihren letzten, stillen Kampf wider die Überfremdung, Vergötzung und Verstaatlichung des evangelischen Erbes. (166)

Her description of the early Anabaptist movement takes into account the believers' experience of persecution and their establishment of an underground church. At the same time, she fuses the brotherhood's Christocentric theology with German patriotism. Her representation of Anabaptism as a genuinely German folk movement battling against secularization and foreign elements echoes the nationalist sentiment after World War I and relates to the situation of ethnic Germans in northern Italy, who, in the 1920s, after the rise of fascism in Italy, were forcibly integrated into mainstream Italian culture. During that time, ethnic Germans established underground (catacomb) schools and churches to preserve their national language and cultural heritage. According to Nina Schröder, Rubatscher worked as a teacher in one of these catacomb schools, after she was expelled from the public school system due to her German heritage. During that time, she was repeatedly interrogated by the Italian police (249).

In her essay on regional history, she elucidates the relationship between her ancestors and the movement in Tyrol and Moravia:

Unter denen, die damals unter dem Drucke der Gegenreformation die

geliebte Tiroler Heimat verließen und die Segnungen deutscher Kolonisation in das ferne Slavenland trugen, waren wohl jene Rubatscher, die von Mähren kommend, nun in der Landschaft Slatz und in einzelnen ihrer Nachkommen in Berlin und Hannover leben. (166)

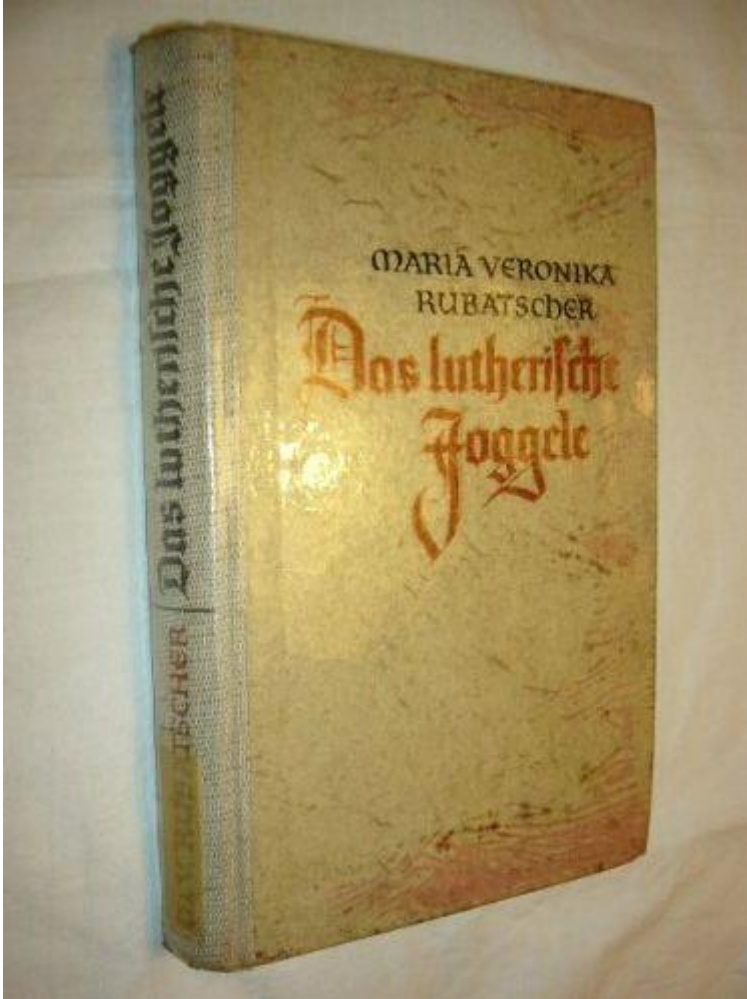
The depiction of early Anabaptism, particularly the Tyrolean experience of eastward migration, is shaped by her interest in the national local color. With a «glühende Heimatliebe» and a notion of expansionism, she idealizes her family history and the nation's past (Leitgeb 28).

Her research on the topic of Anabaptism in Tyrol finds literary expression in the historical novel, *Das lutherische Joggele* (1935). Set in the area of Brixen, southern Tyrol, in the third decade of the sixteenth century, the novel depicts the life of a young dairyman, Jakob (Joggele – a diminutive of Jakob), who after becoming a member of the Anabaptist group, encounters persecution in the form of imprisonment and galley slavery. Prior to his own persecution, Jakob's spiritual leader, Onofrius is imprisoned, tortured, and publicly burned. After twenty years of laboring on a battleship, Jakob finally escapes and returns to Tyrol where he spends the rest of his life roaming through the forests and kneeling on a rock in prayer¹.

Anabaptist Historical Sources

The portrait of Tyrolean Anabaptism in *Das lutherische Joggele* is marked by an insight in the movement's experience with persecution that becomes an instrument of Rubatscher's discussion of twentieth-century minorities and the development of nationalistic identity. The details given in the fictional text indicate the author's familiarity with contemporary research in the field of Anabaptist history as well as with the movement's own martyr literature. The stories and testimonies of the early Anabaptists were largely compiled in chronicles. In 1660, for instance, Thieleman J. van Braght, the elder of a Flemish Anabaptist congregation, published *Het Bloedig Tooneel*

¹ Rubatscher fictionalizes the legend of a hermit who is associated with a small shrine located in the Lügen valley. Villagers often referred to the shrine as «beim Joggele» (Leitgeb 213). According to the local lore, the stone next to the shrine received its cup-shaped form from the knee imprint of the praying man. Prosch has reported that villagers, who visit the shrine as part of walking pilgrimages, commemorate the hermit Jakob, who is believed to be either the excommunicated Jakob Tauber or a reported Anabaptist from the area of Lügen (cited in Leitgeb 213). The name «lutherisches Joggele» is employed by locals simply to acknowledge the non-Catholic faith of the eremite, «ein Ungläubiger, ein Nicht-Katholik, ein Freigeist, jeder, der mit der katholischen Orthodoxie in Konflikt gerät oder sie überhaupt ablehnt» (Maurer 490).



