

GEORG HANSEN AND THE DANZIG FLEMISH MENNONITE  
CHURCH: A STUDY IN CONTINUITY

BY

HARVEY PLETT

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in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## ABSTRACT

This is a study of Georg Hansen and the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church in Poland from 1650-1700. Mennonites from the Netherlands moved to the Vistula Delta beginning in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, in order to escape persecution, but also in response to the recruiting efforts of locators, land renting agents for the noblemen. The Mennonite peasants involved in agricultural production, brought their farming and land reclamation skills to the new homeland. Those moving to urban centers brought their occupations such as textile manufacturing and distilling, with them. Both groups sought the continued use of these in the new homeland.

Through an examination of primary sources such as letters, reports, government decrees, and the writings and activity of Georg Hansen and the Flemish Mennonite Church in Danzig, the question of ethnic continuity has been studied. Various sociological and anthropological constructs were used to evaluate the information found. Included were such concepts as endogamy, density of population, education, "boundedness", belief systems, and leadership style and effectiveness.

This thesis has discovered that there was strong ethnic continuity and group identity maintenance in the Flemish

Mennonites. The separate identity the Flemish Mennonites maintained involved separation from both the wider society and the Frisians.

An examination of the interplay of a hostile environment, the ambivalent treatment by the king of opposition and protection, the theology of the Flemish, and the effective leadership of Hansen were helpful in developing an understanding of the continuity and change the Flemish Mennonites experienced during the last half of the seventeenth century. This thesis found that ethnic identity was maintained despite such adaptations as language shift and postponing baptism of converts. By the end of the seventeenth century the conservative Flemish had maintained a strong group identity, and were moving into the eighteenth century with no indication of relinquishing that sensibility.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AFR</u>	<u>Archiv Fuer Reformationsgeschichte</u>
<u>APH</u>	<u>Acta Poloniae Historia</u>
<u>CH</u>	<u>Church History</u>
<u>DCR</u>	<u>Danzig Church Records</u>
<u>HDR</u>	<u>Hastings Dictionary of Religion</u>
<u>ISBE</u>	<u>International Bible Encyclopedia</u>
<u>MB</u>	<u>Mennonitische Blaetter</u>
<u>ME</u>	<u>Mennonite Encyclopedia</u>
<u>MGB</u>	<u>Mennonitische Geschichtsblaetter</u>
<u>MNL</u>	<u>Mennonite Life</u>
<u>ML</u>	<u>Mennonitisches Lexikon</u>
<u>MOR</u>	<u>The Mennonite Quarterly Review</u>
<u>NCE</u>	<u>New Catholic Encyclopedia</u>
<u>PP</u>	<u>Past and Present</u>

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The following is a study of Georg Hansen, elder of the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church, and the Flemish Church situated in the Danzig suburbs and area. Chronologically, the study is limited to the latter half of the seventeenth century, 1650-1700. This time frame was chosen because it spans the years of Georg Hansen's activity and leadership. This thesis examines how the social structure, religious values, and ethnic identity of the Flemish Mennonites changed as a result of having lived in Poland for over a century from the time that the first Mennonites moved there from the Netherlands. The Flemish were one faction of the larger Mennonite body who had their origin in the Reformation in Switzerland and the Netherlands. When the Mennonites initially migrated to Poland they came as a unified group. Later, divisions were imported from the Netherlands including factions such as the Flemish, Frisians, Waterlaenders, and High German (Hochdeutsche), thereby dividing the Mennonites in Poland into the same factions as existed in the Netherlands. Such divisions aggravated the problem of group identity, for, not only did each faction face the question of retaining an

identity separate from the rest of society, they also struggled for an identity distinct from the other groups.

Anabaptism emerged in the Netherlands and northern Germany almost simultaneously with its appearance in Switzerland.<sup>1</sup> There is some debate whether the two groups emerged independently. Melchior Hoffman, a Lutheran lay-preacher, having accepted Anabaptist doctrine in Strasbourg, found his way to northern Germany and the Netherlands, where he preached these ideas, and became a link between the north and the south wings of the movement.<sup>2</sup>

It is apparent that the early Swiss Anabaptists did not have a clear vision of what they were seeking to achieve until they had made their break with Zwingli.<sup>3</sup> Once the break was accomplished, in the midst of social turmoil, the formation of a church shortly followed. The Schleithem Confession of 1527 reflected a consciousness of identity among the leaders in attempting to form a new community through seeking unity in belief and practice.<sup>4</sup> It was in 1527, rather than 1525, that

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<sup>1</sup>Cornelius Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism. (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: 1981), 253.

<sup>2</sup>William Keeney, "Anabaptism in the Netherlands," in An Introduction to Mennonite History ed. Cornelius J. Dyck (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1967), 75-76; Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 91.

<sup>3</sup>James Stayer, et. al., "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: The Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins," MOR 59 (1977): 83-125.

<sup>4</sup>"Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles." MOR, 19 (1945), 247-253.

Bender's "Vision" of an emergent Anabaptist church became manifest.<sup>5</sup>

The teachings of Anabaptism spread quickly and found followers wherever they were disseminated. Blickle, using the estimates of R. van Duermen, notes that this rapid growth is illustrated in Switzerland, where there were forty-three congregations in 1525, but by 1528 there were five hundred.<sup>6</sup> Claus-Peter Clasen is less enthusiastic about the growth when he indicates that, in comparison to the Lutheran or Reformed churches, the Anabaptist movement was statistically small.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, that Anabaptism spread quite rapidly is apparent from the fact that in a few years small groups of Anabaptists were found in many parts of Europe.<sup>8</sup>

The Anabaptist movement has been variously described.

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<sup>5</sup>Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," CH 13 (March, 1944): 3-24.

<sup>6</sup>Peter Blickle, Gemeindereformation: Die Menschen des 16. Jahrhunderts auf dem Weg zum Heil (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Publishing, 1987), 118. Blickle numbers are based on the estimates of Richard van Duelman, Reformation als Revolution: Soziale Bewegung und religioeser Radikalismus in der deutschen Reformation, Wissenschaftliche Reihe 4273 (Munich, 1977), 182-183.

<sup>7</sup>Claus-Peter Clasen. Anabaptism: A Social History, 1525-1618. (London: Cornell University Press, 1972.), 429-435.

<sup>8</sup>"The Mennonites in Germany," MOR 11 (January 1937): 34-43. Samuel Geisler, "The Mennonites of Switzerland and France," MOR 11 (January 1937): 44-60. J. Ijntema, "The Mennonites in the Netherlands," MOR 11 (January 1937): 24-33.

Roland Bainton called it the Left Wing of the Reformation.<sup>9</sup> In The Radical Reformation, G. H. Williams discussed the whole movement under the rubric of the Radical Reformation.<sup>10</sup> Williams delineated five characteristics of the Radical Reformation. First, it was characterized by a commitment to the principle of separation of the church from the national or territorial state. It insisted on believer's baptism, that is, on the experience of regeneration prior to baptism, and in being quite indifferent to the general social and political order. It further rejected the Lutheran-Zwinglian-Calvinistic forensic formulation of justification, and, in its place, emphasized personal commitment and a continuous exercise of those personal disciplines by which it strove to imitate the New Testament and apostolic community. It placed a strong emphasis on imitatio Christi or discipleship of the re-born Christian.<sup>11</sup>

John Howard Yoder described the Anabaptist movement as a Restitution Movement. In other words, it was an attempt to reconstitute primitive Christianity.<sup>12</sup> Clarence Bauman

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<sup>9</sup>Roland Bainton, The Origin of Sectarian Protestantism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), XIV, XVI, 21, 23-24, 27, 47.

<sup>10</sup>G. H. Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), XXIV-XXX.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>John Howard Yoder, "Anabaptism and History," in Umstrittenes Tauefertum 1525-1975, ed. Hans-Juergen Goertz, (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 244-258.

discussed his definition or identification of Anabaptism in his Gewaltlosigkeit im Täuferium.<sup>13</sup> He made the point that, as a rule, the designation, Anabaptism, included a wide spectrum of groups and beliefs, from trinitarian pacifists of the Grebel community to the revolutionary groups around Thomas Muentzer and the Muensterites. In order to adequately account for similarities and differences in the various groups, Bauman developed a workable schema which grouped the Anabaptists into three identifiable bodies based on their concept of authority. First, there were the Baptists (Täufers). This group was characterized by subscribing to the New Testament as its final authority. Their goal was to duplicate the ideal apostolic martyr church through conversion, adult baptism, and the ban.

Bauman identified three sub-groups within this larger designation. First, there were the Evangelical Baptists in upper Germany and Switzerland. These were further divided into sub-communities such as the Swiss Brethren, represented by Grebel, Manz, and Blaurock. Michael Sattler was considered the connecting link to the next grouping in South and Central Germany where the Marpeck circle was active. Here Hubmaier became the connecting link between the Swiss Brethren and the Moravian Baptists such as Stadler, Hutter, and Riedeman. In addition to the Swiss-South German Baptists, Bauman identified

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<sup>13</sup>Clarence Bauman, Gewaltlosigkeit im Täuferium (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 1-37.

the significant Baptist-Mennonites in the Netherlands, with leaders such as Obbe and Dirk Philips and Menno Simons, as part of the Evangelical Baptist group.

There were two other sub-groups Bauman identified with the Baptist (Taeufer) designation: the Chiliastic Charismatics, as illustrated by Melchior Hoffman; and the Contemplative Anabaptists, such as Denck and Haetzer.

The second large grouping within the wider Anabaptist family Bauman identified were the Spiritualists. This group found its source of authority in the in-dwelling Spirit and the Old Testament. They were concerned with the future and, as a result, there were two responses in this grouping. One grouping put forth every effort to prepare and wait for the Lord's return while the other, out of impatience, initiated revolution to bring in the Kingdom of God. These were further characterized by Bauman as individualistic, quietistic, and considered themselves united in an invisible universal spirit fellowship.

Bauman enumerated three different types of Spiritualists. First, there were the revolutionaries, represented by Thomas Muentzer. Secondly, Schwenckfeld was an example of the so-called Evangelical Spiritualists. Finally, there were the Rational Spiritualists, exemplified by Sebastian Franck.

Franck became the link to the third major grouping of Anabaptists, namely the Evangelical Rationalists, whose authority was reason (Vernunft). Bauman identified Erasmus,



Servetus and Castellio as representatives of this group.

A weakness of groupings such as Bauman's is the problem of overlap. Boundaries between groupings are seldom precise and if groups have several common elements the boundary lines are fuzzy at best. Bauman's schema is however helpful in discussing the genuine differences and similarities within Anabaptism. According to the above schema, the community under discussion in this thesis falls within the classification of Dutch Baptist-Mennonites in the sub-group, Evangelical Baptists.

Bauman's grouping would suggest a monogenesis of Anabaptism. Scholars such as Stayer, Depperman, and Packull argue that the evidence suggests a polygenesis.<sup>14</sup> It is clear that Anabaptism developed differently in such areas as Switzerland, South Germany and North Germany and the Netherlands but whether totally independently in each case is not as clear. The Hoffman connection between Strasbourg and the Netherlands is indisputable. Bauman's schema can be adapted to permit various developments and origins.

James R. Coggins suggests that the attempts to find a polygenesis may be influenced by nationalism, each area

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<sup>14</sup>James Stayer, Anabaptists and the Sword (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1976), 1-25, 329-338; Stayer, et. al., "Mongogenesis to Polygenesis," 83-121. See also Klaus Depperman, Melchoir Hoffman (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 9-35; C. Arnold Snyder, The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, No. 26 (Scotdale: Herald Press, 1984), 15-29, 11-202.

seeking an independent beginning.<sup>15</sup> Coggins further concludes that the attempts at defining the essence of Anabaptism are still in flux and will continue to be so in the immediate future.<sup>16</sup> Consequently this thesis seeks to use a schema that will help to identify the group under study as well as allow for the diversity and similarity that characterizes Anabaptism. Bauman's schema is usable for such a purpose.

The theology of Menno was developed in a different social context than Sattler's and thus reflected some different emphases. For example, some of Menno's statements on the believer's relation to the state appear less separatist than Sattler's.<sup>17</sup> However by the time of his death Menno was advocating the radical separateness of the Schleitheim Confession and by the end of the sixteenth century "virtually all Anabaptists had adopted the idea . . . that 'the Sword is ordained outside the perfection of Christ'."<sup>18</sup> Since this thesis is concerned about ideological comparisons, and since

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<sup>15</sup>James R. Coggins, "Toward a Definition of Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism: Twentieth-Century Historiography of the Radical Reformation," Journal of Mennonite Studies, 4 (1986), 195.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 202. See also Walter Klassen, Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant, rev. ed. (Waterloo: Conrad Press, 1981), 1-9; A. F. Mellink, "The Beginnings of Dutch Anabaptism in the Light of Recent Research," MOR, 62 (1988): 211-220.

<sup>17</sup>Stayer, Anabaptism and the Sword, 309-329.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 328.

Hansen was familiar with the radical separateness that had emerged in relation to the teaching of the state, comparison's will be made with Menno's teaching, seeking to be aware of both, these differences as well as the synthesis that had developed.

The term, Anabaptist or Mennonite, as used in this thesis, refers to that community within the large grouping, sometimes referred to as the Radical Reformation, which accepted the Scriptures<sup>19</sup> as the final and full authority for faith and life. This group postulated the reconstitution of the Apostolic Martyr Church. For this to be achieved, they pressed for an ethical regeneration experience by faith, in relation to which they practised voluntary adult baptism and the ban as well as a life of discipleship and non-resistance.<sup>20</sup>

The Mennonite migration from the Netherlands to Poland began in the early second quarter of the sixteenth century and continued until the beginning of the seventeenth century. In Poland, the Mennonites settled in the Vistula Delta, as well as in northern urban centres such as Danzig and Elbing. There

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<sup>19</sup>John C. Wenger, "The Biblicism of the Anabaptists," in the Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, ed. Guy F. Hershberger (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1957), 167-179.

<sup>20</sup>Cornelius Krahn, Menno Simons (1496-1561) (1496-1561) (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1936), 124-138.

are few recent studies on eastern European Anabaptism.<sup>21</sup> Particularly is this true of the Polish Mennonite community prior to the Prussian take over and the partitions of Poland.

Horst Penner, a Polish Mennonite refugee of World War II currently living in Germany, has written a two volume set on the Mennonites in East and West Prussia.<sup>22</sup> Volume one discusses, in five hundred pages, the time period from 1526 to 1772. Volume II picks up the story in 1772 and carries it forward to the present. Horst Penner's booklet, Ansiedlung mennonitischer Niederlaender im Weichselmuendungsgebiet von der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn der preussischen Zeit, focused on the various settlements in the Vistula Delta.<sup>23</sup> Penner sought to complete the story of the migration of the Mennonites, which Felicia Szper<sup>24</sup> had not covered in her 1913 thesis on Dutch migrations to Poland prior

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<sup>21</sup>A few of the studies include, Horst Penner, Die Ost- und Westpreussischen Mennoniten in ihrem religioesen und sozialen Leben in ihren Kulturellen und Wirtschaftlichen Leistungen (Weierhof: Mennonitsche Geschichts Verein, 1978); K. Mezynski. From the History of Mennonites in Poland (Warsaw, 1975); Erich Ratzlof. Im Weichselbogen: Mennonitensiedlungen in Zentralpolen (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1971).

<sup>22</sup>Horst Penner, Die Ost- und Westpreussischen Mennoniten in ihrem religioesen und sozialen Leben in ihren Kulturellen und Wirtschaftlichen Leistungen, 2 vols. (Karlsruhe: Buchdruckerei Heindrich Schneider, 1978, 1987).

<sup>23</sup>Horst Penner, Ansiedlung mennonitischer Niederlaender im Weichselmuendungsgebiet von der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn der preussischen Zeit (Weierhof: Mennonitischen Geschichtsverein, 2nd ed. 1963), 1-90.

<sup>24</sup>Felicia Szper, Nederlandsche Nederzettinge in West-pruisen Gedurende den Poolschen Tijd (Enkhuizen: P. Bais, 1913), 1-251.

to Prussian rule.<sup>25</sup>

In 1975, Kazimiers Mezynski presented a series of lectures on Mennonites in Poland.<sup>26</sup> This eighty-three page tract is concerned with the pro-German and anti-Polish attitude of the Mennonites, especially that of Mennonite historians and leaders. Seemingly unaware that his pro-Polish bias is somewhat overdone, Mezynski presents a Polish point of view sympathetic with the coming of the Mennonites to Poland. He emphasized the tolerance the Mennonites experienced under Polish rule, which was lost shortly after the Prussian takeover. Mezynski also expressed encouragement for the rapprochement he sensed happening between Mennonites and their Polish homeland. His invitation to speak to a Mennonite audience signalled to him a change in attitude toward the Polish chapter in Mennonite history.

The 1958 doctoral dissertation, Das niederlaendische Erbe der preussisch-russlaendischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika, by Johan Sjouke Postma, is helpful for the background materials it provides as it relates to the Dutch Mennonites.<sup>27</sup> Benjamin H. Unruh, in his Die Niederlaendisch-niederdeutschen Hintergruende der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16, 18, und 19 Jahrhundert, published

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., vii-viii.

<sup>26</sup>Mezynski, Mennonites in Poland, 1-83.

<sup>27</sup>Johan Sjouke Postma, Das niederlaendische Erbe der preussisch-russlaendischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika (Netherlands, Leeuwarden: A. Jongbloed, 1959), 185.

earlier tried to determine the origin and background of the Mennonites who migrated to Poland and Russia.<sup>28</sup> It is his thesis that most of the Polish Mennonites had their origin in the Dutch province of Friesland and at that time the German territory of Friesland.

Das Siedlungswerk niederlaendischer Mennoniten im Weichseltal zwischen Fordon und Wessenberg bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts, by Herbert Wiebe, is a study about the Mennonite colonies in Poland.<sup>29</sup> Wiebe's treatise on the colonization of the Dutch Mennonites in the central delta area, where a number of the Mennonites settled, supplements Szper and Penner. Wiebe, in considerable detail, discussed village administration, the idea of Hollaenderdorf, and various kinds of rent agreements. He also discussed the sizes of the various village plots and farms.

There are several older studies that contribute helpfully to the literature on the Mennonites in Poland and Prussia. Included are works such as those by Wilhelm Crichton,<sup>30</sup> W. Mannhardt,<sup>31</sup> Max Schoen,<sup>32</sup> Erich Rand,<sup>33</sup> and H. G.

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<sup>28</sup>Benjamin H. Unruh, Die Niederlaendisch-niederdeutschen Hintergruende der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16, 18, und 19 Jahrhundert (Karlsruhe: Selbsverlag, 1955), 1-429.

