

leaders could not enter the role of theological or patristic debate and the lack of meaningful discussion did not help their image in the mind of the reformation leaders...but the general intolerance of the age was a large part of the real picture.

With some few exceptions, anabaptists were marked with piety, subjectivism, and often mysticism. But the exceptions are sufficiently gruesome that they are well-remembered. No study of the Reformation is complete, therefore, without some attention to this group.

Some early leaders

II.8.a.

Anabaptist Leaders

Among those who must be mentioned would be Balthasar Hubmeier, Switzerland, who died a martyr's death in 1528. In 1525 he had denied the validity of infant baptism and in 1526 was under death sentence by drowning (although immersion was not his dominant method). He was the student (in principle) of Conrad Grebel whose anabaptist views appeared in Switzerland in 1523. The Seven Articles of Schlatt appeared in 1527 and pronounced the concept of self-governing congregations and were probably outgrowths of Grebel's philosophy. These men were leaders of high principle and moral value.

Unfortunately the leadership in Luther's day in southern Germany was often not so elevated. The Mincer-Storch group was largely a radical element associated with riot and public disorder. They were, however, mild compared with the Munster men. But in both these cases, civil revolutionaries better described the activists than did the term anabaptists.

The Munster Theocracy

II.8.b.

The Munster Theocracy

A radical baptist leader, Melchior Hoffman, prepared the way for the Munster moves through his call for a new Jerusalem and the leading of a radical move at Strasburg. He eventually died there, in prison, but some of his fellow thinkers gained the supremacy at the German city of Munster. Jan Matthys in 1533-34 announced himself to be Enoch returned and along with John of Leyden gained political control of Munster, driving out the bishop. With their cohorts they established the New Jerusalem, reinstituted polygamy--became abusive of the populace and required suppression by external forces. I have earlier noted their