Maria Veronika Rubatscher. *Das lutherische Joggele*. Heilbronn: Eugen Salzer, 1935

Der Doops-gesinde (*Martelaers-Spiegel*), a collection of accounts that includes records of believers who experienced torture and execution from 1524 to 1660. Already in the late 1560s and 70s, in an Anabaptist brotherhood in Moravia, the idea had arisen to collect martyr records, doctrinal statements, and testimonies of the early believers. This collection, known as *Unser Gemain Geschicht-Buch*, is a primary account of Anabaptist beginnings and the group's persecution in Tyrol and Moravia from 1528 to 1665. With the collection of materials pertaining to the movement's development in the sixteenth century, the Anabaptist community wanted to keep the memory of

its heroic beginnings alive². The compilation of martyr stories serves as a medium of internalizing the group's collective experience of suffering «als Instrument asketischer Seelen- und Lebensführung» (Burschel 190). It significantly determines the confessional and cultural identity of the faith group.

Upon the Anabaptist (Hutterite)³ expulsion from Hungary during the eighteenth century, some of the group's manuscripts were confiscated by Jesuits and stored in different libraries. The *Geschicht-Buch* (*Hutterite Chronicle*) had not been known to European scholars until Josef Beck discovered the documents in Hungary and published them in his 1883 collection, *Die Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn*⁴. As Beck's knowledge of Anabaptism is based on the group's own historical documents, he emphasizes the brethren's experience of martyrdom and their notion of imitating Christ through suffering. In his preface to the *Geschichts-Bücher*, he refers to the group as «wahre Nachfolger Christi» and defines their church as «das Wort Gottes nach dem Befehle Christi gesammelten Kirche» (vi-vii). This notion of discipleship and the emphasis on the group's persecution is fictionalized in Rubatscher's narrative. The novelist was informed about the group's theology and history of martyrdom through Beck's sympathetic treatment of the Anabaptist movement. Direct quotes from the introduction to his work give evidence that Rubatscher gained much of her knowledge about Tyrolean Anabaptism from his historical study.

² Peter Burschel has pointed out that these collections of martyr testimonies served the purpose «den Täufer-Gruppen je eigene heroische Vergangenheiten zu[zu]maßen, um sie als Märtyrergemeinschaften in Zeiten zusammenzuhalten, die keine Märtyrereiten mehr waren» (164). The idea of writing an official chronicle arose during the years of the so-called «Golden Era» in Hutterite history (1565-78), a peaceful time in which the brotherhood was able to establish permanent settlements in Moravia.

³ Hutterianism, a communitarian branch of Anabaptism, is rooted in the early movement in South Germany and Austria. The Tyrol communities faced particularly harsh persecution when the Catholic government instituted measures against Anabaptism in 1527. During this time, when Austrian and German members of the movement were hiding from authorities who aggressively enforced *Täufer* (Anabaptist) mandates, word was spread about the tolerant stance of the Moravian ruler toward religious dissidents. A group of Anabaptist refugees from Tyrol thus settled down in Austerlitz under the leadership of Jacob Wiedemann. According to Hillerbrand, both the economic necessity and the ideal of an apostolic Christianity were catalysts for the practice of communal sharing among the migrating fellowship (Divisions128).

⁴ Beck, an Austrian jurist and hobby historian came across Hutterite manuscripts in Hungarian and Slovakian archives during his time at the Bratislava court (1854-1866). He traveled the area to acquire a large collection of these codices and eventually put them together in a mosaic-like fashion.

In addition to quoting Beck's volume on the *Chronicle*, Rubatscher consulted the full print of the *Geschicht-Buch*, first published by Rudolf Wolkan in 1923⁵. The depiction of Anabaptist martyrdom in both of these books must have made a great impression on the author, and led to the respectful attitude with which she portrays the movement's religious experience in her historical novel. According to Leitgeb, the novelist also included information that she evidently found in court reports and enactments, for instance the Merano Articles from 1525 (215). Rubatscher collected the historical data gained from the fellowship's own literature and sixteenth-century legal documents and employed it as a framework for her novel. The storyline integrates various historical facts and relates them to the protagonist's experience as a member of the Anabaptist community.

Rubatscher's fictional adaptation of the group's records and historical reports is enriched by a poetic language. Like all of her fictional prose, *Das lutherische Joggele* is characterized by a poetic quality and a vivid description of the Tyrolean countryside and its people. The Tyrolese dialect in conversational passages contributes to an intimate atmosphere. Through this familiar tongue, the novelist establishes a direct connection between Anabaptist history and contemporary readers. Georg Kierdorf-Traut describes Rubatscher's language as one «die dem Volk entgegenkommt, eine menschliche, verständliche Sprache» (232). Her interest in regional history and her use of a rich, local, and comprehensible language has prompted Kierdorf-Traut to call Rubatscher a «Heimatchdichterin gehobenen Niveaus» (229)⁶.

The Notion of Heimat and Joggele's Reception in Nazi Germany

The author's notion of *Heimat* and commitment to a «bodenständigen, volksfrommen» narrative found favor with the Nazi regime (Kierdorf-Traut 229). Rubatscher's regional literature aims to depict the quiet and idyllic life in the Austrian countryside. Her novels illustrate the peasants' existence in isolation from society. Paradoxically, this fabrication of an idyllic picture and the absence of political content made her works a valuable political resource. As Hansjörg Waldner has noted, propagandists utilized her nar-

⁵ Wolkan, a professor of German Literature at the University of Vienna and the co-founder of the Austrian school of Anabaptist historiography, received the task to edit and publish the *Chronicle* by Hutterites in Canada.

⁶ In her regionalist fiction, the author celebrates the history of her homeland «in mundartlich gefärbter Sprache. Geschichte, Landschaft und Brauchtum ... sind beliebte Motive» (Leitgeb 14).

ratives to distract from the politicized society of Nazi Germany (160). However, Rubatscher distanced herself from the National Socialists after Austria was annexed by Germany in 1938. When the native Germans of South Tyrol received the option of either immigrating to the Austrian territory, ruled by Nazi Germany, or remaining in Italy, thereby losing all minority rights, the novelist chose to stay in Brixen, South Tyrol and went into hiding when German troops occupied this area in 1943. After having decided to remain in Italy, she was excluded from the German Writers' Association⁷.