<sup>29</sup>Herbert Wiebe, Das Siedlungswerk niederlaendischer Mennoniten im Weichseltal zwischen Fordon und Weissenberg bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts, Wissenschaftliche Beitrage zur Geschichte und Landeskunde Ost-Mitteleuropas, no. 3 (Marburg a. d. Lahn, 1952), 1-108.

<sup>30</sup>Wilhelm Crichton, Geschichte der Mennoniten (Koenigsberg: Gottlieb Lebrecht Hartung, 1786), 1-44.

Mannhardt.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the above works, historical articles about the Mennonites in Poland-Prussia were and are being published in several Mennonite Periodicals. Four key journals, Mennonitische Blaetter, Mennonitische Geschichtsblaetter and The Mennonite Quarterly Review have carried such articles.

Several reasons may be suggested why the study of Mennonites in Poland-Prussia has received limited treatment. First of all, there is no Mennonite community left in Poland.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, Polish Anabaptistica does not play prominently in the minds of recent Anabaptist historians. A second possible reason for this lacuna in historical research is the fact that Poland was a communist country for the last forty-five years, from 1945-1990, and so entrance visas have not always been easily obtainable. In addition, fear in the

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<sup>31</sup>W. Mannhardt, Die Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten (Marienburg: Altpreussischen Mennonitengemeinde, 1863), 1-200.

<sup>32</sup>Max Schoen, Das Mennonitentum in Westpreussen (Berlin: Friedrich Luckhardt, 1886), 1-83.

<sup>33</sup>Erich Randt, Die Mennoniten in Ostpreussen und Litauen bis zum Jahre 1772 (Koenigsberg: Otto Kuemmel, 1912), 1-88.

<sup>34</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Die Danziger Mennonitengemeinde (Danzig: Selbsverlag der Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 1919), 1-211.

<sup>35</sup>Harold S. Bender, "Von Danzig bis Elbing im Jahre 1947," MGB (1947): 51-55. Bender made a short visit to the Vistula delta area after World War II. The article is a brief report of what he found and the state of the Mennonite Church in Poland. He reported that there was no Mennonite church left in Poland.

hearts of Westerners may have inhibited historians from going behind the "iron curtain".<sup>36</sup> A third reason for the limited attention being given to Polish Mennonite history may be the limited source materials. Many of the church (Mennonite) records, as well as most of the personal records and archival materials, were destroyed by World War II.<sup>37</sup> A fourth reason why there may have been limited interest in the Polish period of Mennonite history is probably due to the fact that the Mennonites in Poland never adopted the Polish language. The heritage of the Mennonites is Dutch/German. It seems that, in the thinking of many Mennonite historians, the Polish period is considered to be only a short chapter preliminary to the Russian chapter. Fifthly, this neglect may be due to the fact that Mennonite historiography is relatively young. Therefore, those periods of Mennonite history have been studied which have easily accessible sources, as well as those that seem to

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<sup>36</sup>Whether this fear was grounded in fact that there was danger in visiting Poland is another question. Many steer clear of visiting a communist country for fear of what might happen and not what is. With glasnost and pestroika we can anticipate more travel to east-bloc countries.

<sup>37</sup>In my search for primary materials I wrote Dr. Horst Penner in Kirchheimbolanden. He is a native of Danzig who fled to the West during the War. He is the author of a two volume work Die Ost und Westpreussischen Mennoniten, as well as several articles published in Mennonitische Geschichtsblaetter. To my request for sources he writes that the Mennonite library and archives in Poland were destroyed by the war. Some materials were salvaged from the ruins of the Danzig Mennonite library right after the war by relief workers from America and now are housed in the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives at Bethel College in Newton Kansas. Bethel graciously made their materials available for this research.



be considered determinative for understanding the origins and principles of the movement. Finally, Mennonites were a very small group of people in the context of the peoples among whom they lived. A study of such a small doctrinaire group has limited appeal to scholars who are not members of the Mennonite community.<sup>38</sup>

This lack of recent research in the Polish-Prussian period in Mennonite history makes a study of this era significant for telling the whole story of the Mennonites. The Polish-Prussian chapter of Mennonite history is also significant to the history of Russian Mennonites. This importance is illustrated by the language change that took place before the migration to Russia. The Mennonites changed from using the Dutch language to Werder Platt and High German. The Mennonites took these languages with them to Russia, and still speak them today, though Russian is more and more becoming the language of the Mennonites.<sup>39</sup>

Anabaptist research, like other historical research of various groups, frequently focuses on key individuals. By

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<sup>38</sup>Claus-Peter Clasen, Anabaptism: A Social History, 1525-1618, Switzerland, Austria, Moravia, South & Central Germany (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1972). James Urry, "The Closed and the Open: Social and Religious Change Amongst The Mennonites in Russia (1789-1889)" (Doctoral Dissertation, Oxford University, 1978), are two examples of non-Mennonite historians interested in Mennonite historical research.

<sup>39</sup>Personal interview with and report from Viktor Fast, a Mennonite leader from the Soviet Union present at the Mennonite World Conference, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, July 19-24, 1990.

focusing on leaders and their thinking, the birth and direction of a movement may be analyzed at a certain level. Harold S. Bender's Conrad Grebel: The Founder of the Swiss Brethren<sup>40</sup> illustrates this kind of approach. In the book, Bender, in analyzing Grebel's thought, argues that the Swiss Brethren broke with Zwingli over ecclesiology and thereby contributed to the ecclesiological definition of Anabaptism.

But when one has studied the leaders of a group we have only part of the story. Leaders and their writings present the ideal. But the way the ideal is lived is seldom synonymous with the way it is prescribed. This study, therefore, does not only examine Georg Hansen and his work, but it also seeks to examine how the people, belonging to the group led by Hansen, lived.

In examining the Flemish Mennonite Church and Georg Hansen, we find that there was strong continuity in theology, life and practice with their co-religionists in Holland. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Mennonites in Poland retained their strong sense of ethnicity and group identity. This study examines the maintenance of that identity and continuity. Changes in ethnic groups, though at times imperceptible from the outside, do take place, manifesting themselves eventually, hopefully in such a way as not to destroy the ethnic identity of the group. This study examines

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<sup>40</sup>Harold S. Bender, Conrad Grebel: The Founder of Swiss Anabaptism (Goshen, Indiana: The Mennonite Historical Society, 1950).

how this happened to the Flemish Mennonite Church in Danzig.

In this study we will use theoretical constructs that have been developed and are being used in the research of change and continuity in ethnicity and tradition. The Flemish Mennonites in Poland may be defined as an ethnic group according to the definition of ethnicity by George de Vos in his article, "Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation."<sup>41</sup> De Vos defines ethnicity in these words,

An ethnic group is a self-perceived group of people who hold in common a set of traditions not shared by the others with whom they are in contact. Such traditions typically include "folk" religious beliefs and practices, language, a sense of historical continuity, and common ancestry or place of origin. The group's actual history often trails into legend or mythology, which includes some concept of an unbroken biological-genetic generational continuity, sometimes regarded as giving special characteristics to the group. Endogamy is usual, although various patterns for initiating outsiders into the ethnic group are developed in such a way that do not disrupt the sense of generational continuity.<sup>42</sup>

The Flemish may also be defined as an ethnic group in the categories developed by Fredrick Barth, who suggests that defining the boundaries of an ethnic group largely in cultural terms is too limiting.<sup>43</sup> He says,

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<sup>41</sup>George de Vos, "Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation," in Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change, eds. George de Vos & Lola Romanucci (Palo Alto, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1975), 5-41. See also Ronald Reminick, Theory of Ethnicity (New York: University Press of America, 1983), 11-12.

<sup>42</sup>De Vos, *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>43</sup>Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference ed. Fredrick Barth (Bergen: Oslo, Universitets Forlaget, 1970), 11-12.

. . . we must expect to find that one ethnic group, spread over a territory with varying ecologic circumstances, will exhibit regional diversities of overt institutionalized behaviour which do not reflect differences in cultural orientation.<sup>44</sup>

Barth considers an ethnic group as a social organization which is a carrier of culture, but not defined by cultural boundary. He contends that "socially relevant factors alone become diagnostic for membership, not the overt "objective" differences which are generated by other factors."<sup>45</sup> Ethnic boundaries "canalize" social life and often entail a complex organization of behaviour and social relations. Members of the same ethnic group "play by the same rules", and share the same criteria for evaluation and judgement. Interaction of one ethnic group with another, or with its social environment, implies structuring for interaction which allows the persistence of cultural differences.

Harold Isaacs, in his study of basic group identity, speaks of an ethnic group "as composed of what have been called primordial affinities and attachments."<sup>46</sup> For Isaacs, group identity is determined by what a person is born with or receives at birth. Referring to his study of the Kikuyu tribe in Kenya, he concludes,

that man's essential tribalism is so deeply-rooted in the conditions of existence that it will keep cropping out of

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>46</sup>Harold R. Isaacs, "Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe," Ethnicity 1 (1974): 15.

whatever is laid over it, like trees forcing their way through the rocks on mountainsides a mile high.<sup>47</sup>

Cultural differences are part of an ethnic group, as De Vos suggests, but are inadequate to define ethnic identity, as is illustrated by the world-wide Mennonite family. For example, Mennonites in India have no cultural connection with the Mennonites in Russia, yet they use the same principles of evaluation and judgment. Since there are common underlying beliefs, there are some similar cultural forms, such as believer's baptism. This study will take an eclectic approach, using the various principles developed by various social scientists in examining the maintenance of the ethnic identity of the Mennonites in Poland.

Theories of cultural change help to explain modifications and adaptations of a group. Daniel Glaser suggests cultural adaptation happens in four stages:<sup>48</sup> the segregating stage, which seeks to maintain the patterns people that migrated to the new homeland brought with them; the marginal stage, where the ethnic person has been exposed to some assimilation to the society beyond his group, but continually relates back to his group; the desegregating stage, where the ethnic "person seeks to avoid all connections with his ethnic group"; and finally, the assimilation stage,

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>48</sup>Daniel Glaser "Dynamics of Ethnic Identification", American Sociological Review 1 (1958): 31-40.

where the person is totally assimilated into the new society. Andrew Greely suggests a six stage process in changing ethnic identity, while Nahirny and Fishman speak of ethnic identity change in three generations.<sup>49</sup>

Cultural adaptation happens when there is contact between two groups, whether that be through trade, invasion, enslavement, educational or missionary activity.<sup>50</sup> Acculturation happens at various rates of speed, as well as to various degrees. Glaser suggests that total assimilation is probably almost never achieved.<sup>51</sup> Berry argues that acculturation is affected by such variables as the "nature, purpose, duration, and permanence of contact" between the groups.<sup>52</sup>

Berry addressing the process of acculturation, reiterates to some degree what Glaser says, but widens the concept of the process.<sup>53</sup> Berry suggests there may be assimilation, the process whereby a group relinquishes its cultural identity and moves into the larger society. Secondly, there may be integration, which according to Berry's definition means

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<sup>49</sup>Andrew Greely, Why Can't They Be Like Us (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971), 53-59; V. Nahirny & J. Fishman, "American Immigration Groups: Ethnic Identification and the Problem of Generations," Sociological Review, 13 (1972): 311-326.

<sup>50</sup>John W. Berry, "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation," Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings, ed. Amado M. Padilla (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 11.

<sup>51</sup>Glaser, "Dynamics of Identification," 42.

<sup>52</sup>Berry, "Acculturation as Adaptation," 11.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 13-14.

maintaining cultural integrity as well as seeking to become an integral part of the larger society. Thirdly, there may be rejection, which involves withdrawal from society and maintaining one's distinct identity. Finally, there may be deculturation, which involves groups being out of cultural and psychological contact with their traditional culture or the larger society. The latter results in ethnocide if enforced by the society, or marginality if chosen by the group.

Susan Emley Keefe's study of the process of acculturation of the extended family among the urban Mexican Americans indicates that the acculturation process is, however, neither a unilineal nor a single interdependent process. Her conclusion was that "acculturation is one of a multidimensional process in which the process of direction of change is open."<sup>54</sup>

The Mennonites rejected much of Polish culture during their sojourn in Poland. This was also true of the Mennonites in Poland during the latter half of the seventeenth century, though some adaptation was being made, for example, with the language. The Mennonites, typologically identified as a sect

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<sup>54</sup>Susan Emley Keefe, "Acculturation and the Extended Family Among Urban Mexican Americans," in Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings, ed. Amado M. Padilla (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 104. See also B. Dohrenwend & R. J. Smith, "Toward a Theory of Acculturation," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, 18 (1962): 30-39; Berry, "Acculturation as Adaptation," 9-25. R. Linton, "Nativistic Movements," American Anthropologist 45 (1943): 230-240; A. F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologist 58 (1956): 264-281.

by some,<sup>55</sup> were a marginal group in Poland, both demographically and culturally. The various concepts developed by sociological and anthropological studies of group behaviour and group integration into society are helpful in understanding and explaining the Flemish Mennonite experience in Poland during the last half of the seventeenth century. For example, the contact principle is an important factor in lowering barriers between cultural groups. On the other hand, the principle of "boundedness" due to their belief system helps us explain and understand the continued separateness of the Flemish Mennonites in Poland. During the sixteenth century the Polish Mennonites made no attempts at acculturation, except as forced by the larger society and the pressures of economics. As an understanding of what happened to the Mennonites is sought, the model of the multidimensional multidirectional acculturation process will be used in examining the Mennonite experience.

There are several terms that create difficulty in talking about the Mennonites in Poland. Since these issues seemingly have no clear answers, decisions need to be made about how they will be used. First, there is the question of using the name, Poland. During the seventeenth century the territory

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<sup>55</sup>S. D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), xii.



known as Prussia was under Polish hegemony.<sup>56</sup> The western part was directly under the rule of the King and was known as the province of Royal Prussia; the eastern part was a fiefdom governed by a duke and was known as Ducal Prussia. Since the Polish King was sovereign over the whole territory, one could simply speak of Poland. In this thesis, the designation Poland, rather than Prussia, will be used. Only as the need for clarity dictates, will the designations Royal and Ducal Prussia be used in an attempt to reflect the historical realities as they were at the time.<sup>57</sup>

Another question that needs clarification is the use of the phrase "Danzig Mennonite Church." Mennonites were forbidden to live within the city walls till well into the eighteenth century. However, a few moved into the city during the period of the "deluge." Because the Mennonites were restricted in this way, it can be argued that using the phrase Danzig Mennonite Church is inaccurate. To designate the Mennonites in the suburbs of Danzig as well as the few living within the city walls, the name Danzig Mennonite Church will be used, with the awareness that the Mennonite church was located outside the walled city.

Related to the use of the name Danzig, is the use of the

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<sup>56</sup>John Friesen, "Mennonites in Poland: An Expanded Historical View," Journal of Mennonite Studies 4 (1986), 94-108.

<sup>57</sup>John Friesen, "Mennonites in Poland: An Expanded Historical View," Journal of Mennonite Studies 4 (1986), 94-99.

name of the two major Mennonite groups, the Flemish and the Frisians. This is problematic because in many of the sources that distinction is not always clear. Every effort will be made to be clear and specific when referring to the Mennonites, in order to indicate which group is meant: Flemish, Frisian, Waterlaender, or Hochdeutschen.

Sources for this study include Hansen's writings, most of which are extant today, if not in the original then in copies. There are a few of his writings that seem to be lost, including his Church Chronicle as well as all correspondence except for one letter.<sup>58</sup> Except for Spiegel des Levens, Hansen's writings were in German. The Danzig Church records, which were copied from Hansen's records and begin with 1667, except for the ministerial elections lists which date back to 1598, are valuable for our study.<sup>59</sup> Most of these are legible, except where the edges are torn or blackened and, as a result, difficult or impossible to decipher. These baptism, marriage, death, and ministerial election records give us insight into demographics as well as church and family life.

The Mennonites in Poland kept a lively contact with the Netherlands during the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. There are many letters and other records, such as decrees and contracts, kept in the Mennonite Archives in Amsterdam. For

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<sup>58</sup>B. H. Unruh, Die Niederlaendisch-niederdeutschen Hintergruende der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16, 18 und 19 Jahrhundert (Karlsruhe: Selbsverlag, 1955), 100-101.

<sup>59</sup>"Danzig Stadgebiet Church Records."

the seventeenth century most of these are in Dutch and most are legible. This is a valuable source reflecting life in the Werder, the struggles with the guilds, the conflict with the Socinians, and relations between the various Mennonite churches. Many of these letters are appeals for help to rebuild after the war or after floods, which were due to breaks in the dykes because of ice or high water.

Much of the source material that was kept in the churches has been destroyed through war or was confiscated by the Government.<sup>60</sup> As a result one reads of records and letters but in searching for them one discovers they are lost. As noted, some of Hansen's material is gone. This is true of many of the Polish Mennonite records. The Danzig Flemish Church records were salvaged by Mennonite PAX boys who worked on cattle-ships taking beef to Danzig in 1945.<sup>61</sup> They found the salvaged records rainsoaked in the damaged Danzig church.

It must, however, be noted that the correspondence during the seventeenth century was considerably less than it was during the eighteenth century. Reasons for that may be the Thirty-years War as well as the Great Northern War. Consequently primary source materials were not as plentiful as it might have been. This put an obvious restriction on the research. One finds quotes in various writers, for example

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<sup>60</sup>Gustav Reimer, "History and Genealogy of the Mennonites of Former West Prussia," MOR 23 (April, 1949): 101-104.

<sup>61</sup>Interview with Dr. Harold S. Bender, April 20, 1962.

those who wrote prior to World War II, referring to Hansen and church decisions during the time under study. It is apparent they had access to materials no longer available for research. These quotations and references will be used to fill gaps left by the lost material.

Another reason why the primary source material is more limited for the seventeenth century, is the fact that it was only in the latter eighteenth century that the government required the churches to submit information on marriages, births and deaths. Up to that time, most records kept by the churches were maintained by interested individuals. Another reason there is more material in the eighteenth century and on is that as some Mennonites received a higher education, they became more aware of the value of good records. It is again only in the latter eighteenth century that higher education begins to play an important role among the Mennonites in Poland.

A final source that has been used is the Archives in Gdansk, in which there are some materials. Microfilm copies of the Gdansk materials were made available for this study. The materials include such matters as a transcript of the 1678 Interrogation, the Bortenwircker conflict, reports on fines for baptizing a non-Mennonite, problems with exogamous marriages, and other data.