Despite Rubatscher's refusal to be utilized for propaganda purposes after the South Tyrol Option Agreement, her early novels, including *Das lutherische Joggele*, were widely read in Nazi Germany⁸. The texts' glorification of German heritage and their emphasis on the virtues of rural living were most applicable to National Socialist ideology. The notion of the Germanic folk and its homeland inherent in her narratives corresponds to the *Volkestum* celebrated in *Blut und Boden* literature that dominated the literary landscape of Nazi Germany. The National Socialist regime praised Rubatscher's work for its representation of the «Auslandsdeutschtum» and its association of Germanic folklore with Christian elements⁹. In her novel treating sixteenth-century Tyrolean Anabaptism, this union of Christianity and Germanic paganism, considered as the ideal folk piety in the Third Reich, is accomplished by joining primitive customs with an interest in nature and simplicity and the movement's call for discipleship and martyr-mindedness.

Rubatscher embraces the fellowship's martyr history not for the group's own sake, but to discuss political and religious issues of her time. She employs the fellowship's stories of persecution and suffering as a means to express her own ideological orientation¹⁰. The subtitle of the novel, *Roman*

⁷ According to records at the Austrian national library, by 1939, Rubatscher became «eine entschlossene Kämpferin gegen den alles verheerenden Nazismus, durch das Goebelsche Veto aller Berufs- und Verdienstmöglichkeiten beraubt, in Armut und Verborgenheit weiterschaffend» (cited in Waldner 161). Rubatscher experienced much resentment from fellow countrymen for her decision to stay in Italy and was labeled as «Verräterin und Italiensympathisantin» (Gradwohl-Schlacher 8).

⁸ While the South Tyrol clergy regarded Rubatscher's Anabaptist novel as anti-clerical and denied publication, Germany welcomed her *Heimatlidung* and praised its patriotic character.

⁹ Adalbert Schmidt, an Austrian professor of German literature, praised her novel in *Die Neue Literatur*, the leading National Socialist literary journal: «Das innige Zusammengehen von deutschem Volksbewußtsein und christlicher Gläubigkeit ist für das Gesamtschaffen Maria Veronika Rubatschers so überaus bezeichnend. ... Indem sie ihrem Volke dient, dient sie zugleich Gott, denn Volkstum ist gottgewollt» (172).

¹⁰ Rubatscher's nationalistic attitude derived from the experience of Italian fascism in

aus dem Marterbuch der deutschen Seele, reveals her ambition to blend the Anabaptist tradition of martyrology with a sense of German patriotism. Employing her historical fiction as «Spiegel der Gegenwart», she sympathizes with the Anabaptist persecution as she projects her own situation as *Auslandsdeutsche* onto their martyr past (Aust 44). In her narrative, history exists as a mirror of the contemporary struggle for national identity. She identifies with the historical Anabaptists and perceives their fate as an ostracized community representing the German minority in the Italian province.

The Spirit of Brotherhood and Martyrdom

The historical group of Anabaptists in Tyrol were the most unfortunate of all brethren communities in sixteenth-century Europe. According to twentieth-century historical scholarship, the Austrian brethren were relentlessly hunted, tortured, and executed as Ferdinand of Habsburg insisted upon the harshest possible measures against the radical faith group (Loserth, Tirol 36-40). As the authorities applied an array of means to ferret out the Anabaptists, such as the organisation of *Täuferjäger* (Anabaptist hunters) and the appointment of spies as well as the granting of high rewards for those who captured members of the group, the movement went underground and established a catacomb church. Maria Veronika Rubatscher gives a sympathetic account of the group's fate as a persecuted minority that gathers and manages an underground congregation.

The Tyrolean Anabaptists are first introduced in *Das lutherische Joggele* as a clandestine community that, fearing persecutions by the church and the state, meets secretly at night in an isolated building high in the mountains. While the brethren listen to sermons, hold discussions, sing hymns, and administer baptisms, they are well aware of the risks they are taking, and they know the consequences of being caught by officials: «Draußen im Land, in der Nacht reiten die Richter und Pfleger, schleichen die Aufpasser und Schergen, rennen die Postboten mit des Kaisers Edikt und des Bischofs und Landsfürsten Mandat» (10). The novel depicts the group's constant fear of persecution. The mandates and decrees with which authorities aim to

the late 1920s. In order to avoid an «Italianization» under the Mussolini regime, beginning in 1922, a number of authors celebrated their German heritage excessively. As Leitgeb has pointed out, Rubatscher's «Nationalismus nationalsozialistischer Prägung ist als ein Abwehrversuch der Assimilierungstendenzen einer fremden Staatsnation durch den Beweis der Andersstämmigkeit zu werten» (57).

eradicate any deviation from the Catholic Church pose a serious threat to the lives of the believers.

At the same time, this permanent danger of being captured and executed generates a sense of fellowship among the radical religionists. Their confraternity is expressed by terms such as «Geschwistrige», «Brüder», and «Taufgesinnte», nomenclatures that reflect the group's sentiment of being united by faith. Perhaps inspired by Beck's assertion that «sie sich unter einander Brüder und Schwestern [nennen]» and the frequent use of the terms «Brüder» and «Geschwistrige» in the *Geschichts-Bücher*, Rubatscher employs the appropriate nomenclatures favored by the movement rather than the derogative term «Wiedertäufer» that was mostly used by non-members (v, 103). The reference to familial bonds by terms such as «brothers and sisters» supports the narrative's image of Anabaptism as a tight-knit community.