For comparing Hansen's beliefs with that of early Anabaptists the writings of Dirk (Dietrich) Philips and Menno Simons

will be used. The Complete Writings of Menno Simons c.1496-1561,<sup>62</sup> will be used to compare and contrast Hansen's position with those of the founder of the group. Menno had an early interest in the Mennonites in Prussia. He spent some time there in his travels and missions. This interest was amply illustrated by his 1549 letter "Exhortation to the Church in Prussia"<sup>63</sup> which was an exhortation to love and faithfulness. He did not address any particular congregation which may explain why the letter reads as a circular letter.<sup>64</sup>

Apparently, Menno had worked in Poland several weeks during the summer of 1548. During his time there, he had been able to help resolve a controversy that was in progress at that time. His concern was that the strife not break out again. As a result, he exhorted the congregation to love and

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<sup>62</sup>Menno Simons The Complete Writings of Menno Simons c. 1496-1561, trans. by Leonard Verduin and ed. by John Christian Wenger, with a biography by Harold S. Bender. (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1956), 1-1092.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 1030-1033.

<sup>64</sup>It is of interest to note that this letter is not included in two earlier collections of Menno's writings, the Opera Omnia Theologica, of 1681, and the Complete Works of 1871. However, it is found in John F. Funks edition of Menno's works, Die Vollstaendigen Werke Menno Simons, Zweiter Teil, (Arthur, Illinois: L. A. Miller, 1881), 652-656. The letter is dated Oct. 7, 1549. The congregation to whom it is sent is not known but K. Vos, Menno Simons, 290, conjectures that it is probably a congregation in West Prussia. The evidence he uses to support this idea is the fact that the Prussian congregation of Marcus-Thiensdorf possessed a copy as late as the early 20th century in the Oostersch or Eastern dialect, as well as a German translation. See Simons, Complete Writings, 1030.

to a spirit of peace and forgiveness. Such early contact, as well as his prominent leadership among the Mennonites in northern Europe and Poland, make a comparison with his teaching important to the question of continuity.

Dirk Philips (Dietrich Philip), a contemporary of Menno, also served the church at Danzig. He served the church as bishop from 1550 to 1568. It was while he was on a trip to Amsterdam on behalf of the Mennonite Church in Danzig that he fell sick in Amsterdam and died.<sup>65</sup> Dirk Philips spread his views through a number of writings. Toward the end of his life, he collected into one volume the writings that had been published, entitling the compilation, Enchiridion oft Hantboecken van de Christlijcke Leere. His writings have been translated into German and English.<sup>66</sup> Because of his leadership role in Danzig, it is of value to compare his teaching with those of Hansen.

The Polish Flemish Mennonites went through some difficult circumstances during the seventeenth century. Despite the difficulties, they entered the eighteenth century as a group who had maintained their identity and would remain a separate group for some years to come.

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<sup>65</sup>N. van der Rotterdam Zijpp, "Dirk Philips," in ME, 1955.

<sup>66</sup>Dietrich Philip, Enchiridion oder Hand buechlein von der Lehre und Religion (Scottsdale: Mennonitisches Verlagshaus, 1917). Dietrich Philip, Enchiridion or Handbook of the Christian Doctrine and Religion, trans. A. B. Kolb (Elkhart: John F. Funk, 1910).

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL SETTING: POLISH-LITHUANIAN KINGDOM

During the latter half of the seventeenth century, the time period covered in this thesis, Poland experienced an economic decline.<sup>1</sup> At the same time there was an increase in activity against religious dissenters. This was a change, for Poland had been a haven for religious dissenters during the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Among the various religious immigrants fleeing to Poland during the sixteenth century, were Mennonites from the Netherlands, who were under intense pressure, especially during Duke Alva's reign of terror.<sup>3</sup> In order for us to understand the situation during the latter half of the

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<sup>1</sup>E. J. Hobsbawm, "The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century," H. R. Trevor-Roper, "The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century," in Crisis in Europe - 1560-1660, ed. Trevor Aston (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 5-96.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Heussi, Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1957), 342-343. W.J. Rose, Poland: Old and New, (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd. 1948), 65-70. Janusz Tazbir, A State Without Stakes: Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, trans. A. T. Jordan (Wydawniczy: Panswowy, 1967), 167-181.

<sup>3</sup>W. J. Kuehler Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Doopsgezinden in de Zestiende EEuw (Haarlem: H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon N. V., 1961), 418-421. See also Karl-Heinz Ludwig Zur Besiedlung des Weichseldelta Durch die Mennoniten, Wissenschaftliche Beitrage zur Geschichte und Landeskunde Ost-Mitteleuropas, Nr. 57 (Marburg: 1961), 31-32.

seventeenth century, one needs to briefly examine the historical development of Poland.

For centuries, various tribes of Slavonic peoples lived in the territory east of the Rhine. With the coming of Christianity to this territory during the tenth century, written history had its beginning in this area.<sup>4</sup> By 966 A.D. a Polish nation had emerged on the eastern frontier of the Holy Roman Empire. This attempt to establish a sovereign state in the open country, where for generations tribes and regional loyalties had been determinative, was inevitably beset with a variety of difficulties.

The first Polish royal line that emerged was the Piasts,<sup>5</sup> who were succeeded by the Jagellions<sup>6</sup>. In 1386, Jadwiga, daughter of Louis of Anjou,<sup>7</sup> Duke of Hungary and king of Poland, married the Grand duke of Lithuania, the founder of the Jagellion dynasty, which ruled Poland from 1386 to 1572.

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<sup>4</sup>Heussi, Kompendium, 207.

<sup>5</sup>A helpful discussion of the rise and development of the Piast line is found in Norman Davis, God's Playground: A History of Poland, The Origins to 1795. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982), 61-114.

<sup>6</sup>It should be noted that from 1370 to 1386 the territory of Piast Poland was ruled by Louis of Anjou as part of, or at least connected to Hungary. See Rose, Poland, 42-46.

<sup>7</sup>Louis had forced the Polish nobles to promise that one of his daughters would succeed him to the Polish throne. Consequently the 14 year old girl was forced to give up her engagement to Wilhelm von Habsburg, Prince of Austria. The Polish barons were not interested in this Habsburg overlordship and so resisted the union and engineered the connection with Lithuania. See for example, Davis, God's Playground, 106-114.



The union included hegemony over Ruthenia as well. The politically expedient marriage included the stipulation that the new territory, Lithuania, would accept Christianity. The motivation for this union was to find an ally against the Teutonic Knights. The 1386 union was, at most, a union of the aristocratic ruling classes and in no sense a union of peoples in the modern sense.<sup>8</sup>

Politically, the union appeared promising, but it was to prove far from easy. Lithuania was five-sixth Byelorussian in speech and manner.<sup>9</sup> In addition, it was under the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, while Poland was Roman Catholic. This difference meant that a common loyalty to the monarchy would not be natural. The zealous missionary activity of the Roman Catholic clergy, in the new eastern territory, resulted in a long and bitter conflict between the two interpretations of Christianity. This conflict was detrimental to maintaining the defences of the long eastern frontier, for the Russians, being Orthodox, used it as an excuse to interfere, from time to time, in the internal affairs of Poland under the pretence of protecting the Orthodox Church.<sup>10</sup> Such interference in the internal affairs hindered the development of a strong, unified Poland. Another

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<sup>8</sup>Rose Poland, 42-43.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. See Appendix I for a map of the Jagellion era c. 1500.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

difficulty in developing a strong, unified Poland, was the aristocratic rule.<sup>11</sup>

Traditionally, Polish society was feudally organized though the government was a form of a limited constitutional monarchy. Theoretically it was a democracy of land-owners,

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<sup>11</sup>In 1569, through the Union of Lublin, the Kingdom of Poland, made up of Great Poland in the west and Little Poland in the southeast, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the northeast, were united as a republic under one crown and one Diet. These three larger geographic divisions were divided into thirty sub-divisions known as palatinates (województwa). Each of these were administered by a hereditary chief called Palatine, (wojewoda, or vaivoda). These palatinates were further subdivided into over eighty castellanies administered by castellans.

In outline form, the Polish administration was as follows: the King was the superior administrator while next to the King was the Senate, a rather large Privy Council which the King consulted and whose approval was required for all important decisions. The Union of Lublin stipulated that the Senate consisted of 139 members appointed by the King for life. These 139 included ten of the highest ministers, fifteen Archbishops and Bishops, 32 Palatines and 82 Castellans. The Archbishop of Gniezno presided and in all proceedings the Bishops took precedence. The Senate sat separately from the Diet, though it could not veto or annul the acts of the Diet. The Diet, however, used its influence to advise the latter. Since the higher clergy were always Catholic, the Senate could be relied on to give the cause of the Roman Catholic Church powerful support. Evidence for this is seen in the fact that, in 1572, there were only two Catholics among the lay Senators and yet the Catholic Church received priority consideration.

The national Diet was the most influential branch of the national government. It was the effective legislative arm. The Diet (sejm) was a representative body of some 200. There was a prescribed number of representatives from each Palatinate. They were appointed by the provincial diets (sejmiki) from the great body of lesser nobility, those of the 'equestrian order' as distinguished from the nobles of senatorial rank. The Diet met annually on summons of the King. At the end of a session, the Senators and Deputies met collectively to agree to the laws passed. Following this agreement these laws were called Constitutions and became law. For a fuller description see Davies, God's Playground, 322-340.

though in actuality it was governed by the aristocracy of the higher nobility. Poland was governed as a federation of palatinates with the king at the head. However, the distribution of power was such that it was difficult to pass controversial legislation or enforce laws disliked by the nobles.

In 1572, the power of the king was weakened when the monarchy became an elected office. The elected monarchy made it possible for nobles to put unreasonable demands on would be kings. Nobles, jealous of their power and economic welfare, acted in harmony with those interests to the detriment of the country as a whole. Consequently, when a new king had to be elected, the nobles would demand concessions from candidate kings and the one who granted the best concessions would be elected.

In addition to that kind of pressure, once elected, the king was unable to make any decisions of State without consulting the one hundred and thirty-nine member senate. The other arm of government wielding considerable influence was the National Diet, a body made up of representatives from the Palatinates. This Diet (sejm) stalled legislation if they were unhappy with it. A third power in the government was the church, the rule being that in all proceedings the Bishops took precedence. Under these circumstances, it became difficult to maintain a strong central government; whenever regional interests conflicted with national interests, the latter had to give way. Since the magnates and lower gentry

considered themselves as the nation, they jealously guarded entrance into their ranks. They also prohibited cities from investing in farm land, prohibited sons of the bourgeoisie from holding high office in either church or state, and restricted the movements of the peasants, thereby tying them to the land.<sup>12</sup>

Another difficulty Poland faced was the complete lack of self discipline by the great families of Poland for the benefit of the Joint Kingdom. The philosophy of the nobles was to be at liberty; a concept which to them meant license not to obey the law. This was coupled with a heterogeneity of interests in family, personal, regional or national matters, breeding quarrels and disagreements among the nobles. The king's concern to avoid serious quarrels among the nobles motivated him to make concessions for the sake of peace.

The mandate system, requiring all local assemblies to confirm any law that would be binding on the country as a whole, made legislating any law difficult. Regional interests all too often over-ruled good laws, making rule by law and legislation almost impossible. Frequently, the magnates of each district got their way, while the sovereign, unable to compose their differences, was incapacitated to lead in action for the common good.

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<sup>12</sup>Rose, History of Poland, 47. See also Roman Dyboski, Outline of Polish History (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1925), 71-76; Norman Davies. God's Playground: A History of Poland In Two Volumes. Vol I. The Origins to 1795 (New York: Columbia Press, 1982). 115-155.

Already in 1505, the Nihil Novi statute had been accepted, making it difficult to pass good legislation. It was a concession the magnates wrung from their monarch when he was looking for support in a campaign of defence against the threat from Moscow. The statute stipulated that the king bound himself not to make any decision affecting the state without the consent of the Senate and the Diet.

While the power of the king was being centralized in France and England, the opposite was happening in Poland. Step by step, the king was driven to extend privileges to the nobility at the expense of the urban population and the weakening of his own position.

During the latter half of the fifteenth century, despite opposition, the right to engage in trade was extended to a larger fraction of the population. During this time, the National Diet confirmed the right of district assemblies to meet to discuss concerns of local interest and seek to determine policy. It was also during this time that provision was made for a parliament in each of the major divisions of the Kingdom. This, in turn, developed into the parliament of the Joint Kingdom with a chamber of Deputies and a Senate.

The sixteenth century began with some serious difficulties for Poland, but equally with much promise. In 1506, peace-loving Sigismund I came to the throne. The period of his reign, which ended in 1548, has been justly described as "the Golden Age." It was during his reign that the earliest

migration of Mennonites from the Netherlands to Poland took place.

When Sigismund came to the throne, central Europe was being endangered by a mounting threat from the Ottoman Empire. This threat led Sigismund to seek closer relations with neighbouring nations. He developed close ties with the papacy with a view to fostering and maintaining the unity of Christendom. Sigismund, in addition to having problems with his nobility at home, faced the external threat from Moscow, and by 1514 they were at war. Even though Smolensk was lost, the victory at Orsza brought temporary relief from this external pressure. When war broke out with Russia again in 1562, Poland found herself in competition with Sweden for the eastern Baltic province of Livonia. Conflict with Sweden plagued Poland well into the eighteenth century.

In 1520, Koenigsberg, still under the rule of the Eastern branch of the Knights, went over to the Lutheran faith, and became a secular power posing a potential threat to the security of Poland. Instead of ending the dominion of the Grand Master, Sigismund was satisfied to accept the homage of the Grand Duke of Prussia at Cracow in 1525. This leniency would create difficulties later, and Prussia ultimately would be one of the powers that would participate in the dismemberment of Poland during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Not only did the Lutheran and Reformed theology find its

way to Poland, but radical ideas, such as antitrinitarianism, found their way to Poland with the migration of two Italian religious refugees, Lelio (1524-1562) and his nephew Fausto Socinius (1539-1604).<sup>13</sup> Another antitrinitarian refugee, who found his way to Poland in 1563, was Bernardo Ochino (1487-1564).<sup>14</sup> Ochino began his spiritual pilgrimage as Franciscan Observant, but then converted to Calvinism. When he was forced to flee to England, he was cordially received by Cranmer. After several more narrow escapes and finally conversion to antitrinitarian thinking, he went to Cracow, where he preached his Arianism until he was once more forced to flee. He then settled in Slovkov, Moravia, where he died of the plague in 1564. As the Jews and Mennonites had found toleration, so the Socinians experienced initial toleration.

In vain, the Catholic clergy sought to curb this influx of heresy. Attempts of the clergy to get the state to take action against this incursion floundered on the rocks of personal liberties. Poland was Catholic, but not the most loyal son of the church.<sup>15</sup> Jan Ostrorog, a Wojewoda and

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<sup>13</sup>Halecki, God's Playground, 167.

<sup>14</sup>Earle Morse Wilbur, A History of Unitarianism Socinianism and its Antecedents (Boston: Beacon Press, 1945), 1:93-96; Robert G. Clouse, "Ochino, Bernardino (1487-1564)", in The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1974), 721.

<sup>15</sup>Poland had resisted the reforms of Gregory VII, marriage among the clergy was still common in the 13th century, papal Interdicts, e.g. those of Innocent III, were not always proclaimed or enforced and the Hussite movement found considerable sympathy in the country. In the conflicts between

Polish nationalist, as early as 1473, put it as follows:

The polish king recognizes the supremacy of no one save that of God: instead of assuring the Pope of obedience, he will adequately fulfil his duty if he congratulates him, and at the same time reminds him that he should govern the church justly. . . . The clergy should help to bear the burdens of state as well as other citizens. . . . The church does not possess gold to be kept, but for the purpose of helping the needy. All payments for the benefit of the Pope should be abolished. . . . The king should nominate bishops. In order to diminish the number of idlers, the establishment of monasteries in cities should be restricted, the admission of foreigners prohibited.<sup>16</sup>

Hardly could one make a statement that better expressed the need for reform. But Sigismund was not ready to change to Protestantism and so resisted the spread of Protestant ideas.

Attempts at hindering Protestant ideas from entering the country were futile. By the middle of the sixteenth century, it appeared that the State would make a declaration in favor of the Reformation.<sup>17</sup> The aristocracy resisted any attempt by the Church to control their thinking. Rather, they studied and discussed the growing volume of Protestant material that came from the press. But, in the final analysis, they were not willing to take the leap to the Reform. This was also true of the gentry and townsmen.

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the papacy and councils, the Poles took a stand for the latter; they wanted a more democratic church. See Rose, Poland, 54.

<sup>16</sup>Quoted in Rose, Poland, 54. See also A. Bruce Boswell, "Cultural and Social Conditions in the Middle Ages," in The Cambridge History of Poland, ed. W. F. Reddaway et. al. (Cambridge: University Press, 1950), 161-166.

<sup>17</sup>See Appendix II for a map of "Reformation Centres in Poland-Lithuania.



The rural and urban elite were ambivalent about accepting Reformation dogma. They were not prepared to reject the Roman Catholic Church, even though it demanded large contributions and sought to control their minds by limiting what they could read. Neither were most prepared to support the king so he could become head of a national Church, as Henry VIII had become in England.

The gentry preferred to have the liturgy in the mother tongue, but were not interested in living by the restrictive standards advocated by the Reformation theology. They disliked the Lutherans because they were Germans and, as a result, many leaned toward Calvinism, but were unwilling to accept the discipline involved in Calvinism. The language of the Roman Church was Latin, while the reformers sought to carry out their proselytizing in Polish. This use of the vernacular was popular both in the rural and city churches.

William Rose, late professor of Polish literature and Polish history at the University of London, again quotes Ostororg who had, a century earlier, expressed a strong pro-Polish sentiment. Ostororg said,

What an insult and offence this was for all Poles! In our churches in various cities the sermons are preached in German, even in high and stately edifices. They are listened to by a few women, while throngs of Poles are crowded together in some corner with their preacher. Seeing that between the two tongues, and for other reasons, nature has placed eternal discord and dislike, I exhort that preaching be no longer done in German. Let people learn Polish, if they want to live in Poland! It looks as though we were only half intelligent, since we forget that the Germans in their country act in that way with our tongue. If, however, such sermons are needed

for immigrants, let them be preached somewhere apart, where the dignity of Poles will not be involved.<sup>18</sup>

This early demand for Polish as the language of the church reached a burning intensity by the latter half of the 16th century.

In addition to this demand for communication in their language, agitation for the execution of the laws emerged. Large areas of Royal Domain had been handed over to nobles in return for services rendered or to the starostas as the endowment for their offices. These territories did not contribute to the royal treasury. They were not even returned to the king when the holders had no more claim on them. There was also some demand that church property help bear the financial load of the State. These issues were being focused and demanded attention, but before Sigismund could take any action he died in 1548.

Sigismund II succeeded his father and much was expected of him. Several reform attempts were made, beginning with the Diet of 1548, but without lasting results. In 1556, the Cracow Parliament asked for a decision on the following points:

1. The clergy should be made to share in the burden of national defence.
2. The Church lands should be secularized.
3. The Polish Church should be separated from Rome.<sup>19</sup>

The king was sympathetic to these demands, but failed to take

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<sup>18</sup>Quoted in Rose, History of Poland, 56.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. 58.

action. However, he did ask the pope for Mass in the Polish language, communion in both kinds, and cessation of the celibacy requirement for the clergy, but nothing was changed.

In 1562, the king decided to support the Diet in their decision to tax the ecclesiastical properties in question. The decision received vigorous support at first, but action tapered off and eventually the matter was dropped without taxing the Church.

In 1565, the landed aristocracy proposed legislation which would open the country to imports of manufactured goods resulting in lower prices. In addition, they demanded the right to handle the export of farm produce themselves, to the exclusion of the Polish burghers. Their initiative was profitable for them in the short run, but proved disastrous for the nation.

This legislation, favorable to the nobility, began the headlong decline of the middle class in Poland, which was completed ninety years later during the period of invasions. Urban life did not recover from this disastrous action until the nineteenth century.

The Union of Lublin culminated Sigismund II's reign. Among other conditions, the union provided for a single parliament; separate but equal administration of the two parts; armies each with its own Hetman; equality in citizenship; religious freedom in which no difference would be made between Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant; and religious

equality, expressed by all three Churches sitting in the Senate on an equal basis.<sup>20</sup>

Upon the death of Sigismund the Younger in 1565, the search for a new king and the resulting decisions were calamitous for Poland. The hereditary principle was replaced by the elective principle, stipulating that a new king could be appointed only after the death of the incumbent. During the interregnum, from the death of the king until a new one was elected, the Bishop of Cracow was to rule. With this move, the powers of the monarch were further eroded.

Another restriction of the king's powers was put into effect by the magnates in 1573, when they adopted the Pacta conventa.<sup>21</sup> Acceptance of this Pacta was demanded of every applicant who wished to become king. In essence, this made

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<sup>20</sup>Halecki, Borderlands, 169-172. J. Pajewski, "Zygmunt August and the Union of Lublin, 1548-72," in Cambridge History to 1696, 363-365.

<sup>21</sup>Rose, History of Poland, 63. Davies, God's Playground, 334-335. The Pacta, was also known by the title, "Henrician Articles." The Pacta stipulated among other things that: the elected king would have no voice in the election of his successor; he must adhere to the principles of toleration as outlined in the act of the Confederation of Warsaw; no war must be declared, and no military expedition undertaken without the consent of the Diet; no taxes must be levied without the consent of the Diet; the king must appoint a permanent council of five Bishops, four Palatines and eight Castellans; this council was to be changed every year and elected by the Diet; the Diet must be summoned every year or oftener if needed; it must not last longer than six weeks; no foreigner must hold public office; and the king must neither be married nor divorced without the consent of the Diet. A final article stipulated that the nobles had the right of resistance if the king contravened his oath. See also George Slocombe, A History of Poland. (Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., 1939), 135-136.

the king not the ruler of the nation or subject to a parliament, but subject to or servant of the noble class who worked for their own interests.

Henry of Valois, the successful French candidate to the throne in 1565, was happy to escape the Pacta and return to France after a reign of less than a year. He was replaced by Stephan Bathory of Transylvania, a competent leader in war,<sup>22</sup> and a builder of peace. Unfortunately, he ruled only ten years, dying at the young age of 55, in the year of 1586.<sup>23</sup>

Bathory's successor was Sigismund Vasa who, like Bathory, came from abroad. Rose describes his reign, 1587-1632, as a period of stagnation.<sup>24</sup> The powers of the monarch were further eroded during this period. For example, at the coronation Diet, Sigismund agreed to the demand that no treaty or agreement would be made with a foreign power without the Diet's consent. In 1592, the king promised not to persecute

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<sup>22</sup>F. Nowak, "The Interregna and Stephen Bathory, 1572-86," in Cambridge History to 1696, 369-392. He ably defended Poland in three campaigns against Moscovy and is credited with taking the first steps toward establishing a standing army in Poland. He drafted peasants for the infantry from the royal domains and enrolled the Cossacks of the Dnieper as freemen serving under the crown in return for a semi-citizen status.

<sup>23</sup>Rose, History of Poland, 63-64. Some of the more notable achievements of Bathory include: granting civic rights to the Jews, establishing Courts of Appeal for the Crownland and Lithuania, establishing an Academy which later became the University of Wilno, and, in spite of his loyal Catholicism, insisting on absolute toleration in religion. The unfortunate part of Bathory's reign was that his well-laid plans were not followed through by the magnates or succeeding kings .

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 64.

anyone for calling illegal meetings of the nobles and committed himself to not leave Poland without permission.<sup>25</sup>

Not only did King Sigismund Vasa give away royal privileges, but Poland lost much influence in the Baltic. The Swedes, under King Charles IX, attacked Poland through Livonia and won several victories, but were defeated in the siege of Riga. Due to disunity among the nobles of Poland, Chodkiewicz, the Polish army general, was not able to follow up this victory. This inability to retain sufficient unity among the Polish ranks to follow through on a victory on the battlefield, hindered the effectiveness of the Polish army and ultimately contributed to Swedish advances.

It had become apparent that without a navy Poland could not defeat the Swedes. Sigismund had been, however, reluctant to permit Danzig to develop a navy. At this juncture, Chancellor and strong civil leader Zamoyski's death provided the opportunity for the discontent of the nobles to break out in open rebellion. For two years Poland was paralyzed by the civil strife.

Despite this internal turmoil in Poland and increased influence in the Baltic region, Sweden had limited success in re-capturing previously held territory. In 1605, Swedish ships appeared outside the ports of Riga and Danzig, capturing

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<sup>25</sup>This discussion follows F. Nowak, "Sigismund III, 1587-1632," in Cambridge History to 1696, 451-475. See also Davies, God's Playground, 433-469.

and searching ships trading with these ports.<sup>26</sup>

Gustavus Adolfus succeeded to the Swedish throne in 1612.<sup>27</sup> As soon as he had secured his home frontier, he turned to foreign exploits in Russia. In 1617, he signed the Treaty of Stolbova by which Russia became land-locked, while Sweden obtained the greater part of the province of Ingeria south of the gulf of Finland. Russia was now dependent on Sweden for its Baltic trade.

When the hostilities with the Russians were resolved, it was inevitable that the Poles in Livonia would suffer attack from the Swedes as they continued their pursuit of making the Baltic a Swedish lake. The Polish king advised the Livonians not to renew the Swedish truce of 1613 and 1614. Sigismund also refused to negotiate with the Swedes unless they recognized his claim to the Swedish crown. Finally, in 1618, a truce was signed with Sweden, and the Polish army focused its activity against the Turks on the south-eastern frontier.

Unfortunately this truce did not end the hostilities with Sweden. In 1621, Gustavus, with a navy of one hundred and fifty-one ships, sailed for the Dwina. After a month's valiant resistance, Riga capitulated. Mitau fell shortly after the surrender of Riga, and Gustavus' army moved on to

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<sup>26</sup>p.O. von Thorne, "Poland and the Baltic in the first half of the Seventeenth Century." in Cambridge History to 1696, 478-479.

<sup>27</sup>Discussion is based on Davies, God's Playground, 433-469. Gieysztor, et. al. History of Poland, 208-237.

Courland. With stiff resistance from the Polish army, both sides were ready for a truce by 1622, which they signed in September and renewed until 1625.<sup>28</sup>

East Prussia also played a part in the vicissitudes of the political relationship of Poland and Sweden. Sigismund had neglected to develop close ties with East Prussia and, unfortunately, East Prussia and Sweden became allies through the 1620 marriage of Hedwig Eleonora and Gustavus Adolfus. With East Prussia on his side, Gustavus once more attacked Poland through Livonia.<sup>29</sup>

To Gustavus' surprise, the Poles were not so easily defeated as had been anticipated; he would have to mount an attack from East Prussia. That planned invasion was hindered by Danzig's refusal to promise neutrality. This threat of attack finally aroused the Polish nobles to rally behind their king, resulting in them voting taxes for the war and supporting Sigismund's military aims. Consequently, Gustavus' advance in the Spring of 1627 was frustrated by the combined forces of Danzig and Poland and the promise of help by the imperial General Wallenstein. As a result, Poland and Sweden

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<sup>28</sup>The truce was used by both sides to prepare for continued hostilities. It lasted so long because both sides were not ready sooner for conflict.

<sup>29</sup>Due to the Protestant coalition that had been formed in northern Europe, including England and Denmark, Gustavus was relieved of the fear of attack from Christian IV. Out of deference to his brother-in-law and the opposition of the Protestant coalitions's negative reaction he had to attack through Livonia rather than via Prussia or Danzig.



signed a truce in 1629.

In 1632, Vladislav IV succeeded his father to the Polish throne.<sup>30</sup> Due to his admiration of his kinsman, Gustavus, and the Swedish reverses in its campaign against Germany, Vladislav, in 1634, negotiated a twenty-six year truce with Sweden. The Poles continued their alliance with Austria, as well as sought to regain the Swedish and Russian crowns. However, when Vladislav died in 1647, he had defeated the Russian army without regaining the Russian crown, and had failed to recapture the Swedish crown.<sup>31</sup>

In 1648, John Casimir was elected to succeed Vladislav.<sup>32</sup> His reign was characterized by continual conflict. In 1655, Sweden again advanced against Poland, which resulted in six years of turmoil and destruction for Poland. This time period has subsequently been called the "Swedish Deluge" (Ptop).<sup>33</sup> The conflagration was finally ended with the heroic stand of the Polish army at the monastery of Jasn G'ora and the Treaty of Oliwa, on May 3,

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<sup>30</sup>The discussion of Wladyslaw IV follows W. Czaplinski, "The Reign of Wladyslaw, 1632-48," in Cambridge History to 1696, 488-502; Davies, God's Playground, 433-469; Giesytor, et. al., History of Poland, 235-241.

<sup>31</sup>See Appendix III for a map of Poland-Lithuania-1635-35, when the Joint Kingdom was at greatest extent.

<sup>32</sup>This discussion is based on M. Kurduba, "The Reign of John Casimir: Part I, 1648-54," and W. Tomkiewicz, "The Reign of John Casimir: Part II, 1654-68," in Cambridge History to 1696, 502-531; O. Halecki, A History of Poland (New York: Roy Publishers, 1966), 142-164.

<sup>33</sup>See Appendix IV for map of "The Deluge".

1660.

In 1654, Russia renewed hostilities against Poland. Casmir was able to subdue this invasion and expel the Muscovite garrisons in 1662. The 1648 Cossack rebellion, under the leadership of Bogdan Chmielnicki, had pushed the Poles west of the Dnieper river and, in spite of Casmir's attempts to regain the lost territory, they were unsuccessful. The historian Davis aptly describes the terrible carnage inflicted by the rebellion in the following words,

The destructive effects of the Rebellion are undeniable. For the Republic as a whole, it precipitated a process of decline which was never successfully reversed. For all the Republic's citizens, it provoked an orgy of destruction of life and property commensurate to that of the Thirty Years War in Germany. For the Jews and Protestants it brought blood-shed and persecution in unprecedented scale. The scattered and defenceless Jewish settlements attracted the wrath, not only of Chmielnicki's Cossacks and of the peasant bands, but also of the Tsar's army. The entry of the Muscovite soldiery into Wilno on 28 July 1655 was attended by the indiscriminate slaughter of its remaining inhabitants. The death-toll of some twenty thousand persons included a large portion of Jews. The total Jewish casualties in the period 1648-56 has been put at 56,000; the over-all decrease in the Jewish community through death, flight, and destitution approached 100,000.<sup>34</sup>

This carnage ended with the Truce of Andrusovo in 1667, by which Poland ceded to the Cossacks the provinces of Smolensk, Seversk and Czernichow, as well as the eastern side of the Dnieper. The following year, Casmir abdicated and retired to France, where he died in 1672.

Michal Korybut Wisniowiecki, the Austrian candidate, was

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<sup>34</sup>Davis, God's Playground, 447.

elected to succeed Casimir.<sup>35</sup> In his brief four year reign, the alliance with the Habsburgs was cemented through the marriage of Archduchess Eleonora to Michal. Militarily, Poland suffered the second Turkish war and lost all Ukrainian districts still under Polish rule to the Turks.

John Sobieske, the French backed candidate, succeeded Michael in 1674.<sup>36</sup> His lengthy reign to 1696 was characterized by conflict due to his attempts to win back lost territories such as East Prussia. This goal was frustrated when East Prussia, which had become an independent state in 1657, defeated the Swedish forces under Fredrick William and allied itself with the French. Any designs the Polish might have made on East Prussia would be an attack on a mutual ally, France.

Sobieske's next move was against the Ottoman Empire. In order to have any hope of success, he renewed the alliance with the Habsburgs, which had lapsed with his election. The alliance was formalized on March 31, 1683 and in September a combined army of Imperial, Austrian, and Polish troops, under the command of Sobieske, defeated the Turkish army near Vienna. With this victory, the centuries' old threat from the Ottoman Turks subsided and gradually faded away.

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<sup>35</sup>The following is based on Davies, God's Playground, 470-472.

<sup>36</sup>The following discussion follows Halecki, History of Poland, 165-175; Davies, God's Playground, 473-491; O. Forst de Battaglia, "Jan Sobieski, 1674-96," in Cambridge History to 1696, 532-556.

With the death of Sobieske in 1696, Fredrick Augustus, elector of Saxony, due to pressure from Russia and Prussia, was elected king of Poland.<sup>37</sup> Thus began a sixty-six year reign of Saxon kings.

In 1700, Sweden and Russia were at war again and finally concluded the conflict with a peace treaty in 1721 in which new boundary lines were drawn. Sweden was defeated and had to retreat back to Sweden. Finland was occupied by Russian troops, but was not claimed as a Russian possession by Peter the Great at the peace treaty. Estonia and Livonia were transferred from Swedish to Russian protection and so Russia once more had direct access to the Baltic. The Polish and Lithuanian armies were limited to eighteen thousand and six thousand men respectively. Finally, Russia and Prussia declared themselves as empires.

Poland found herself in a difficult situation, for both of the new empires sought every opportunity to interfere in her affairs, using as an excuse the need to protect both Protestant and Orthodox against Catholic harassment. When Augustus died in 1733, wheels were well in motion that would ultimately annihilate the Polish Kingdom in the three partitions of 1772, 1793, and 1795.

This brief survey of Polish history indicates that the time period covered in this thesis, 1650-1700, was a turbulent

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<sup>37</sup>For this discussion see W. Konopczynski, "Early Saxon Period, 1697-1733," in Cambridge History to 1935, 1-25; Davies, God's Playground, 492-510.

time. Stanislaw Kot, in his lectures on Polish learning, points out, that between the years of 1600 and 1700, Poland had only fifteen years of peace while, in comparison, England had seventy-five.<sup>38</sup> War is almost never conducive to positive internal developments and the continual conflict in Poland proved to be a hindrance to development. Mennonites found themselves in a difficult situation during the seventeenth century because of their pacifist position. Since they were not citizens, they had to send substitutes or make monetary payments in lieu of military service.

By the time of the Union of Lublin in 1569, Polish society had emerged as a system of at least four, if not six, estates: the Clergy, the Nobility, the Burghers, and the Jews.<sup>39</sup> There were two other social groupings who could be considered as separate estates. They were the peasants, who at times were referred to as the fifth estate, and the Crown and its dependents, which could be considered as an independent Estate.<sup>40</sup>

The criteria for membership in the various estates was the intended function of the estate rather than their relati-

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<sup>38</sup>Stanislaw Kot, Five Centuries of Polish Learning, trans. William J. Rose (Oxford: The Shakespeare Head Press, 1944), 14.

<sup>39</sup>See Appendix V for chart of the social classes in Poland as outlined by Davies.

<sup>40</sup>Davies, God's Playground, 126-135, 201. See also Earl Morse Wilbur, A History of Unitarianism, (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1945), 266-272.

onship to the means of production or any other measure of wealth, income or economic position.<sup>41</sup> Davies suggests that underneath the law-making of the fourteenth to sixteenth century, which had created the estates lay a social theory that held that the Crown was to rule, the clergyman to pray, the nobleman to fight, the burgher to trade, the Jew to be a Jew, and the peasant to till the fields.<sup>42</sup>

This is not to deny that economic differences did exist, but economic differences existed to the same degree within estates as between estates. For example, a landless noble family might well have sustained an economic existence at the level or even below that of its peasant neighbor. But such poverty in no way impaired the fiscal, legal, and political privileges to which their noble inherited status entitled them. Similarly, a Jew might exceed many of his neighbors in wealth and influence, but short of conversion to Christianity, he could not gain access to the ranks of the burghers or nobility. Membership in the estates was largely hereditary. Economics counted for less than law, heredity, and custom. Mobility between estates was fraught with obstacles.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Davies, God's Playground, 204. Attempts were made as early as the fifteenth century to eliminate independent social groups. This is illustrated by the action of the Bishops in closing the cathedral Chapters to all but noble candidates. In this way they eliminated the large group of plebian clerics, who, by merit and education, had risen to occupy an influential position mid-way between the episcopate and the

The Jews were, in many senses, also an estate: membership was hereditary; they were a clearly identified group; and they had a legal status of their own. According to Laeuen,<sup>44</sup> it is not possible to determine the origin of the Jews in Poland. However, he says it is quite clear that the Polish Jews did not come only from Germany, as had been held for some time. Many Jews came to Poland from the Black Sea area and the Orient. When the Chasanreich was destroyed in the tenth century, a migration of Jews to Russia and Poland was initiated. In the eleventh century, the persecution of Jews by the Crusaders caused an influx of Jews to Poland from Bohemia. After the Tartar wars, German Jews migrated in large numbers to Poland.

Laeuen goes on to suggest that the main incentive for the

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parish clergy. Only two prebendaries, for Doctors of Law or Medicine, were reserved for non-nobles in each Chapter. Likewise, the nobility attacked the shrinking holdings of the free peasantry and eliminated the special status of esquires, forcing them to accept full responsibilities of a nobleman, move into the towns, or fall into serfdom. In like manner, the Guilds attacked illegal craftsmen's fraternities a parte, whose members, known as partaacze or interlopers, contrived to evade established practices of apprenticing and licensing. This, in turn, drove a large part of the urban poor into the service of the noble Estates, and fostered the creation of extra municipal zones within cities. These zones, known as jurydiki, were subject only to the jurisdiction of their nobles or ecclesiastical owners, usually located on the outskirts of the cities or outside the city walls, and at times developed into ghettos. For example, many Jews lived in such ghettos. And in these Jewish ghettos the Jewish kahal followed the pattern of the nobles and clergy by attacking separate Jewish Guilds which sought to escape the Kahal's rigid control. For more see Rose, Poland, 125-126.