The spirit of brotherhood is further illustrated by the believers' unselfish conduct and their charitable efforts to support those members of the group who are in need. During the nocturnal gathering, the brethren collect items for an impoverished believer:

Hänsl Unterrainer, der selber lang in der Keuchen [Kerker] gelegen, ausgebrochen und in diesem Jahr Diener der Notdurft ist, breitet seinen Mantel auf die Erde hin und ein jegliches gibt sein Vermögen dar, mit willigem Gemüt, ungezwungen und ungedrungen. (13)

This nearly apostolic act of mutual aid by spreading the cloak and pooling all belongings to be shared with those members who are destitute was a common practice among the early believers and is reported in the brotherhood's chronicle¹¹. In the face of persecution and forced migration, the community embraces the spirit of *koinonia* and shares material aid with needy congregation members. Brotherly love and care is a recurring theme that characterizes the Anabaptist community in Rubatscher's narrative. After Joggele and his wife Gertraud are shunned by her father, the newlyweds receive support from the local Anabaptist congregation¹². In return, they

¹¹ *Die Geschichts-Bücher der Wiedertäufer* informs about such a similar act of sharing that took place in Nikolsburg in the year 1528: «Zu der Zeit haben disse Männer einen Mantel vor dem volkh nidergebratet vnd jederman hat sein vermögen dargelegt, mit willigem gemüt, vngezwungen vnd vngedrungen, zur unterhaltung der dürftigen, nach der leer der propheten vnd apostel» (75). Rubatscher copies this account word for word and transplants it into her storyline that is set in the 1530s.

¹² Although a couple of fellow believers suffer from hardship and privation themselves, they joyfully give their last cloak to the shivering bride. «Sie haben nur den einen [Mantel].

provide shelter for a fugitive from Moravia. The invitation «Kimm lei», which Joggele extends to the fellow believer, expresses the group's practice of mutual aid (112). The novel depicts the Anabaptists as a fellowship that is concerned with the welfare of each member. The service to the community is not regarded merely as an obligation to the poor; rather it is perceived as a blessing, «Gnad», and a beatific experience (93).

During the secret gathering at the beginning of the story, Jakob gives testimony of his faith, thereby summarizing essential aspects of Anabaptist life and piety. He reports that, even before he joined the faith group, he was fascinated by its exceptional conduct:

Sie nennen einander Bruder und Schwester. Sie fluchen nit. Sie schelten nit. Sie brauchen nit Wehr und Waffen, nit Kleider, die weltlich Pomp und Pracht anzeigen. Sie schlemmen und prassen nit. Sie rechen nit vor der Obrigkeit und tragen alles in Geduld und dem Heiligen Geist. Hab völlig vermeint, die ersten Christen wären wieder kömmen, und bin ihnen nachzogen. (22)

Through the perception of the young man, the main characteristics of the movement are introduced, namely its conformity to primitive Christianity, its sense of brotherhood, and its emphasis on simple life, humility, and patience as well as its non-resistant stance¹³. In Jakob's words, the author characterizes the group's patience and faith in suffering as having brought about his conversion to their belief: «Hab' das alles und noch viel mehr zum höchsten beherzigt und gedacht, es müsst doch eine gewaltige Gnad' Gottes bei ihnen sein, daß sie so beständig in ihren Herzen bis in den Tod verharren» (23). The Anabaptists are represented as a Christian community that remains steadfast in its faith, even when facing death. The protagonist assumes that the fellowship has received God's grace, for it stays true to its belief while persevering through torments and tribulations. Their experience of suffering and martyrdom defines their identity as a religious group.

Hat immer einer müssen in der Hütten bleiben, wenn es kalt und windig ist gewesen ... Jetzt haben sie keinen mehr. Sie aber falten die Händ und danken der Gnad, die ihnen ist erwiesen worden» (92).

¹³ Incidentally, this favorable account of the brotherhood was first given by Christoph Andreas Fischer, one of the most aggressive opponents of the Anabaptists in Moravia. Cited in Beck's introduction, Rubatscher copies Fischer's passage from his polemic writing *Von der Widertaufer verfluchten Ursprung*, leaving out his conclusion — «Wer sollte da glauben, dass unter diesen Kleidern lauter reissende Wölfe stecken!» — in order to keep up the humble and peaceful appearance of the Anabaptists in her literary portrayal of the group (cited in Beck v).

This path of suffering and acceptance of death for the sake of their faith is emphasized throughout the novel. Each time Joggele gets together with fellow believers, they exchange information regarding persecuted brethren. Burschel refers to this practice of spreading martyr stories as «ambulanter Todenkult» (161). The community shares the news about various members who have recently faced torture and execution while bearing testimony to their faith. «Sie reden von Geschwistrigen, die in der letztverwichenen Zeit für die Wahrheit Zeugenschaft gaben» (Rubatscher 117). Numerous names of brethren, whose fate is described in the *Geschichts-Bücher*, are mentioned in the novel. This listing of male and female martyrs of the Anabaptist movement creates the image of a suffering church. At the clandestine meeting, for instance, one of the members relates the events he witnessed in the dungeons:

Jörgl Übl, der Knappe, der Ruepper Hans und Gyprian, mein Bruder, nit minder die Weibsbilder: die Verena Klasen, die Ursula Hellriglin, des Joachim Kösner und des Josen Marken Tochter sein alle beständig geblieben. ... Der Huebmair, alias Bastl Glaser, der Hänsel Grünfelder, der Joggel Zängerle und der alte Oswald haben wohl sterben müssen. Ich kann euch ihre Freudigkeit nit sagen. (15)

This cataloguing of Anabaptist persecution stories constructs a collective identity of the faith group that is based on a shared experience of suffering and martyrdom. The community is stamped with a deep martyr sensibility. It holds its martyrs in the highest regard and memorializes their patient endurance of extreme pain.

Rubatscher's Use of Anabaptist Literature of Martyrdom

Imitating the *Hutterite Chronicle's* «Strategien der "Erfindung" heroischer Traditionen», Rubatscher's novel portrays the believers as heroes who exhibit courage and discipline when remaining steadfast in moments of torture and pain (Burschel 7). As the chronicle's motivation is historical and inspirational, Rubatscher employs martyr stories as a means of both preserving regional history and shaping the readers' sensibilities. Her literary portrayal of the Anabaptists' patient endurance of earthly tribulations aims to provide encouragement for fellow members of the German minority in northern Italy. Her fictionalized accounts of Anabaptist martyrs serve as examples of steadfast behavior. They exhibit qualities of courage and perseverance to be imitated by the contemporary ethnic minority.