<sup>44</sup>Harald Laeuen, Polnische Tragoedie (Stuttgart: Steingru-ber Verlag, 1955), 67.

Jewish migrations to Poland was not political or religious, but economic. It was the economic upswing of the Jagellion State that attracted many Jews to Poland. This is illustrated by the fact that at the key centers of trade and commerce we find Jewish settlements emerging. The latter migrations were so large and influential that they gave the Polish Jewish colonies their Yiddish language. The Jews developed a state within a state where, at least until 1764, they held regular diets to regulate their affairs.<sup>45</sup> Jewish liberties in Poland went back to the charter of 1264,<sup>46</sup> passed by Prince Boleslaw for Great Poland. This charter was re-affirmed by every Jagellion King. In 1364, Casimir enacted the statute for all of Poland and, in 1367, it was extended to the Jews of Cracow, Sandomiez and Lwow. In 1515, Sigismund I encouraged Jewish immigration and permitted them to settle in various parts of the country, but when they settled in a city, they frequently would not be permitted to settle within the walled

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>46</sup>Bernard D. Weinryb, The Jews of Poland: A Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 100 to 1800, (The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 32. See also Davies, God's Playground, 79-80. It is suggested by Davies that the first charter of 1264 was granted to avoid harassment of the Jews by city corporations which had received enhanced powers. The charter included such privileges as: the right for Jews to travel without being molested; permission for Jews to engage in trade and the right to engage in their own religious practices, including worship in a synagogue, burial practices, and slaughter of animals for food. The royal charter could not insist that Jews be allowed to reside within the bounds of the city walls or that they would have the same rights and privileges as the autonomous burghers.



part of the city. The Mennonites were restricted in the same way. However, Jews were not accepted or permitted into all parts of the Kingdom. This exclusion is illustrated by what happened on the Baltic seaboard, around Danzig and Elbing, as well as in Courland and Livonia. In these areas, where an entrenched German Lutheran bourgeoisie controlled the economic and political activity, there was opposition to the Jews, and in some areas they did their best to exclude Jews from their territory.

Jews were also restricted in some of these areas in terms of what they could do for a livelihood. Local trades and merchants sought to restrict Jewish settlement and activity. Only in the vast eastern fringes of the Polish monarchy, which became important because of the growing grain trade, were the landowners pro-Jewish. They needed people with the ability to manage estates and tolls and handle long-distance trade. Jews were adept at this, and were therefore sought after.

The Jews had the privilege of forming their own communities, Communes or kahal. Elders were elected to run this Commune to administer the affairs of the Kahal socially and economically. Their freedom and protection was under the personal patronage of the king.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Jonathan I. Israel, European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750 (Clarendon Press, 1985), 5-16. In these pages Israel discusses the attempts of various western European countries at annihilating the Jews from the West. Many of these went to Poland. Israel says that in 1500 there were approximately 30,000 Jews in Poland but by 1575 that number had increased to 100 to 150,000 Jews. The Polish

The treatment of the Jews parallels the treatment received by some other dissident groups, such as the Mennonites. Both were prohibited from living within city walls. Both groups were continually under attack by guilds and artisans who felt they were being robbed of a livelihood by these outsiders. Citizenship was withheld from both. Declarations of protection were frequently made by the king personally. Neither of the two groups was interested in acculturation. They were concerned about being left alone to earn a livelihood, train their children, worship in freedom according to their conscience, and be good members of the community, as far as their faith would permit them.

During the sixteenth century, Poland had become a granary from which foodstuffs and other products of field and forest were being exported to western European countries.<sup>48</sup> The Vistula became a crowded highway of commerce, while Danzig developed into one of the busiest ports of the continent, as trade with Amsterdam and Antwerp mushroomed.<sup>49</sup> Not only did Danzig enjoy growth, but so did other towns and rural areas.

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population had increased from 5 million to 7 million in the same period. This reflects the pressure against the Jews in the West and the open door in Poland. The open door was not a little influenced by the lucrative grain trade in the process. For this the Polish nobles needed settlers, as well as administrators for their estates, and the Jews obliged.

<sup>48</sup>See for example Andrzej Wyczanski, "Tentative Estimate of Polish Rye Trade in the Sixteenth Century," APH 4 (1961): 119-132. Stanislaw Hoszowski, "The Revolution of Prices in Poland in the 16th and 17th Centuries," APH 3 (1960): 7-16.

<sup>49</sup>See Appendix VI for a map of the Vistula trade.

Danzig showed her prosperity by extensive building programs, which included churches, public buildings and private mansions, many of which still command admiration.<sup>50</sup> Visitors were impressed with the hospitality as well as the law and order they experienced in Poland; travellers were rarely molested. With this prosperity in material wealth went a general awakening of arts, letters, and science.<sup>51</sup>

As the towns flourished, well-to-do burghers sought an outlet for their capital and so purchased land in defiance of the existing laws prohibiting such investment. In similar defiance, they sent their sons abroad to study, in order to fit them for the professions or public office. Their houses became veritable palaces; the walls were adorned with paintings from the brushes of recognized masters, both native and foreign. The great Augsburg banking firm of the Fuggers established itself in the country, thereby facilitating business relations with the outside world. Italian and Bohemian merchant families, and even some Danzig merchants, left Danzig for the towns.

A major shift in the intellectual climate of Poland oc-

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<sup>50</sup>Rose, History of Poland, 49; See also O. Halecki, "The Renaissance in Poland: Cultural Life and Literature," in Cambridge History to 1696, 273-286; S. S. Komornicki, "The Renaissance in Poland: the Fine Arts." in Cambridge History to 1696, 287-299; A Brueckner, "Polish Cultural Life in the Seventeenth Century," in Cambridge History to 1696, 557-569; W. Tatarkiewicz, "Polish Art in the Seventeenth Century," in Cambridge History to 1696, 571-578.

<sup>51</sup>For a discussion of the revival in learning see Rose, History of Poland, 49-58.

curred during Sigismund's reign, when sons of the nobility went abroad to Italy, France, and Germany for studies. They discovered humanism, were enamoured with it, and brought it back to Poland. As a result, they made a break with almost everything that was medieval and instead recognized and accepted the visible world and became willing to support national institutions. Polish scholars were in correspondence with Erasmus; some were his pupils. Leonard Coxe, the English humanist, was a guest lecturer in the halls where Kopernik had sat at Cracow.

As contacts with Renaissance Italy increased, the power of these new ideas grew in the Vistula Delta. With churchmen giving the lead, both town and country houses became centers of eager discussion of the rediscovery of the ancient pagan ideas and the discovery of the new worlds across the seas. This new learning produced, among the nobility, a more tolerant attitude toward deviations from the Catholic faith. In turn, this meant a more tolerant attitude towards groups not adhering to either the Lutheran, Reformed, or Catholic faith; groups such as the Mennonites.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Polish Republic had reached its economic zenith and was in an early stage of decline. For some one hundred and fifty years, from 1500-1650, Poland experienced a buoyant grain market.<sup>52</sup> This

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<sup>52</sup>Arthur Attman, The Russian and Polish Markets in International Trade, 1500-1650. trans. by Eva and Allan Green, (Goeteborg, 1973), 65. See also Stanislaw Hoszowski,

active trade was illustrated by the fact that by 1650, some fifty Dutch firms maintained resident agents in Danzig while the British had some twenty agents. Similarly, the number of ships visiting Polish ports was an index of the volume of trade. In 1642, no less than two thousand and fifty-two vessels called at the port of Danzig alone. Some four to five hundred ships would have been moored at the quays on the banks of the Motlau. The size of the vessels was also indicative of the volume of trade. In 1641, on one thousand seven hundred and forty-one ships, nine hundred and sixty-four had a capacity of fifty lasts, or approximately one hundred and fifteen tons. There were one hundred and three vessels that carried one hundred and fifty lasts, or approximately three hundred and forty-five tons. The amount of grain exported during the early 17th century was never repeated.<sup>53</sup> Davis, in discussing this phenomena, says,

In the lifetime of Copernicus, the Vistula Trade developed by leaps and bounds. In terms of exported grain measured in lasts,<sup>54</sup> it rose from 5,573 in 1491-2, to

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"The Revolution of Prices in Poland in the 16th and 17th Centuries," APH, II (1959), 7-16; and Davies, God's Playground, 258-266.

<sup>53</sup>Attman, Russian and Polish Markets, 65.

<sup>54</sup>The Danzig last or "load" was a measure of capacity equivalent to 3,101 litres of rye or roughly 2.3 tons. (Its exact weight varied according to the commodity. One last of frothless beer was equivalent to 2,644 litres, to 2,760 litres of frothy beer, or to 2,264 litres of wine.) It was divided into 60 Scheffel/korczyk or 'small bushels', of 52 litres. It was approximately 10 per cent smaller than the Polish wholesale 'laszt', which, at 3,440 litres of rye, was designed to include an automatic commission for the seller. The Polish

10,000 in 1537, to 66,007 in 1563, and to a peak of 118,000 in 1618. The figure for 1618 was never repeated. But the volume of trade remained substantial.<sup>55</sup>

Trade was not only in grain, but also in timber. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Poland exported lumber for shipbuilding and housing. By-products of lumbering, such as tar and potash also were lucrative for the traders. Wyrobisz notes that, by the seventeenth century, the forests were becoming depleted; there was no plan for reforestation, but only a harvesting for gain. As a result, writers began to bring this to the attention of the people, demanding that industries that were intensive fuel users, such as foundries and glass works, should be curtailed or eliminated in order to preserve the forests.<sup>56</sup>

Furs, as well as other agricultural products, were exported, helping the prosperity of the producers and exporters. Poland became part of the "Baltic Zone," shipping its products to England, Holland, France and to the Mediterranean countries.

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'last' was often divided into 30 Varsovian bushels or korzec, each of which at 114 litres was twice as large as the Danzig Scheffel. In Maloposka, the Cracovian korczyk was equivalent to 134 litres. The profusion of Vistula grain measures was standardized in 1850 by the Prussian Customs Service which fixed the Scheffel/korczyk at 50 litres of rye. Davies, God's Playground, 257.

<sup>55</sup>Davies, God's Playground, 257.

<sup>56</sup>Andrzej Wyrobisz, "Economic Landscapes: Poland from the fourteenth to the seventeenth Century." in East-Central Europe in Transition from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century, ed. Antoni Maczak, Henry Samsonowicz and Peter Burke. (Cambridge: University Press, 1985), 38.

This active commerce had a number of both positive and negative effects. Negatively, there was a depletion of the natural resources without due regard for conservation or long term effects. The greed of the landowners intensified the serf problem, in that they worked the serfs harder with less remuneration for services rendered. It made the lot of the peasants worse, while the gentry, at least those owning land, lived in luxury.

On a more positive note, there was interest in improving farming methods to obtain greater production. More land was put under cultivation in order to produce more grain for export. Since many Mennonites were farmers, this lucrative trade helped them as much as other Polish farmers. Many Mennonite farmers were model producers.

Navigable rivers became important routes for the transportation of goods. This, in turn, resulted in towns and villages developing at strategic places for trans-shipment. At these trans-shipment points many Jewish colonies flourished. Conversely regions with no navigable rivers remained undeveloped.

During the latter half of the seventeenth century, there was an economic down turn due to wars and passage of armies, as well as fire and plagues and the shift from trading in grain to forest products and lesser profitable exports.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Hobsbawm "The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century," in Crisis in Europe, 5-58. A non-Marxist view of the crisis is found in H.R. Trevor-Roper, "The General Crisis of the

Despite this economic decline, several of the major towns and cities maintained a relatively high standard of living, while many of the smaller towns suffered economically.<sup>58</sup>

The burghers had been quite well to do up to the first half of the seventeenth century, but then they suffered a decrease in their wealth. Opportunity to gain wealth had diminished because the gentry needed no middlemen; they received their goods from abroad, direct and duty free. Industry and handcrafts declined because the gentry imported what they needed.

The burghers, consequently, were restive because they had no political rights and were unable to join Parliament. As a result, the burghers sought to enter the ranks of the gentry and from there find their way into Parliament. Parliament granted the right of nobility, only exceptionally, to commoners who had performed acts of valour in battle. Some old family might accept a commoner as a participant in their coat-of-arms, and thereby make them a part of the nobility. At times the king would dub a commoner a knight at the king's coronation. Even then, only the third generation of the new noble could enter Parliament. The custom developed of buying a noble title from an old family for money or services rendered. Though this was forbidden, it happened quite

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Seventeenth Century," in Crisis in Europe, 59-96.

<sup>58</sup>A. Brueckner, "Polish Cultural Life in the Seventeenth Century," in Cambridge History of Poland to 1696, 565-569.



frequently.

The burghers were not permitted to sit in the district seyms. Through the evolutionary process of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, three organs of authority had emerged in the various towns. They were the Urban Council, headed by the mayor, also known as the burgomaster; a bench of alderman, presided over by the headman (wojt), nominated by the Council; and the representatives of the lower orders. In addition, the artisans had their guilds, which also exerted influence and power.

Polish historian Janusz Tazbir describes the latter half of the seventeenth century as a time of economic and political crisis.<sup>59</sup> The time period on which this thesis is

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<sup>59</sup>Janusz Tazbir, History of Poland, (Polish Scientific Publishers, 1968), 258-259. Factors that led to and intensified the crisis included: greater demands on the serfs which met with resistance and resulted in many fleeing the manorial farm's; the nobles suppressed serf uprisings with force and did not reduce their demands of labor; the impoverished peasant bought less and the gentry bought abroad and this resulted in a decline in urban trade and crafts; and agriculture production was down due to devastation of wars as well as natural disasters such as floods. This resulted in a decline of the population which meant lowered production. Arable land reverted to waste.

During the latter half of the 17th century the crisis also had political implications. The middle gentry lacked money and thus sold their land to the magnates or transferred to leaseholds. This strengthened the power of the magnates who now were supported by the middle gentry. This created a decentralization of political power. Each magnate protected his power and authority. There was no central fiscal organ strong enough to pull these centrifugal forces together. The weakness of the political scene was illustrated by the fact that from 1650 to 1700 there were a total of 44 Seyms. Fifteen of these were broken up by the liberum veto and two ended without passing any laws.

concentrating thus was a time of economic decline. The Mennonites experienced the effects of this economic down turn, as well as the destructive effects of the various wars and natural catastrophes.

Demographically the Mennonites found themselves in a minority position. Population figures are difficult to determine for the time period under discussion though a broad outline is discernable.<sup>60</sup> According to Mannhardt there were an estimated one thousand persons including children in the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church around 1700.<sup>61</sup> This estimate is supported by a 1749 statistic that indicates there were two hundred and twent-nine families in the Danzig Flemish Church. With an estimate of five persons per family this results in an estimated one thousand one hundred and forty-five people.<sup>62</sup> In 1709 some four hundred and nine died of the plague.<sup>63</sup> This was a serious decimation of the Danzig Flemish population, but due to immigration from the Netherlands and natural increase due to numerous marriages, the original number was reached again by the mid-eighteenth century.

The Mennonites were a small percentage of the Danzig population. Benes and Pounds suggest that Danzig had a

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<sup>60</sup>Vaclav L. Benes and Norman J. G. Pounds, Poland (New York: Praeger Books, 1970), 99-100.

<sup>61</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 82.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 83.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 82.

population of thirty-six thousand and seven hundred in 1793.<sup>64</sup> They further suggest that during the mid seventeenth century the population was considerably more though they give no estimated figure. Davies estimates that Danzig had some fifty thousand people in 1650 while Skwarczynski suggests seventy thousand for the same time.<sup>65</sup> This would suggest that the Mennonites were between one and two per cent of the Danzig population during the last half of the seventeenth century.

The multinational character and constant flux in the population of the Polish cities suggest that care must be taken in identifying the national make-up of any Polish city. However, of Danzig, Davies says,

It is incontestable of course, that the cities of Silesia and of the Baltic Coast, especially Breslau, Stettin, and Danzig were overwhelmingly German from the thirteenth century onwards.<sup>66</sup>

This was largely due to the influence of the Teutonic Knights as well as immigration from Germany. Thus the Mennonites found themselves in a largely German city. The oppression they would experience from the guilds was more from Germans than from Poles.

Some reference has been made to the religious scene in

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<sup>64</sup>Benes and Pound, Poland, 62.

<sup>65</sup>Davies, God's Playground, 271; P. Skwarczynski, "Poland and Lithuania," in The New Cambridge Modern History, ed. R. B. Wernham, vol. 8 (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), 380.

<sup>66</sup>Davies, God's Playground, 304.

Poland which requires summarization. During the sixteenth century, Poland, though officially Roman Catholic in faith, was characterized by considerable religious toleration, as illustrated by the fact that there were a diversity of faiths in the Republic.<sup>67</sup> In addition to the Roman Catholic faith, there were Lutherans, Reformed, Uniates, Bohemian Brethren, Arians, Orthodox, Armenians, Jews, and Mennonites. The Mennonites were predominantly found in the western and northern parts of the United Kingdom; the Orthodox were found more in the eastern part of the Kingdom; the Socinians were more in central Poland; and the Moslems were in the southern part of the Kingdom.<sup>68</sup>

The distribution of the population was uneven with the territory west of the Vistula being most densely populated while the area east of Warsaw had large tracts of marsh and forest virtually without inhabitants. In terms of religion it is estimated that fifty percent of the population was Roman Catholic and thirty per cent was Uniate. The other major grouping was the Orthodox church. In addition there were

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<sup>67</sup>Janusz Tazbir, "Culture of the Baroque Poland," in East-Central Europe in Transition-From 14th to the 17th Century, ed. Antoni Maczak, Henryk Samsonowicz, Peter Burke (Cambridge: University Press, 1985), 167-180. Tazbir says that up to mid 17th century the Commonwealth was a haven for all those persecuted for their religious beliefs in other countries. It was in Poland that Antitrinitarians' works were published calling for religious toleration and a rational approach to matters of faith. See Tazbir, A State Without Stakes, 13.

<sup>68</sup>See Appendix VII for a chart indicating the various religious groups in Poland in 1660 and 1772.

small groupings of Protetant sects, Jews, Moslems and Armenians.

Danzig was affected by Reformation teaching. Stasiewski estimates that during the sixteenth century the Catholic majority in Danzig shrank to one-third of the population.<sup>69</sup> This was reversed during the seventeenth century so that during the latter half of the century Catholicism was again in the majority. Therefore the Mennonites in Danzig lived in the midst of a German Catholic majority during the seventeenth century.