In Rubatscher's novel, the fellowship develops a martyr consciousness by circulating eyewitness reports and prison letters among congregations

and singing about fellow martyrs in hymns. The employment of specific texts taken from the Anabaptist literary heritage resembles the community's historical usage of martyr literature, namely the commemoration of the believers' suffering and the celebration of their witness (Gregory 4). Several songs from the movement's hymnbook are included in the narrative, reflecting the Anabaptists' desperate situation during the time of severe persecution. During the brethren's march through the city on their way to the galleys, for instance, Jakob and the other prisoners carry the tune of «Dein heilig statt» attributed to Leonhard Schiemer¹⁴. The hymn's verse, «mit Schmach und Schand durch alle Land, verjaget und vertrieben ... man hetzt uns mit den Hunden», expresses poignantly the group's experience of ostracism (159).

In addition to the songs and records of martyrs taken from the Anabaptist literature of lamentation, *Das lutherische Joggele* contains a passage from the *Geschicht-Buch* that summarizes the various forms of physical torture and cruel execution methods the radical believers encountered during the sixteenth-century persecution:

In den finsternen Türmen haben sie verhungern und verfaulen müssen ... man hat ihnen Löcher in die Wangen gebrannt ... Etliche hat man zerreckt und zerstreckt, zu Aschen und Pulver verbrannt, an Säulen gebraten, mit glühenden Zangen zerrissen, mit dem Schwert gerichtet, ins Wasser gestoßen ... Sie trutzten aller Pein und Marter und blieben stark, standhaft und getrost bis in den Tod. (183-184)¹⁵

The narrative gives a vivid account of the brutality officials employed to punish the religious deviants and compel them to return to the state church. This depiction of the Anabaptists' fate in the dungeons and at the stake captures the group's notion of *Gelassenheit*, «a “letting-go” of temporal things in the awareness that God will provide for His own» (Hillerbrand, *Origins* 165). The brethren are pictured as faithful believers who accept

¹⁴ Rubatscher is very familiar with the Anabaptist hymns and even knows the melodies to which they were sung. In the case of Schiemer's song, for instance, the narrator reports «Es geht im Ton wie das “Dies irae, Dies illa”» (159). The author may have gleaned this information from Beck's *Geschichts-Bücher* or Wolkan's research about the *Ausbund* published in *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer* (1903).

¹⁵ Similarly, Wolkan's edition of the *Geschicht-Buch der Hutterischen Brüder* states: «Etliche gereckt und zerstreckt ... Etliche, daß sie an der Marter zerrissen und gestorben sein. Etlich zu Aschen und Pulver verbrannt ... Etlich an Säulen gebraten ...» (184). Rubatscher incorporates the persecution account almost word for word and even mentions her source at the end of the paragraph, «so und noch viel mehr ist in den Geschichtsbüchern der Martyrer Christi zu lesen» (185).

their fate and fully submit to the will of God despite any worldly tribulations. In doing so, they evolve into a community of courageous disciples who demonstrate a high degree of strength and steadfastness. As Rubatscher adopts the heroic tradition of the *Geschicht-Buch* in her historical novel, she idealizes the religious minority.

The parallel between the Hutterites' chronicle and Rubatscher's novel is most noticeable in the narrative's depiction of martyr accounts of the movement's Tyrolean leaders. The author relates to the stories of Jakob Hutter and Onofrius Griesinger¹⁶ their apprehension, their steadfastness on the rake, and their public execution – as they are presented in Beck's *Geschicht-Bücher*. Jakob Hutter's torture, for instance, is integrated into the novel as a reminder for community members to remain persistent in their faith: «Dann aber bekenn dich und laß nit ab, und wenn sie dich auf Eis und Feuer setzen, dir Salz und Pfeffer, Öl und Branntwein in die Wunden gießen und sie anzünden, wie weiland dem Huter selig» (16)¹⁷. Jakob Hutter is idealized as an Anabaptist hero whose steadfastness serves as an inspiration for the Tyrolean congregation. Based on the Anabaptist tradition of martyrologies, the account of Jacob Hutter's suffering offers moral guidance to fellow believers and is understood as «Anleitung zur Buße und damit zum Glauben» (Burschel 182).

Corresponding to the concept of the martyr record as a means of promoting faith, the protagonist of Rubatscher's novel reports of an uplifting encounter with Jakob Hutter. Witnessing the leader's endurance of pain, the young man converts to the Anabaptist belief:

Da haben sie den Jakob Hueter vorbeigeführt, gen Innsbruck in den Kräuterturm und Tod. ... einen Knebl [haben sie] in den Mund getan, daß er die Wahrheit nit verkünden könnt. Der Hueter hat mi angeschaut. Meiner Lebtag werd i den Blick nit vergessen. Und insgeheim hab i's versprochen ... «Taufbruder wird' i, und Taufbruder bleib i!»

¹⁶ Onofrius (Offrus) Griesinger was ordained as the leader of the Anabaptist community in Tyrol after Hutter's death. Before being called to this region of Austria, he had taken a group of brethren to Moravia and established a settlement in Auspitz. Once ordained as leader in Tyrol, he preached, baptized, and observed communion services. He was repeatedly captured by officials but he managed to escape each time. According to Loeserth, Onofrius was able to elude his pursuers several times (Griesinger 174). He was finally caught and executed in 1537.

¹⁷ The *Geschicht-Bücher* give following account of Jakob Hutter's torture: «diessen in in Eiskaltes wasser setzen vnd nachdem in ein heisse stuben fueren, ... Auch habens im sein leib verwundt, branntwein in die wundten gossen vnd an im angezndt vnd brennen lassen» (Beck 122).

(23-24)¹⁸. The prominent Anabaptist leader hardly appears as an actual character in the story. Joggele simply observes him from a distance. Yet, the elder's gaze has a fundamental impact on the protagonist's life. The short moment in which their eyes meet links the *Geschicht-Bücher's* account of the historical individual with the storyline of the fictional novel.