Reformation doctrine had first appeared in the western Polish provinces that were neighbors of Germany. Urban centers such as Danzig and Polish Prussia, as well as East Prussia, responded favourably to the Reformation. King Sigismund I was distressed at this development, and tried to stop the movement by issuing severe decrees that were, however, never enforced. The younger Sigismund was more partial to the Reform and so many were waiting for his "succession."<sup>70</sup>

In 1570, at the Synod of Sandomierz,<sup>71</sup> an alliance was formed between the Polish Lutherans, Reformed and Bohemian

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<sup>69</sup>B. Stasiewski, "Danzig," in NCE 1967 ed.

<sup>70</sup>Sigismund's I restrictions helped focus the need for reform in the Catholic Church. The interest for reform was also sparked and fed by real abuses in the church, travel and studies in foreign lands, spread of Protestant literature and contacts with non-German reformers, including antitrinitarians. See Halecki, Borderlands, 164-168.

<sup>71</sup>Tazbir, State Without Stakes, 87-89.

Brethren, to make common cause against the Catholics and antitrinitarians. This alliance, though it never was able to agree on a Confession of Faith, presented a united front to and isolated the anti-Trinitarians. At the same time, the Catholic Church was experiencing renewal and presented a strong front against the Arians as well.

This Protestant cooperation was also important because the king had accepted the decrees of the Council of Trent which, in part, resulted in a return to the Catholic Church by those who had left it. The Protestants needed a united front in the face of an aggressive rejuvenated Catholicism. This alliance or union served as a model, for the rest of Europe, of the possibility of various religions working and coexisting together. In Poland it did not eliminate religious debate between the various denominations but it dulled the religious differences and promoted an atmosphere of conciliation. In sharp contrast, the rest of Europe was torn by religious dissent. At the Diet of 1562-63, the Protestants had successfully pressed for the decision that no judgments of an ecclesiastical court would be executed by the state authorities. When the king accepted the Decrees of Trent, the Protestants sought for constitutional guarantees that freedom of religion would continue in Poland. This guarantee came at the Confederation of Warsaw in 1573, a year after Sigismund's death and during the interregnum. The guarantee stated that attempts would be made to maintain peace among those who

dissented in religious matters. This charter went further than any in Europe because it covered all denominations, even those that the Protestants wanted to see exiled.<sup>72</sup>

Tazbir says that, up to the middle of the seventeenth century, people persecuted for religious reasons in other countries found asylum in Poland. For example, it was in Poland that the Antitrinitarians were able to publish their writings and call for religious toleration.<sup>73</sup> But in the first half of the 17th century, the religious scene had begun to change. Rejuvenated Catholicism, with the help of the Jesuits, had become aggressive. The Catholics also continued to pressure the king to expel the Protestants. These restrictions, however, were not enforced. Among the nobility, solidarity of the estate was more important than religious affiliation. Consequently, religious matters impinged less on political, cultural or social life in Poland than in most other European countries. Due to class solidarity, the nobles were the main support for religious tolerance, and the main

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<sup>72</sup>Halecki, Borderlands, 168. H. G. Mannhardt, in Die Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, argues that the Mennonites and the Arians or anti-Trinitarians were not included in the Warsaw Confederation of 1573 nor were they included in the 1648 Diet of Warsaw. For his point of view he cites Lengnich, Geschichte der Preussischen Lande, Bd 7, p. 19. Citing the Danziger Stadarchiv Mm. 18b, 131, Mannhardt maintains that King Michael in under-writing the Religionsprivilegium in 1676 excludes the Mennonites.

<sup>73</sup>Tazbir, State Without Stakes, 13.

restraining influence on religious fanaticism.<sup>74</sup> Complete religious tolerance applied primarily to the nobles, while the burghers did not receive such sympathetic treatment. Also, the Reformation teaching never seriously touched or left an impact on the peasants. The peasants faced some difficulties because the landlord could impose his faith on the villagers working his land. Thus, if a village was sold, a change of religion could take place.

In 1565, the Jesuits had arrived in Poland and strengthened the resolve of the king to remain Catholic. Sigismund did not profess to make a decision of conscience for his subjects, but in making the decision to remain Catholic, he made the decision for the fate of the Reformation in Poland. A few years later, Chancellor Jan Zimmoyski took the same path. He feared civil war and so decided to abandon the Reformation in the interests of national unity. The civil war in France and the St. Bartholomew's massacre influenced Polish opinion against the Reformation.

It is not accurate to blame only the Royal Court for the failure of the Reformation in Poland. Divisions within the Reformation camp did its work in defeating the Reformation. The three major groups, the Lutherans, Calvinists, and Bohemian Brethren, could not resolve their differences. This

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 122. The tolerance of other faiths is also seen in that seldom was capital punishment used to punish a dissident. Bribery and persuasion were used or if possible exclusion from public office. Ibid., 111-125.



conflict was further aggravated when some radical reform voices, such as the Antitrinitarians, made many fear the Reform.

In Poland, the Reformation never reached the common people and so it never received the support of the masses. There was no parallel to the 1525 Peasants War of Germany, which demanded more popular rights in terms of running their own churches and freedom to earn an easier livelihood.

Religious intolerance increased during the seventeenth century, especially the latter half of the century in which the Catholic majority was aggressive in missionary activity and in its opposition to heretics, whom they would like to have seen expelled from the country.<sup>75</sup> During the last half of the seventeenth century, the tolerance of Poland had been replaced by a spirit of intolerance, which bode ill for the Mennonites and other dissenting groups such as the Antitrini-

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<sup>75</sup>Some of the reasons for the origin of this growing intolerance include: 1. The Reformation had lost most of its impetus by the 17th century while Catholicism had been rejuvenated. 2. The Protestants had an early majority but this was lost as many turned back to Catholicism. 3. The Reformation had never won popular support and so it was at the mercy of the nobles which seemed to use their religion for their personal enhancement rather than allowing it to control them. 4. New ruling families, who were not sympathetic to the Reform emerged and they promoted Catholicism. 5. The Counter-Reform was quite successful, the Jesuit schools trained loyal sons and so when they took over from their fathers they supported Catholicism. It also drove a wedge between Protestant and Catholic nobles in that the Counter-Reform labelled the Protestants as rebels seeking to overthrow the regime. 6. Among the ruling class, the concepts of noble birth, Polish patriotism, and catholic faith began to merge. Ibid., 163-164.

tarians.<sup>76</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century, the Golden era of Poland was passed. It was during the 1650's that the "Deluge" came and in the last fifty years of the century, Poland was almost continually involved in war. Economically, Poland had reached its peak, at least in the area of trade. Even though there was still a considerable volume of trade, it would never reach the level it had previously attained. Socially, the aristocratic classes were strongly entrenched, though the burghers of the towns found ways and means of moving into the gentry estate and thereby into positions of power and control. The peasants found themselves in a worse condition than they had at the beginning of the century. They were poorer and were required to give more services to their landlords. Religiously, Poland had moved from a haven for dissenters to an entrenched and aggressive Catholicism with less tolerance for religious heterodoxy. This was the milieu in which the Mennonites lived during the last half of the seventeenth century.

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<sup>76</sup>See Appendix VIII for a map of the Ecclesiastical Dioceses of the seventeenth century.

## CHAPTER 3

### MENNONITE IMMIGRATION: IN SEARCH OF A NEW HOME

Whenever an ethnic group, or an individual, moves to a new country or social environment, they never move into that environment tabula rasa. Such individuals or groups of people always bring with them a heritage of religion, language, customs and skills. The move to a new home is accompanied by a variety of pressures for the newcomers to conform to the new environment. According to anthropologist Remnick, the first generation of newcomers usually is resistant to cultural change.<sup>1</sup> The second generation is frequently more open to modification, but finds itself in a confused state between adaptation and rejection of the new culture, preferring the culture that has nurtured it. The third generation seeks to disassociate itself from its parent culture, while the fourth generation may be totally acculturated. The Mennonites who moved to Poland were faced with pressures to acculturate but they did not conform to Remnick's four generation process. The Mennonites resisted change and did not become acculturated until well into the nineteenth century. The regressive economic, political, and social structure of Polish society

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<sup>1</sup>Ronald A. Remnick, Theory of Ethnicity (New York, University Press, 1983), 27-29.

facilitated this choice. There are always individual exceptions, but as a people, the Mennonites never completely adapted to the Polish, and later Prussian, society. Though many changes had taken place, they continued as a unique group until their demise in Poland in 1945. In a new social environment, pressures are brought to bear on a people who push for modifications of faith and life, but there may also be strong resistance to change and a holding on to what was brought along. The Mennonites, with their flight to Poland, were thrust into such an exigency.

Historians agree that Mennonites appeared in Poland within twenty-five years after the birth of the movement in the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> There is a reference to Taufgesindte, or

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<sup>2</sup>The Dutch Anabaptist movement had its beginning in the Netherlands around 1530. It is not absolutely certain whether there were any Anabaptists in the Netherlands prior to the coming of Melchior Hoffman in 1529. C. Henry Smith suggests that there may have been small isolated groups here and there in the cities of the Lowlands somewhat earlier but there was no organized effort before Hoffman appeared in these regions in 1529. In 1530, Hoffman started baptizing in Emden, shortly after Counts Enno and Johann published the Edict of Speyer. Among other things, the Edict stated that "all, whether of spiritual or secular status" if "contaminated by the sect of Anabaptism" were to leave the country. By publishing the Edict, it would appear that the Counts were familiar with Anabaptists even though they may not have been aware of any in their territory. Being loyal to the Emperor, they proclaimed the decree in obedience to him, as well as a warning to their people. In 1533, Jan Mattjis, a baker from Haarlem and follower of Hoffman, claimed the leadership of the Melchiorites in Amsterdam. He sent missionaries out in pairs to convert the people. One of these pairs, Bartholomeus and Dirk de Kuiper, visited Leeuwarden, where they won over and baptized Obbe and Dirk Philips. The Philips brothers worked hard for the movement initially. Obbe ultimately withdrew, but Dirk continued with the movement. Dirk did not follow the radical direction that culminated in the infamous Muensterite

Anabaptists, present in Marienburg as early as 1526.<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Unruh suggests that this is not a reference to the Anabaptist group identified as Mennonite.<sup>4</sup> In searching for

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affair. It was the followers of Dirk who were joined by Menno Simons in 1536. Both Menno and Dirk did much to give direction to the struggling groups. Menno ultimately gave the group its name, Mennists and later Mennonites. The Mennonite migration from the Netherlands to Poland was composed of followers of these two leaders. For more on the origin of Dutch Anabaptism see: William Keeney, "Anabaptism in the Netherlands," in C. J. Dyck, ed. An Introduction to Mennonite History (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1967), 75-88. Cornelius Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism: Origin, Spread, Life, and Thought (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1981), 89-95, 175-180. C. Henry Smith, The Story of the Mennonites, 4th ed. rev. & enl. Cornelius Krahn (Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957), 64-69. John C. Wenger, Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1949), 72-81.

<sup>3</sup>Benjamin H. Unruh, Die niederlaendish-niederdeutschen Hintergruende der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert (Selbsverlag, 1955), 101-102. See also Anna Brons, Ursprung, Entwicklung und Schicksale der Altevangelischen Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten in kurzen Zuegen uebersichtlich dargestellt (Norden, Druck von Diedr. Soltau, 1891), 242. Horst Penner speaks to the question of the first Anabaptist migration to Prussia in his book, Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederlaender in Weichsellmuendugsgebiet von der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn der preussischen Zeit (Mennonitischer Geschichts Verein, 1940), 5-17. It has been established that by 1531 Mennonites, due to persecution in the Netherlands, began moving to Poland in ever greater numbers. Not only did the Mennonites migrate to escape persecution but other Protestant groups did as well. In Poland there was a lack of centralized government as well as a diversity of religious opinion among the gentry so that the various groups, also described as sects, were tolerated. They were tolerated not because they were liked but as Brons says, "Weder in Ostpreussen noch in Polen gab es damals eine Macht, die den Willen gehabt haette, Jemanden seines Glaubens wegen zu verfolgen oder zu toedten." Brons, Ursprung der Taufgesinnte, 242.

<sup>4</sup>Unruh, Hintergruende der Ostwanderungen, 101-102. See also Brons, Ursprung der Taufgesinnte, 242., and G. L. Baron von Reisswitz, Beitraege zur Kenntniz der taufgesinnten Gemeinden oder der Mennoniten, statistischen, historischen und religioesen, auch juristischen Inhalts (Breslau, 1829), 2:19-20.

when the Anabaptists, known as Mennonites, settled in Poland, one finds evidence that they were in the Vistula Delta region at least by 1540.<sup>5</sup>

There is some question about the origin of the Mennonites who migrated to Poland. Unruh, on the basis of the names, traced the migrants to northern Holland, particularly to the province of Friesland.<sup>6</sup> Postma, using the same criteria as Unruh, questioned whether Unruh's conclusion was accurate.<sup>7</sup> A majority of the Mennonite immigrants to Poland came from the Netherland provinces of West Friesland, Groenigen, as well as German Ostfriesland. The names of the immigrants were Frisian, Saxon and Frankish, all indicating Dutch origins, but, in addition, Postma points out that of the five hundred and sixty-seven names being examined, one hundred and eighty-six were names found in all the provinces of the Netherlands.<sup>8</sup> Postma's helpful correction indicates that the immigrants came from the southern as well as the northern part of the Nether-

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<sup>5</sup>Menno Simons visited the Mennonite Church during the time period of 1547-1552. Unruh's careful work on this makes it clear that in the 1540's Mennonites were flowing into Poland. It is possible that isolated families came already in the 1530's. See Unruh, Hintergruendeder der Ostwanderungen, 120-135. It should be noted that during this time some Anabaptists came to Poland from Moravia. See also Reisswitz, Beitraege zur Kenntniss, 1:17-18.

<sup>6</sup>Unruh, Hintergruende der Ostwanderungen, 65-74.

<sup>7</sup>Johan S. Postma, Das niederlaendische Erbe preussisch-russlaendischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika (Leeuwarden: A. Jongbloed, 1959), 82-108.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

lands. However, he does concede that many may have moved to the northern provinces due to persecution and from there migrated to Poland.

The primary motive for the Mennonite migration was the search for religious freedom. The Anabaptists were resistant in relation to the Roman Catholic faith in the Netherlands, consequently, they were under severe pressure to conform or migrate. As early as May 8, 1521, Emperor Charles V passed an edict excluding adherents of the Reformation, which included the Anabaptists, from his inherited lands, including the Spanish Netherlands.<sup>9</sup> In 1529,<sup>10</sup> the Diet of Speyer, by the command of the emperor, proclaimed an edict of death to the Anabaptists within the Roman Empire. Though the severity of the enforcement of the edict varied in different parts of the Empire, Anabaptists were forced to flee for their lives, finding temporary asylum in cities and dukedoms where the edict was not enforced. This is illustrated by Strasbourg, a free city of the Empire and a refuge for religious dissidents including Anabaptists, Reformed and Lutheran.<sup>11</sup> Pressure from the emperor was brought to bear on such liberal cities

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<sup>9</sup>Mannhardt, Danzig Mennonitengemeinde, 36.

<sup>10</sup>Johann Loserth, "Reichsgesetze gegen die Wiedertaeufer: Die Reichsabschiede als Quelle zur Geschichte der Taufgesinnten," in MGB 1, no. 1 & 2 (1936):27-29.

<sup>11</sup>Miriam Usher Chrisman Strasbourg and the Reform (Yale University Press, 1967). "Die Reformation aus der Sicht Luzifers," MGB, 41, no. 36 (1984): 7-29. Katharina Zell, "Strassburg als Beispiel der Barmherzigkeit," MGB 41, no 36 (1984):30-33.

and territories, to oust such sects as the Anabaptists. As a result, the cities put pressure on the dissidents, restricting their activity within the territory and at times expelling them.<sup>12</sup> With strong opposition to the Anabaptists in the Netherlands, especially during Duke Alva's "reign of terror," 1567-1573, many moved to Ostfriesland and other areas where there was less opposition.<sup>13</sup>

Poland was noted for its religious toleration,<sup>14</sup> which resulted in a steady flow of religious migrants to Poland.<sup>15</sup> Trade was at an all-time high during the sixteenth century between the Dutch traders and the Polish ports such as Danzig, making it easy for anyone, including religious dissidents, to find passage with the trading ships to Danzig.<sup>16</sup>

The bloody religious persecution during the "reign of terror", the promise of religious freedom, and the easy accessibility via boat, resulted in many Mennonites finding their way to Poland.<sup>17</sup> The Mennonites were, however, not the

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<sup>12</sup>Harold S. Bender, "Strasbourg," in ME, 1959 ed.

<sup>13</sup>Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 175-177; W. Mannhardt, Wehrfreiheit, 104-105; Harold J. Grimm The Reformation Era (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), 435-437; Dirk Cattepoel, "Niederlande," in ML 1958 ed.

<sup>14</sup>Janusz Tazbir, A State without Stakes, trans. A. T. Jordan (Poland: Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1973), 17-28, 74-112.

<sup>15</sup>Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 214-220.

<sup>16</sup>Davies, God's Playground, 256-292.

<sup>17</sup>Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 214-220.



only group who migrated to Poland for religious freedom. Many of the other Protestant groups such as Lutherans, Reformed, Socinians and Bohemian Brethren also found asylum in Poland.<sup>18</sup>

The Mennonites were not the first Dutch to migrate to Poland. The interest of trade and economic gain had enticed many Dutch to move to Poland prior to the middle of the sixteenth century. There were not only Dutch but many German immigrants as well who had moved to Poland for economic reasons.

Herbert Wiebe, in his study on the Dutch settlements in the Vistula Delta, points out that there were at least two waves of migrations to Poland and Prussia.<sup>19</sup> The first wave was during the Middle Ages, when the Teutonic Order was invited to subdue the Prussians on the eastern border of the Two Kingdoms. This immigration stream consisted largely of Germans who had been solicited by the Knights to help subdue the Prussians, and also to settle on the estates that had become desolated through the suppression of the native Prussians and floods. This migration flow reached its zenith in the fourteenth century.

The second migration wave came during the sixteenth

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<sup>18</sup>Reiswitsz, Beitraege zur Kenntnis, 2:18.

<sup>19</sup>Herbert Wiebe, Das Siedlungswerk niederlaendischer Mennoniten im Weichseltal zwischen Fordon und Weissenberg bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts, Wissenschaftliche Beitrage zur Geschichte und Landeskunde Ost-Mitteleuropas, no. 3 (Marburg a.d. Lahn: Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1952), 3-4.

century, initiated by the consequences of the Reformation and the extensive trade between Poland and western Europe, especially Danzig and Amsterdam. Many trading companies and bankers established themselves in the Polish cities to facilitate the lucrative trade in wheat, lumber, and furs from Poland, and textiles and luxury items to Poland. Immigration during the sixteenth century was made easier by the fact that Poland-Prussia and Holland had had considerable trade interaction over the centuries; there was, therefore a long standing contact between the two territories. Danzig and other Polish cities served as stop-overs and trans-shipment points for trade with Poland and territories further East and South, such as Moscow and the Ukraine.

Mennonite migration to Poland was enhanced by the invitation of Polish nobles to Dutch farmers to come and reclaim the Vistula Delta farmland.<sup>20</sup> Drainage of the rich delta had begun under the rule of the Teutonic Knights, but due to wars with their devastation, economic depression, and pestilence, there had been a demographic decline.<sup>21</sup> With the population decrease, many villages were vacated, the dykes fell into disrepair and reclaimed agricultural land reverted

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<sup>20</sup>Karl-Heinz Ludwig, Zur Besiedlung Des Weichseldeltas Durch die Mennoniten, Wissenschaftliche Beiträege zur Geschichte und Landeskunde Ost-Mitteleuropas, no. 57 (Mahrburg: Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1961), 32. See Appendix IX for map of the Vistula Delta.

<sup>21</sup>Hans Rosenberg, "The Rise of the Junkers in Brandenburg-Prussia, 1410-1653," Part II, The American Historical Review, 49, (1943): 230.

back to swampland. The Cracow peace of 1525 ended the carnage which had been caused by the Grand Master's struggle against his feudal lord, the Polish King. That same year, the Grand Master of the Order, Duke Albert, accepted Lutheranism, declared for a secular state, and accepted the feudal parameters spelled out by the 1466 Peace of Thorn. He also accepted his role as vassal of the Polish king for the promise that he would be the hereditary Duke of Prussia, thus ending resistance to Polish overlordship. East and West Prussia, as a result of the defeat at Tannenberg in 1410 and the Peace of Turin in 1466, were incorporated into Poland. The western part was known as Royal Prussia, ruled by the Polish King, while the eastern part became a fief, called Ducal Prussia, under the lordship of Duke Albert.<sup>22</sup> Both areas were now under nominal Polish hegemony. Rebuilding the Vistula region was a first priority for the duke and other Polish magnates and, as a result, they invited settlers to their territories.<sup>23</sup> The effectiveness of Duke Albert's agents in recruiting settlers was evidenced by the steady stream of immigrants to Royal and Ducal Prussia. They came from all directions: Germany, Netherlands, Scotland, England, Bohemia, and Poland.<sup>24</sup> Danzig was interested in settling their Werder and so, in 1547, commissioned Philip Edzema, a Dutchman and

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<sup>22</sup>Halecki, Borderlands, 137.

<sup>23</sup>Unruh, Hintergruende der Ostwanderungen, 98-99.

<sup>24</sup>Reisswitz, II, 18., So also Unruh, 89f.

probably a Mennonite,<sup>25</sup> to recruit settlers in his native - land.<sup>26</sup>

An important factor in recruiting settlers from the Netherlands was the expertise of the Dutch farmers in reclaiming land, making them invaluable settlers for the swampy delta. The geography of the Vistula Delta was similar to the Dutch landscape, meaning that immigrants would be able to continue their agricultural activity in circumstances similar to the ones they had left. As a result, little change would be demanded from the rural immigrants because of geography or climate.

Consequently, the migration of Mennonites to Poland was not unique. If one wishes to speak of a uniqueness in relation to the Mennonite migration, one would have to find it in the fact that persecution was the primary motive for the migration of the Dutch Mennonites. The news of freedom in Poland, as well as the possibility of agricultural pursuits along similar lines as in the homeland they were forced to leave, attracted the Mennonites.

Many of the immigrants and refugees settled around Danzig. Danzig was made up of four districts or areas.<sup>27</sup> They were the city itself, the Vorstaedte or Gaerten, the

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<sup>25</sup>Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 217.

<sup>26</sup>Peter J. Klassen, A Homeland for Strangers (Fresno, California: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1989), 9.

<sup>27</sup>Unruh, Hintergruende der Ostwanderunge, 121. See Appendix X for a map of Danzig.

Nehrung or Niedrung and the Danziger Werder. The city itself consisted of that territory enclosed within the city walls. The Vorstaedte were the suburbs just without the city walls where those not permitted to settle within the city built their homes and shops. The Niedrung was the narrow strip of land between the Danzig Bay and the Friesischen harbor; while the Werder was the land between the Weichsel and its western arm, the Mottlau. Included in this territory were such villages as Reichenberg, Weslinke, Wotzlaff, Landau, Scharffenberg and Schmerblock. The Rat of Danzig owned much of the land and was anxious to obtain settlers who would be able to drain and develop the fertile agricultural land. Consequently, they were happy to have refugees and settlers from the Netherlands settle in the Werder.

The Rat had one concern, that the settlers coming from the Netherlands be peaceful. In 1534, they wrote a letter to the shipping firms in Amsterdam, Antwerpen, Veere and Enkhui-zen requesting that they should not permit any "dangerous" settlers to take ship to Danzig.<sup>28</sup> This "dangerous" ascription had in view Anabaptist followers of the Muensterite affair. Mennonite historian H. G. Mannhardt noted that it is not known whether any of the immigrants were unruhige oder aufruehrerische Leute.<sup>29</sup> Several of the Hanseatic cities,

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<sup>28</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 37.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., See also Horst Penner, Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederlaender, 9-10.

including Luebeck and Danzig, though happy to have Mennonites settle in the Werder or rural areas, were opposed to accepting Anabaptists within their walls. This opposition decreased over time, but it did not disappear until after the partition of Poland in the late eighteenth century. Nonetheless, it soon became evident that the Anabaptists were hard workers, good at reclaiming land, not revolutionary, and, given the satisfying effect of the large volume of trade with the Netherlands,<sup>30</sup> the Danzig Council permitted the Anabaptists to rent land in the rural areas under its jurisdiction, while prohibiting them from living within the city walls.<sup>31</sup> When Bishop, king, or noble attacked the Mennonites, the Danzig Council frequently came out in defence of the Dutch immigrants settled in the Werder.<sup>32</sup> The Dutch Mennonites had the expertise and experience to build dykes and canals and the technical knowledge to use the windmill for pumping water. The Dutch brought with them the innovative water windmill, which had scoops for pumping water, a technique that was an

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<sup>30</sup>Davies says, "In the lifetime of Copernicus, the Vistula trade developed by leaps and bounds. In terms of exported grain measured in lasts [1 Danzig last was a rough equivalent of 2.3 tons though the exact weight was of course determined by the commodity shipped], it rose from 5,573 in 1491-2 to 10,000 in 1537, to 66,007 in 1563, and to a peak of 118,000 in 1618. The figure of 1618 was never repeated. But the volume of trade remained substantial." Davies, God's Playground, 257.

<sup>31</sup>Penner, Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederlaender, 10.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 12.

unknown in Poland.<sup>33</sup> The major dam breaks of 1543 and 1544 had caused a number of the original farmers to leave the Werder. The Danzig Council was happy to replace them with immigrants from the Netherlands. The first rent contract was concluded in 1547 with locator, an entrepreneur who in return for free rent for his land recruited renters for the nobleman's land,<sup>34</sup> Philip Edzema, who was granted permission to solicit settlers from the Netherlands.<sup>35</sup> Edzema was Dutch, and according to Krahn, he was an Anabaptist.<sup>36</sup> The name Edzema is not found in any of the lists of names in Penner, Reimer, Unruh or Postma.<sup>37</sup> However, the suggestion is made, by both Krahn and Penner, that he was also known by the surname of Frese and Fressen, which could mean Friesen, which in turn, would very likely be Mennonite.<sup>38</sup> With Mennonites serving as locators, immigration by Dutch Mennonites to Poland was spurred not only by the search for religious freedom but

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 12-14.

<sup>34</sup>H. W. Koch, A History of Prussia (New York: Dorset Press, 1978), 26.

<sup>35</sup>Penner, Anseidlung, 12-13. Klassen, Homeland for Strangers, 9.

<sup>36</sup>Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 217.

<sup>37</sup>Penner, Die Mennoniten, 1:256-262; Gustav E. Reimer, Die Familiennamen der westpreussischen Mennoniten, 2nd ed., Schriftenreihe des Mennonitischen Geschichtsvereins, no. 3 (Weierhof: Mennonitischen Geschichtsverein, 1963), 106f; Unruh, Hintergruende der Ostwanderungen, 66-74; Postma, Niederlaendische Erbe, 88-89.

<sup>38</sup>Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 217; Penner, Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederlaender, 69.

also the possibility of better economic opportunities. A Mennonite lessee would be attractive to Mennonites for they would feel confident that their religious concerns would receive a considered treatment by one of their co-religionists. That same year, a similar contract was signed with Hermann von Bommeln and Toennies Florissen.<sup>39</sup> In 1571, we read of a Jantzen, a Conrad Hermann von Bommeln and an Adrien Florissen being designated as responsible for dam building in the land draining program. Jantzen and Conrad are definitely Mennonite names; both are found in the lists, but whether they were related to the lessee is unknown.<sup>40</sup> If Florissen was non-Mennonite, we have here an example of Mennonite and non-Mennonite settlers working together in maintaining dykes as well as an indication that Mennonites and non-Mennonites lived in the same villages in the delta.<sup>41</sup> Mennonites did not only settle in homogenous groups in isolated villages, though that was the preference, but rather often lived in villages with non-Mennonite neighbors, often Lutherans. This forced more contact with non-coreligionists and caused Mennonite communities to face the question of maintaining their faith in a mixed environment. Their non-conformity became more obvious and, consequently, more easily subject to attack.

The contract signed by Edzema stipulated that he and his

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<sup>39</sup>Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 217.

<sup>40</sup>Reimer, Familiennamen, 105, 111.

<sup>41</sup>Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 12.



settlers were to receive the village of Reichenberg. They could administer it according to the German Kullmischen Recht,<sup>42</sup> which was the pattern of village administration that had been granted to colonists who came during the fourteenth century migration to the territories of the Teutonic Knights. With this pattern the land of the village was divided between the priest, village mayor and the farmers. The mayor usually received ten percent of the land, the priest four hufen, and the rest was given to the Bauern as inheritable property.<sup>43</sup> The Bauern were free peasants, and so had to pay an annual tax to the one from whom they contracted the land. The tax was calculated according to the number of Hufen farmed by the person. In addition, they had to pay the priest a levy known as Messkorn. No tax was collected for the first five years when the laborious work of land reclamation was in progress. The land of the priest and the mayor was tax exempt. The mayor was also responsible for the administration of minor justice, such as petty thievery.

The sixteenth century colonists requested and obtained

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<sup>42</sup>Penner, Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederlaender, 12.

<sup>43</sup>Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 3-4. Ludwig states that one kulmische Hufe was 16.8 hectares or 2.471 acres. The Hufe was subdivided into 30 Morgen. One Morgen consisted of 300 Ruten. When Prussia took over at the end of the 18th century the Prussian Morgan was introduced. There were 66 Prussian Morgan in one kulmische Hufe. Karl-Heinz Ludwig, Zur Besiedlung des Weichseldeltas durch die Mennoniten, Wissenschaftliche Beiträage zur Geschichte und Landeskunde Ost-Mitteleuropas, vol. 57 (Marburg: Johann Gottfried Herder-Institute, 1961), 149.

the change of village administration from the Kulmischen Recht to the Hollaenderrecht.<sup>44</sup> Where the medieval right had rested on the wealth and ability of one individual, the sixteenth century pattern rested on the privileges of a group of settlers. It was the corporate entity that negotiated with the Landowner a rental agreement. Instead of holding the land as Erbzinsrechts, or inheritable, the settlers now had a rental agreement know as Emphyteusis. This shift in administration of new villages permitted the immigrants to maintain the village pattern they had had in the Netherlands, with little change. This meant there was a wholesale transplanting of practices from the Netherlands to Poland which permitted the new settlers to continue to live as they had in their land of origin. The adaptations were minor in terms of lifestyle, thereby assuring perpetuation of customs and traditions they were used to.

Due to the time it took to reclaim the land and harvest the first crop, initial rental agreements under the Hollaenderrecht were from one to three years, with rent payments exempted during that time. In contrast to the Kulmischenrecht pattern, where the initial agreement expired under the Hollaenderrecht pattern, there was no inheritability right involved. This meant that with the expiration of the rent agreement, unless it was renewed, the renter lost his right to the rented property and it could be rented to another.

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<sup>44</sup>Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 7.

Frequently, the renewed agreements were made for an extended time period, usually 40 years.

The renewed agreement required annual rent payments. For all rental requirements, and any other obligations, the whole community was held responsible. This "communal" responsibility marked a further difference from the Kulmischenrecht.

Another characteristic of these Hollaender villages was the fact that they were not required to do any servile labor (Scharwerk) for the landowner. The Dutch settlers, and especially the Mennonites, held that this kind of compulsive labor was inappropriate for a freeman. As a result the colonists insisted on having this privilege written into their rental agreements. When it was not included in the agreement, the Hollaender would annually purchase this exemption.<sup>45</sup>

The Hollaenderrecht village administration reflected community responsibility and democratic participation.<sup>46</sup> One of the villagers was elected Schulz, mayor, or village head. Even though the Schulz was chairman or leader of the village, that did not place him in a rank or class above the rest of the villagers. He was simply one of the villagers who had the responsibility of leading the village for a limited time

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 51, note 4.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 4. Bruno Schummacher, Niederlaendische Ansiedlungen in Herzogtum Preussen zur Zeit Herzog Albrecht (1525-1568) (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humbolt, 1903), 86-92.

period, usually for a year.<sup>47</sup> Usually two assistants (Ratmannen) were elected to assist him in administering the rental contract and other village matters, such as taking care of widows and reconciling villagers who were at odds with each other. Directions for the carrying out of the rent contract were contained in a Willkuer (constitution) that had been worked out by the Schulz and assistants, agreed to by the community, and confirmed by the landlord. This democratic pattern reflected the pattern of church administration, with the difference that the ministerial body was elected for life. The authority rested in the community or church body and not the Schulz or Elder. Both the Schulz and Elder wielded considerable influence, and unless the community exercised its rights, there was the danger of either of the two functioning as dictators.

As the Kulmischenrecht pattern provided for the administration of minor justice to be handled by the mayor, similarly, the Hollaenderrecht villages' administration retained the administration of minor justice. The original documents give some indication of what minor justice would include. One document notes that, "All matters, that are not penal (peinlich), or designated as civil in Latin they may

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<sup>47</sup> Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 4. The village administration in Russia reflected many of the characteristics of the Polish-Prussian villages for the Mennonites took the pattern along to Russia. See Cornelius Krahn, "Government of Mennonites in Russia," in ME 1955 ed.

judge according to their usage and customs."<sup>48</sup> Another remarks that, "The smaller community matters are to be judged by the elected Schulz, the penal, larger issues are to be judged by the Castle."<sup>49</sup> A third document says that, "They [the local Schulzen] are to have the unhindered power to appoint guardians for widows and orphans equitably and justly. However, the superior court retains the Caduca, as well the iudicia maiora (higher court)."<sup>50</sup>

This Hollaenderrecht colonization pattern was such that the renter functioned virtually as owner of his rental property. The landowner could not prohibit the settler from moving away. The settler could trade his agreement to another renter, including his offspring. By being able to transfer the agreement to his offspring, the inheritance problem was largely solved. The inheritance was not ironclad, but very seldom would the landlord not accept the transfer of the rent agreement to the son or sons of a good renter-father. On the other hand, the landlord was protected from abuse by the renter by the provision that, in case of disaster, whether that be war or flood, the renter had to remit the rent. The one matter that left things somewhat in question was the right

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<sup>48</sup>Reichsarchiv Danzig, 358, 742, quoted in Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 51.

<sup>49</sup>Pachtvertrag von Brattwin, Reichsarchiv Danzig, 181, 13104, as quoted in Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 51.

<sup>50</sup>Pachtvertrag Lunau, 1604; Reichsarchiv Danzig, 322, 141, quoted in Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 51.

of the landlord to refuse renewal of the rent contract. However, this possibility was very slight since the landowners were happy with the productivity of the Mennonites.

For the Mennonites, who were interested in maintaining personal freedom, the Emphyteucic agreement (Zeitpacht) or time rent agreement, met this need. With this pattern of renting, there was minimum interference from the landlord, as long as the renters paid their rent. The community responsibility for the obligations of the villagers assured both the villager and the landlord that, should hard economic times come, the community would help in making the required payments. The community responsibility pattern was in harmony with their concept of the church, which included a strong sense of social responsibility for each member of the group. The Mennonites were able to sign the rent contracts without contradicting their religious conviction.

In her thesis, Felicia Szper has shown that the Dutch settlers, including the Mennonites, welcomed by the Danzig council, did a remarkable work of draining the land and making it productive.<sup>51</sup> One can conclude that the Mennonites came originally to the Danzig Werder as religious refugees, but were welcomed, despite their religious heresy, for economic reasons.<sup>52</sup> The same can be said for the Mennonites settling

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<sup>51</sup>Szper, Nederlandsche Nederzettingen, 40-57.

<sup>52</sup>King August II said in his 1732 affirmation of the privileges to the Mennonites in the Marienburger Werder, that the Hollaender, which included Mennonites, came to the Vistula

in Elbing, Marienburg and the rest of the Vistula Delta. However, during the latter part of the sixteenth century, many of the Mennonites who migrated came for economic reasons and in response to the recruiting of locators.

However, the Dutch Anabaptists were not only rural agricultural people; there were also many craftsmen, tradesmen, and shopkeepers among them. As the rural Mennonites found vocational continuity so too did those moving to the city of Danzig and its suburbs. A listing of trades and artisans in and around Danzig indicates the following trades among Mennonites: twenty Kaufleute, buyers who had no display booths; one Gelt Casirer, a money changer; one widow, who was a Bortenmacherin, border maker or lace maker; forty Brantwein Distilierer, brandy or spirits distillers; eight Bortenmacher, Border makers; seven Maekler, brokers; eleven Faerber und Presser, dyers and pressers; and eleven Concessionones, concession stand or small store-operators.<sup>53</sup> The date of this listing is not given, but letters C-823 and C-824, the ones preceding and following this listing in the Inventaris, are both dated 1750. This would suggest the list reflected the situation around 1750. Due to the limited change noted in the

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by invitation of the Polish king and lords. W. Mannhardt, Die Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten (Marienburg: Selbstverlag, 1863), LXVII-LXVIII. See also "Privilegien der Mennoniten," in Hildebrand's Zeittafel, ed. J. J. Hildebrand (Winnipeg: J. Regehr, 1945), 17-20. See Appendix XI for a copy of the decree.

<sup>53</sup>Inventaris, C-824.

Mennonite way of life in Poland, it is probable that the vocational activity of the Mennonites had not changed much since the last half of the seventeenth century.