Rubatscher's narrative relies on the documents given in the group's chronicles in order to construct the image of the historically attested leaders who epitomize the Anabaptist experience of suffering. In the novel's description of Onofrius' interrogation and execution, the author intertwines historical accounts and fictional plot. Onofrius' martyr story is presented in the form of a messenger's report that is spread among congregation members. The depiction of torture underlines his strength in remaining true to his faith and fellowship:

Sie dräuen ihn. Sie brennen ihn: Er soll ihnen seine Brüder anzeigen, die noch nit vertrieben sein, und sonderlich die ihn beherbergt und verköstigt haben. Bruder Onofrius aber hat gesagt: Ich habe mich dahin begeben alle Pein und Marter zu erdulden, die ein Mensch erdulden kann bis in den Tod, eh daß ich's euch sag und ein Verräter sein sollt. (32)

This portrayal of Onofrius' commitment to the brotherhood unto death corresponds with the report given in the *Geschicht-Bücher*¹⁹. Employing historical records of the elder's perseverance through the grim ordeal evokes an admiration for the group's persistence in the face of death.

Rubatscher enriches Onofrius' heroic martyr legend, documented in the *Geschicht-Bücher*, with a poetic language that illustrates the courage and devotion of the Anabaptist leader. With an array of stylistic devices such as anaphora, rhyme, and alliteration, the author emphasizes the martyr's patience and faith in suffering, thereby arousing sympathy for the persecuted minority. Onofrius' experience of torture is introduced with a vivid description:

¹⁸ Parallel to Joggele's report of Jakob Hutter's transport to Innsbruck, the *Geschicht-Bücher* relate: «Balt darnach unden sie im ein knebel in's mail, auf das er nit reden solt künen vnd fuerten in geen Insprukh» (Beck 122).

¹⁹ «Nit lang darnach, als sie den Br. Offrus vil versuecht vnd in vast dreueten zu martern, er soll inen anzaigen seine Brueder, die noch nit vertriben seindt, vnd sonderlich die in beherbrigt, da hat er inen gesagt: Ich hab mich dahin gegeben alle pein vnd marter zu erdulden, die ein Mensch erdulden kann, bis in Todt, ee daz ich's euch sag vnd ein verräter sein solt» (Beck 139).

Immer wieder ein Stuck.
 Immer wieder ein Schluck.
 Immer wieder ein Ruck.
 Es kracht das Gebein. Es spritzt das Blut.
 Schwarz von Blut ist der Boden in den
 Gewölben und sind die Wänd. (31)

The novel's fixation on the bloody sacrifices of Onofrius and other Anabaptist martyrs exceeds the group's notion of the *Nachfolge Christi*. The author glorifies the collective suffering and fuses the movement's heroic tradition with nationalistic elements. Onofrius' death as a martyr not only reflects the brotherhood's readiness to follow Christ in his bearing of the cross; further, it represents the oppression of an entire German folk movement.

Tyrolean Anabaptism and Martyrdom as Expressions of German Nationalism

Rubatscher adopts the movement's martyrological tradition in order to depict the early Anabaptists as an «einig Volk», that set a boundary to the outside world through the celebration of martyr legends (19). Employing the notion of the fellowship as a distinct *Volk*, a term that is frequently mentioned in the Anabaptist chronicles²⁰, the novelist draws a comparison between the situation of 1530s Anabaptists in South Tyrol and the German-speaking populace in that region during the 1930s. While Anabaptists use the term *Volk* to mean «gemain gottes» (Beck 151), the author employs the shared term to transfer her ultra-patriotic stance onto the movement's past. The identification of the brotherhood's early history with an awareness of the German *Volk* is apparent in Onofrius' remark on the group's settlements in Moravia:

Ejawohl schön ist es in dem Markgratumb, alda Gott aus allen deutschen Landen ein Volk in seinem Namen sammelt, in einem Herzen, Sinn und Gemüt zu wandeln, daß sich der eine um den andern in Treuen annehmen mög ... ja wohl viele treue Helden haben die Wahrheit ritterlich mit ihrem Blut bezeugt, seit Gott ein enig Volk sich abgesundert hat vor allen Völkern der Welt in Deutscher Nation. (19)

The author blends Anabaptist martyr rhetoric with a national identity. However, the portrayal of the fellowship as a German national movement

²⁰ «Zur selben Zeit meret sich daz volkh gottes täglich vnd got gab seinem wort, daz durch seine sendtboten gepredigt wardt, zeugnuss» (Beck 151). In contrast to Rubatscher's use of the term *Volk*, suggesting a national identity, the Anabaptist literature employs the term exclusively in the context of the group's destiny as God's chosen people.

is most problematic. Historically, the concept of nation and nationalism is extraneous to the sixteenth-century faith group²¹. The novel's association of the radical reform movement with the «Deutsche Nation» ignores the group's chief tenet of separation from the world. In the narrative, Rubatscher combines Anabaptism with nationalistic elements for the purpose of cloaking her ideological program in the guise of the historical fellowship.

The novel's nationalistic employment of the early Tyrolean Anabaptists becomes especially noticeable in its depiction of the protagonist. Joggele emerges as a hero who embodies virtues essential to the *Blut und Boden* ideology of the early twentieth century. His physical traits epitomize the Nordic type claimed as the master race by German race theorists. Referred to as «der blonde Ries», Jakob is described as: «blutjung, braun wie Brunelle und blond wie reißendes Traid» (21-23). A fellow believer praises him for strength, asserting «ihr seid die Gesundheit» (146). The protagonist's outward appearance indicates the novelist's emphasis on qualities of character commonly associated with the Nordic race, such as healthy and clean lifestyle and joy in manual labor. As an idealized figure, Joggele is characterized by an eager, vigorous, and strong-minded nature. Even during his time as a galley slave, he bears the pain with a consistently high degree of strength and patience. Despite the torments and tribulations, he proclaims that life «ist eine Gnad'» (67). The illustration of the Anabaptist perseverance of intense suffering aboard the slave ship blends the movement's notion of *Gelassenheit* with the author's call for patience during the German oppression in South Tyrol by the Italian government. The Anabaptist faith thus serves as a means of elevating the «passive Bejahung allen Geschehens», as Leitgelb calls it, to a «duldigem Ertragen einer jeden Lebenssituation» (51).

As a member of the peasantry, Joggele represents the simple rural life of the Tyrolean people. He is described as a hard worker, eager to occupy and cultivate land to create a foundation for his family's life:

²¹ The concept of nationalism is foreign to the Anabaptist movement. According to Hans Kohn's definition, «nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness» with which the individual identifies himself as a member of and gives supreme loyalty to a specific nation (10-12). As Benedict Anderson has pointed out, it was not until the nineteenth century that Europe was in the process of building nations and states, and developing notions of nationalism (83). Apart from the fact that the concept of nationalism did not yet exist in the sixteenth century, the Anabaptists have historically been a Christian fellowship that was solely committed to God's kingdom and separated from any secular power. According to the Schleithem Confession of Faith, stating that «the rule of the government is according to the flesh», the Anabaptists promoted a strict separation of church and state (Yoder 15).

Der Joggel haut und schaufelt den ganzen Tag. Brotland schafft er für sein ungeborenes Kind aus dem dürren Staudicht. Denn auf Pieterstein hört die arge Welt auf und fangt die göttliche Wildnis an. Da regiert noch das gute alte, ungeschriebene deutsche Recht und das Land ist dem untertan und für Leib und Erben verfallen. (120-121)

The narrative romanticizes the life that Jakob and his wife lead in separation from the established society. Due to his dissident faith, the couple has settled in the remote area of the Pieterstein, avoiding conflict with society. His efforts to transform the wilderness of the Tyrolean Mountain into an agricultural area correspond to the rural values and virtues stressed by the German National Socialist ideology, which regarded peasants as guardians of the German land and racial stock (Mosse 134). As an industrious farmer, Joggele works the land and creates living space for his growing family. The mountain serves as a safe haven for the religious minority. Motivated by the author's love for the Tyrolean landscape, the description presents the mountainous region as a nearly divine place that conciliates «Familie, Arbeit, Natur und Religion» (Waldner 158). In correspondence to the «agrarromantische Ideologie» of the National Socialism, Rubatscher crafts an image of the Anabaptist that is characterized by his vigor and self-sufficiency in the mountainous enclave (Leitgeb 80).

Similarly, his fellow believers in Moravia are described in the novel as «deutsche Brüder» who are the «friedsamste[n] und fleißigste[n] Untergebene[n], die die Wüsteneien zu Gärten machten ... das beste Korn und Brot ... und Gerät in die Scheunen lieferten» (114). The text links the Anabaptist industry and expertise in farming to the German nationalist concept of *Lebensraum*, the concern with the colonization of Eastern Europe, which was assumed to provide additional space and an agricultural surplus to feed the German nation. The brethren's reported settlement in the East where «sich daz volckh gottes täglich [meret]» is portrayed as an expansion mission to cultivate waste regions of Moravia (Beck 151). De Boor-Friedrich's article in *Frauenkultur*, a journal affiliated with *Deutsches Frauenwerk*, the German national socialist organisation for women, indicates that Rubatscher's description of the Anabaptist migration to Moravia was perceived as support for Germany's colonization efforts, «keine Marter und keine Qual vermag diese stolzen und mutigen Menschen von ihrem Weg abzubringen, und so werden sie schließlich zu Trägern der deutschen Kolonization im fernen Slavenland» (23).

Rubatscher classifies the Tyrolean Anabaptists as Germans in her historical novel. The brotherhood is depicted as a highly respectable folk

movement that is intrinsically German, contrasting with Romanic elements of the Catholic Church. Jakob is described as a German hero who combines national spirit with evangelical faith. He presents a vision of rescuing the country from ecclesiastical divisions:

Deutschland, o Deutschland, all deine Flüß sein rot vom Blut der Bekenner, deine Türrn sein voll von ihrer Pein. Deine Wälder brennen und verbrennen das Gebein der Heiligen. ... Wann wird der Streit: Hie lutherisch? Hie katholisch! Aus sein und der Deutsche wieder deutsch uns eins zu seinem Herrgott beten? (20)

In this exclamation, the German nation assumes a personality that mirrors the country's religious schism and pain. The landscape reflects the suffering of martyrs as they are drowned or burned at the stake. This visualization of the «Bekenners Pein» does not, however, elucidate the historical reasons for the Anabaptist persecution; rather, it pictures the fellowship's fate as part of an overall tragedy of the German spirit (Schowalter 668).

The nation's inner conflict and the brethren's massacre are portrayed as a result of foreign influences. The novel depicts the invasion of the German Empire by Romanic powers: «Inquisiter kömmen aus Hispanien mit scharfem Geschau und Bluthunden an der Leine» (81). The French sovereign and the Catholic authority pose a threat to the country's unity, «des Königs von Frankreich böse Praktiken sind offenbar geworden. Böse Fäden spinnt der Papst in Rom» (28). Rubatscher alludes to the contemporary situation in which she experienced the ruthlessness of the «Italianization» efforts in South Tyrol. Mussolini's policy to reduce the indigenous German-speaking population was perceived as a threat to the German spirit. Representing the *Auslandsdeutschtum*, Rubatscher's writing is motivated by a strong desire for the reunification of the South Tyrol region with the German fatherland.

Yet, the author's critical remarks about the papal leadership, Mary Bender justly observes, were not meant as a reaction against the Catholic Church as such (116). In fact, Rubatscher grew up in the Catholic faith, received free schooling from the *Englische Fräulein* (Congregatio Jesu), and completed one year of novitiate at St. Pölten where she was known as «vorbildliche Ordensanwärterin» (Leitgeb 26). Although she left the order in 1923, she remained a devoted Catholic and integrated «das katholische Element» into her fiction (Leitgeb 266). As a devout Catholic, her object of criticism is the foreign element and moral laxity within the established church. The novel's protagonist denounces the Latin influences and the priest's questionable conduct when asserting, «da singen und lesen sie [die Priester] Latein, von

dem der gemeine Mann nix versteht», and proposes, «die Leutepriester sollen dem Gotteswort auswarten und nit in den Wirtshäusern liegen» (83, 43). Joggele and the Anabaptist movement are described as a religious response to the foreign, especially Italian, infiltration of the state church.

The protagonist and his fellow believers form a counter movement to the church's politics and its foreign influences by proposing ecclesiastical changes that suggest a folk piety. Yet, at the same time, they retain an essentially Catholic disposition in the novel's storyline. The author avoids the completion of the protagonist's adult baptism – a practice that is fervently rejected by the Catholic Church – during the nocturnal gathering. Although Joggele responds to the elder's questions according to the movement's principles, he does not attain full membership through the baptismal rite. After his failed confirmation to the brotherhood, he marries Gertraud, who venerates the Blessed Virgin Mary and encourages him to consecrate himself to the mother of Jesus. At their engagement, she presses a medallion with the picture of Mary to his lips, asking him «daß er sie in ihrem Bildnis ehren und benedeien mög, die Mutter des Herrn» (84). The veneration of saints, not practiced by the Anabaptist movement, provokes an image of the radical reform movement that fuses the fellowship's sense of discipleship with Catholic elements.

The novel advocates a unified German folk piety that merges Christian aspects, both Catholic and Anabaptist, with Germanic paganism and closeness to nature. Upon Jakob's return to Tyrol, he is marked by the torture experienced aboard the slave ship:

Die Sprache ist ihm vergangen im Meerwind, in den römischen Sümpfen. ... Wenn man ihn fragt: «Wer bist du?» stürzt er die Ärmel auf. Tief ausgelaugt ist ihm das Gelenk vom Mal der Kette. Er entblößt den Rücken. Braunnarbig, fleckig, streifig wie die Alm im späten Herbst ist er von der Sklavenpeitsche und alle wissen: Das ist ein Bekenner Christi. (177)

His wounds are reminiscent of the pain caused by foreign powers on Roman territory. Although the narrative affirms the religious motivation of his martyrdom, Jakob no longer represents a specifically Anabaptist character. The novel associates his persecution with foreign influences while leaving the church's reasons for oppressing the brotherhood unclarified. The book uses the Anabaptist protagonist to embody the suffering and pain of all martyrs, without symbolizing the fate of the Anabaptist movement in particular. This elimination of the uniquely Anabaptist element is also no-

ticeable in the epithet «lutherisch», which is used to designate all who are not affiliated with the Roman-Catholic Church.

The radical reform movement has lost its significance in the story and merely serves as a catalyst for the development of a folk piety that promotes a steadfast belief, the rejection of Latin influences, and an attachment to rural simplicity. The protagonist grows closer to nature and God by a life in the open in prayer. The Tyrolean landscape provides a place of safety for the physically suffering man, «er hat die Wolken und die Berg, den Wind zum Gespielen, ... das schwellende Moos ist sein Lager ... ja klein und fern ist alles Menschenwerk und Gott ist nah» (179). In proximity to the divine, he awaits death. According to Leitgeb, the theme of «des Leidenden, der durch die reine Natur zur “Stille” kommt, ist ein häufiges Motiv der Heimatliteratur» (80). Jakob appears as the hero of a romantic myth about the development of a folk piety that does not distinguish between particular confessions. The Anabaptist faith and its unique history of martyrdom dissolve into the concept of a universal church.

Conclusion

In her historical novel, Rubatscher gives a sympathetic portrayal of the Anabaptists' religious principles and their experience of persecution. Her awareness of the group's theology and perseverance of pain is initiated by advancements in the research of sixteenth-century Anabaptism and the recovery of the brotherhood's own historical documents and testimonies. Through her familiarity with the group's own literature, especially the Hutterites' *Geschicht-Bücher*, the author has developed a group-internal perspective that focuses on the believers' experience of suffering and martyrdom. The portrayal of the Anabaptists' sense of brotherhood and their emphasis on a simple life, humility, and non-resistance is reminiscent of the apostolic early church. Incarnating Christ's example of patience and faith in suffering, the Anabaptists in Rubatscher's novel exemplify a calm spirit and submission to the will of God.

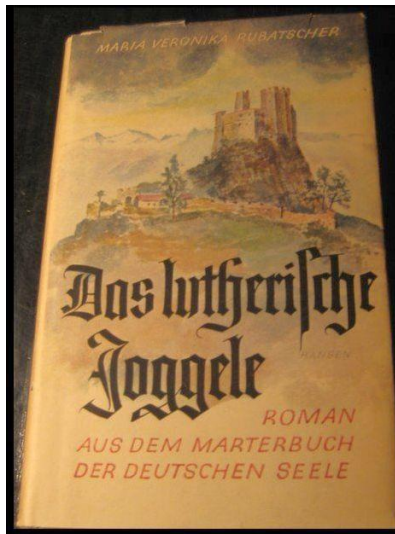
The author utilizes the depiction of the movement's martyrdom for inspirational as well as programmatic purposes. Her literary illustration of their endurance of pain provides both encouragement and guidance for the reader. At the same time, the novelist interprets the Anabaptist sense of *Gelassenheit* to suit her personal situation as a member of the German Tyrolean minority in fascist Italy. In her fictionalization of the historical Anabaptist movement, she commends virtues such as simplicity, brotherhood, and steadfastness, all of which represent the German nationalist ideal. The

distinctive components of the group's Scripture-infused social practice, especially the adherence to ethical principles and the collective experience of persecution, generate the image of an ideal community. This emphasis on aspects of martyrdom and steadfastness contributes to a literary formulation of Christian heroism that the novelist relates to her own national identity. In order to advocate for her personal ideological views, she depicts the Anabaptist notion of *Nachfolge* as part of a larger movement. She assigns the brethren specifically Germanic attributes, thus linking them to a unified German folk piety. In that regard, she exploits Anabaptist issues such as martyrdom and steadfastness to suit her own nationalistic ideology. In *Das lutherische Joggele*, the sixteenth-century Anabaptist faith group is united with the Tyrolean *Auslandsdeutsche* for the strategy of cementing the author's conception of an ideal folk piety.

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