The above listing does not only identify the vocation or trade but it also notes the number of people engaged in each of the trades mentioned. Of one hundred and eighteen tradesmen listed, 38.9% were engaged in the distillery business, and 25.4% operated small stores. There were seven crafts and trades mentioned. This was not an exhaustive listing of trades and skills, Mannhardt noted the following skilled craftsmen and trades: many Hakenhuben (small stores where you could buy almost anything), shopkeepers, brewers, thread manufacturers, cloth producers, shoemakers, tailors, linen weavers, bakers, wheel makers, tinsmiths, gardeners, bleachers, sellers of milk, vinegar distillers, leather workers, satin spinners, carpenters, cooks, grinders of oatmeal, and some women had stores in which they sold bonnets for ladies.<sup>54</sup> It is apparent that the Mennonites in the non-rural setting had a wide variety of skills. Karl-Heinz Ludwig has included in his study the "Special-Consignment aller in West-Preussen Befindlichen Mennonisten-Familien im Jahr 1776," "Special Listing of all Mennonite Families Living in West Prussia in 1776." In examining the 1776 list, which notes the vocation, was sie sind, of each person mentioned, one finds

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<sup>54</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Danzig Mennonitengemeinde, 83-84. Waldemar Epp, "Zur Kulturegeschichte Danzig's," MGB 40, no. 35 (1983), 52-54.



that the Mennonites were active in at least fifty-five different vocations.<sup>55</sup> Some of the Mennonites eked out a meager existence, as illustrated by the Brantwein Distillierer (wine distillers), of whom it was said that half of them barely made their living.<sup>56</sup> To speak of great wealth is hardly possible, but one can speak of continuity with what many of the settlers had done in the Netherlands.<sup>57</sup>

The opposition to the Mennonites from the guilds in Danzig forced the Mennonites to work together to maintain their livelihood and to advance their trades. Two key areas in which the Mennonites excelled were in the distillery business and in the textile industry. Their extensive experience in the textile industry was reflected in Mennonite involvement in this industry in Ostfriesland, where some of the Polish Mennonites originated. Of one hundred and twenty-two male members of the Emden Mennonite church, who died between 1700-1740, sixty-three had been connected with the weaving industry.<sup>58</sup> In Poland, many Mennonites pursued the trade of weaving borders and lace (Bortenwircker or Passamentmacher).

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<sup>55</sup>Ludwig, Besiedlung des Weichseldeltas, 159-260; Robert Kreider, "Vocations of Swiss and South German Anabaptists," MNL 4 (January, 1953): 38-42.

<sup>56</sup>Inventaris, C-824.

<sup>57</sup>Penner, Ansiedlung Mennonitischer Niederlaender, 10.

<sup>58</sup>C. Krahn, "Anabaptists in East Friesland," MOR, 30 (1956), 171.

There was a long and arduous conflict with the Danzig shopkeepers guild and the border makers.<sup>59</sup> The home industry of manufacturing lace and borders and selling them threatened the merchandising monopoly of the guilds. Already in 1622, the shopkeepers guild lodged a complaint with the Danzig City Council and obtained a restriction in the use of the roads for transportation of their goods applicable to "strangers" or non-citizens including the Mennonites.<sup>60</sup> In May, 1625, this was reinforced by a second decree.<sup>61</sup> Such measures were clearly designed to limit the commercial activity of the Mennonites. The Mennonites were to be prohibited from having shops and restricted to selling only out of their homes.

In 1648, again due to complaints from the shopkeepers' guild, the City Council issued further restrictions that curtailed the activity of the Mennonite lace makers.<sup>62</sup> Four key restrictions were mandated. "Strangers" were not to buy or sell to or from "strangers" in the city of Danzig. This first decree further required that producers of laces and braided borders could not be both producers and sellers. In addition, they were to sell only what had been manufactured by Mennonites. This last restriction suggests that the

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<sup>59</sup>Much of the following discussion is based on Schluesse und Privilegie dieser Stadt Gehoerig, 1712, MS 694, Biblioteka Gedanska.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 25, 36.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 25.

Mennonites were not only manufacturers and sellers of their own products, but that they were also retailers for other producers. This additional activity took business away from the shopkeepers' guild and consequently provoked opposition to the Mennonites. Secondly, the manufacturers could only stock as much silver, gold, or silk materials, as needed for their own use. The materials could be purchased only from guild-members, that is, citizens. Thirdly, no new up and coming Border makers could use the town market. Only those non-citizens could use it whose forefathers had been selling in the market. It was reiterated that they were permitted to sell only their own manufactured products. Finally, the guild was successful in limiting the measurements the non-citizen sellers could use. They could only sell material in ninety-six or sixty yard bolts.

These restrictions hampered retailing in such a way as to leave a profitable margin to the guilds. The Mennonites found it difficult to comply with what they considered an unreasonable demand. Consequently, some of them proceeded beyond the prescribed boundaries. Five Mennonite lace makers, Simon Pagan, Jacob Friessen, Jacob Kushen, Hans Buhler, Cornelius Simensen and Carl Simensen, did not restrict themselves to selling only as prescribed. They were reported and the judge warned them that if they did not comply they would be fined fifty gulden.<sup>63</sup> These restrictions were

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 26.

tightened still more in 1649, when a law was passed emphasizing Mennonite permission to sell only from their homes.<sup>64</sup> The warning that a fine would be levied for non-compliance was insufficient deterrent, for a few months later a charge was brought against several other Mennonite lace makers, as a result of which they were fined fifty ducats. In 1651, two Mennonites were fined two hundred gulden for a similar violation.<sup>65</sup>

The Mennonites had learned the trade from their fathers who, in turn, had brought it from the Netherlands. They had been permitted to come to Poland, settle outside the city and develop their skill, but now they were being restricted. They were not about to comply without some resistance against what they considered unfair and wrong restrictions, and a violation of a freedom they had enjoyed when they first came to Poland.

The "Swedish Deluge", which saw the burning of the Danzig suburbs provided a short economic reprieve. In 1656, the guilds relented under pressure from the City Council, and removed the restrictions, and permitted the Mennonite lace makers to recoup their war losses.<sup>66</sup> The Mennonites were given permission to make good their losses during the lifetime of the husband and wife, though they were prohibited from using either the river or roads for commercial purposes.

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 26.

This reprieve was short lived. In 1658, rebuilding in the burnt suburbs was under way. The Shopkeepers Guild sought to hinder any non-citizen from rebuilding. Through their lobbying efforts, the City Council agreed to restrict rebuilding only to qualified people.<sup>67</sup> This restriction was a further attempt at keeping the competition, the Mennonites in particular, from re-establishing their businesses. The attempt slowed rebuilding by the Mennonites, but did not stop it. The Mennonites came back, rebuilt their destroyed properties and entered into their trade with full vigour. In spite of opposition, a few Mennonite families obtained permission to settle within the Danzig city walls.

The struggle of the Mennonites to gain more freedom for exercising their trades flared up again in 1683, when Heinrich Mueller, a Danzig Mennonite tailor, was asked to curtail his economic activity unless he became a member of the guild.<sup>68</sup> Mueller found the arguments used in trying to persuade him to join the guild unconvincing. For him it was a matter of conscience. He felt his faith would not permit him joining a guild, especially since it involved swearing an oath of loyalty, and so he resisted. For Heinrich, joining the guild contradicted his principle of being separate from the world. One of his proof-texts would have been 2 Cor. 6:14a, which says, "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers." (RSV). Mueller

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>68</sup>Inventaris, B-2629.

requested a testimonial from Elder Galens Abrahams in Amsterdam, which he felt would help him explain why he could not join the guild. This request for a testimonial from Amsterdam reflects the continued close ties between the Polish and the Dutch Mennonites. Why the testimonial had to come from the Netherlands is not clear. It is possible they thought it would carry more weight if the testimonial came from a Dutch elder.

Galens Abrahams was a distinguished preacher and medical doctor in Amsterdam.<sup>69</sup> Abrahams' church, the congregation at Zierikzee, had kept itself aloof from the Flemish-Frisian controversy. The doctor also tried to not take sides, though he became embroiled in a division in his own church when he was accused of being Socinian, and could not clear himself to the satisfaction of an element in his church. Abrahams advocated union among the Mennonites, though he was sensitive to those who opposed it. His reputation as a preacher and doctor spread beyond the boundaries of the Netherlands. It is this celebrity that possibly persuaded Mueller to ask Abrahams for a testimonial. Abrahams had close associations with the Flemish, but was not identified as a Flemish or Frisian. It is not clear whether Mueller was Flemish; in any case, he asked help from a respected leader in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, we have no record of Abrahams response nor how

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<sup>69</sup>H. M. Meihuizen, "Galens Abrahamsz de Haan," in ME, 1955 ed.

Mueller fared. A further question that remains is, if Mueller was Flemish, why did he not request help from the able Hansen. Since he did not, one is inclined to conclude that Mueller was Frisian.

The distillery skill and trade in spirits was developed to a high degree by the Polish Mennonites. Mennonites were and are not total abstainers, but a significant majority of the North American Mennonites are abstainers.<sup>70</sup> Many have serious misgivings when they hear about this activity of the Polish Mennonites. In contrast, the European Mennonites are much less conservative in relation to alcoholic beverages. They consider the North American Mennonites the weaker brother in this regard.<sup>71</sup> Consequently the Europeans look with considerable less negativism on this activity of the Polish Mennonitism than do the American Mennonites.

The Mennonites brought this skill of distilling with them when they migrated from the Netherlands. It was a trade they were able to transport without difficulty, and one for which they found a ready acceptance. Around 1750 there were some forty identified Mennonite distillers in the Danzig area.<sup>72</sup> This active involvement in distilling and in the selling of

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<sup>70</sup>Harold S. Bender, "Alcohol," in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>71</sup>This author was told this by a number of German Mennonites when he spent a year teaching in West Germany, 1974-75. This was discussed with Gerhard and Marlies Wevers, April 15, 1974.

<sup>72</sup>Inventaris, C-824.

the distilled liquors was competition for the Danzig distillers guild, who became resentful.

Much like the shopkeepers guild, the distillers' guild successfully petitioned the town Council to restrict the Mennonite distillers with various regulations. They charged the Mennonites were hurting guild members economically, and so on December 10, 1681, King John III passed restrictive legislation.<sup>73</sup> Mennonite distillers were to purchase their containers from citizens only, but sell to non-citizens only. In addition, they had to pay a twenty per cent tax on their goods. Despite these handicaps, the Mennonites became renown distillers and were known for their famous Goldwasser.<sup>74</sup>

Many Mennonites owned and operated small stores known as Hackenbueden. Since they were prohibited from living within the city walls, the shops were located in the suburbs, and in many instances, they were part of their homes. The Dutch name given to these small stores was Kleine Winkelzcos die Vietuae-  
lien Verkoopen.<sup>75</sup> These shops were also regulated somewhat harshly due to the pressure of the Third Estate.<sup>76</sup> Owners had to obtain their goods from within the city, purchasing them from guild members. They were also required to pay an

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<sup>73</sup>Inventaris, C-697, C-809. "Informatio contra Mennonista," 823-824, MS 694.

<sup>74</sup>Waldemar Epp, "Zur Kulturgeschichte Danzigs," MGB 40, no. 35 (1983), 53.

<sup>75</sup>Inventaris, C-809.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.



annual tax which was double that of the guild store-owners.

The City Council did not always act on the requests from the guilds nor restrict the Mennonites as requested by the guilds. In September 1670, the Third Estate charged the Mennonites in Poland, which included Mennonites in Danzig, Elbing, Marienburg and the Marienwerder, with violating the Polish Constitution with their trading.<sup>77</sup> They were also charged with contravening the religious regulation by engaging in prohibited proselytizing as well as being charged with being Arian or Socinians.

Upon further investigation the Danzig Council decided to reject the heresy charge. Furthermore the Council asserted Poland permitted religious freedom and that a person could change his/her religion if they so desired. The Mennonites had been in Poland more than one hundred years. They had been tolerated in the Werder all these years and it seemed only appropriate to continue the toleration. The charge of Arianism had not stood up in Danzig nor did it in the Werder. In addition, most Mennonites were Dutch, and Poland had a long history of trading with the Dutch. It was considered unwise to shift quickly from toleration to oppression of the Dutch. Consequently the Council took no further action.

The Mennonites faced difficulties from all sides during the last half of the seventeenth century. In addition to the opposition in Danzig, there was the disruption from the First

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<sup>77</sup>"Informatio contra Mennonista," 838-840, MS 694.

Northern War, followed by the Polish-Russian conflict in the early eighteenth century. They lost much of their wealth and property. With the help of Mennonites from Hamburg and the Netherlands, they rebuilt. Then came the floods and its destruction. The suffering was intense. Some went as temporary refugees to Danzig where the city Mennonite church helped as much as they could. Response to the appeals for help from Hamburg and the Netherlands were an important factor that made it possible for the Mennonites to remain in Poland. In the early eighteenth century some tired of the difficulties experienced in the delta and moved to Samland hoping to make a new start.

However, not every trade or skill received so much opposition from the Danzigers. Architecture was another craft the Mennonites brought with them from the Netherlands and, in the pursuit of it, left an impressive mark on Danzig. Anthony van Obbergen, from the Danzig Flemish church, designed the Arsenal Building in Danzig as well as the old city hall. He had a significant influence on the townscape.<sup>78</sup>

Peter Willer, builder and engraver, received his training at the Hochburg der Architektur und Ingenieurskunst in the Netherlands, under the tutelage of Jacob von Kampens (1598-1657).<sup>79</sup> He served at the court of King Casimier in 1651.

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<sup>78</sup>Epp, "Kulturgeschichte," 53-54.

<sup>79</sup>Horst Penner "Peter Willer: Ein mennonitischer Baumeister und Kupferstecher im Danzig des 17. Jahrhunderts," MGB 27, no. 22 (1970): 50-54.

He built a forty foot wide sluiceway, the king's pleasure palace called Hollaenderhof, a pleasure palace for queen Ludowika Maria, and a gristmill in Warsaw.

Willer fled to the Netherlands during the Swedish War, returning in 1660. The year he returned, he married the daughter of Peter Kinn, a Mennonite distiller in Danzig. After the marriage, Willer carried on wine making in addition to his architectural and construction work. In 1661, he applied for the position of town construction foreman. In his application, he noted his expertise in general construction, emphasizing his expertise as a builder of buildings on water and mill-constructor. To sweeten his application, Willer said that he could build a dredge that would dredge two hundred and sixteen barges a week. This proposed dredge compared favourably to the existing dredges, with which one could at best dredge sixty barges a week. The prospect of speeding up the dredging of the continual sand deposits in the mouth of the Vistula River persuaded the Council to give Willer a trial year of employment. In 1663, after the trial year, he was hired with a wage of one thousand Gulden per year and a rent free house.

The great building construction era of the sixteenth century was history. Despite this decline in construction, Willer left his mark on the city. He build a tower for the hospital which had a weather vane depicting poor Lazarus. He also built the church tower of the Leichnam Church and the

tower of the St. Bridgette Convent. In addition to designing other buildings, he engraved and drew pictures of buildings and landscapes of the surrounding area of Danzig for Curickes famous Chronicle of the City of Danzig.

In the early days of 1700, Peter Willer died, having served the city for nearly four decades as City Construction Foreman and Architect, building multi-storied buildings, tunnels, levees and dams as well as being a cartographer, artist, painter and engraver. That the city employed a Mennonite during the time period under consideration is indicative of the ambivalent attitude towards the Mennonites, but it also indicates the skill and expertise of the Mennonites. A Mennonite in the employ of the city is in sharp contrast to the many attempts at either having the Mennonites expelled from the city or restricted in their activities. Adaptation and change were a minimal for a man such as Willer. He continued the vocation he had learned from his forefathers standing within the tradition of continuity.

In addition to Obregin and Willer, there were other building experts such as Wilhelm von dem Block and Jacob Joosten.<sup>80</sup> Bishop Hansen excommunicated the artist Enoch Seeman for painting portraits which was not permitted by the Flemish group. This excommunication reflects the conservative character of the Flemish church. Willer, belonging to the

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<sup>80</sup>Horst Penner, "Niederlaedische Taeufer Formen als Baumeister, Bildhauer und Maler mit an Danzigs Unverwechselbarem Gesicht." MB 26, no. 21 (1969):12-26.

Frisian group, did not face such severe restrictions. This does not mean that all the Frisians were in agreement with what Willer did, but provides another illustration of the more liberal attitude found in that group. This action of Hansen deepened the rift between the two groups and did not help in efforts of reconciliation.

With deteriorating trade during the 17th century, especially in the latter half of the century, pressure from the Third Estate to limit the economic activity of the Mennonites was quite intense.<sup>81</sup> The town bourgeoisie not only claimed that the Mennonites were taking away the bread from their children by being permitted to pursue their trades, they also demanded that Mennonites should be prohibited from being shippers since they were not citizens. The Mennonites were also attacked because they did not belong to one of the three accepted religions, Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism or Reformed.<sup>82</sup>

Already in 1582, some lesser officials addressed a Supplikationschrift (appeal) to the members of the Danzig Council, who were responsible for the Kleiner Werder. They requested that strict measures be taken against those who did not attend the Catholic Church, take communion, and baptize

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<sup>81</sup>E.J. Hobsbawm, "The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century," in Crisis in Europe-1560-1650, ed. Trevor Aston (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 6-7.

<sup>82</sup>K. Mezynski, From the History of Mennonites in Poland (Warszawa: Akademia Rolinicza W Warszawie, 1975), 15.

their infants. This was a direct attack on what the Mennonites considered the essentials of their faith. They resisted the demand for attendance at the Mass and infant baptism because their refusal to baptize their infants and attend mass was the reason they had been persecuted in the Netherlands and, as a result, had immigrated to Poland. The response of the Mennonites was that, thirty years ago when they had migrated to the country they had not hidden their faith, but had been welcomed with their faith. The Mennonites further responded that, had they known that pressure would be brought to bear, they would not have adopted Poland as their home.<sup>83</sup>

The Mennonite response to the pressure indicates that there were Mennonites in the Danzig Werder by the middle of the sixteenth century. The full quotation shows that others called them Mennonites or Anabaptists out of derision. That Menno's name became attached to them is largely due to the

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<sup>83</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 38-39. Mannhardt quoted their response as follows. "dass man uns fuer die hallten woelle, fuer welche man uns vor dreissig Jahren erkandt, dass wir keinen Rotten, Secten oder Auffruehrern noch Muensterschen noch andern anhengig, sondern in ruhe und friede begehren zu sitzen und der gebuerenden Obrigkeit in allem, was nicht wider Gott und unser Gewissen ist, den schuldigen gehorzam zu leisten. Aber und Abermahl gantz demuettig und zum allerfleissigsten bittende, E. g. wollen desfalls unsere gewissen nicht beschweren, noch Herren ueber das hertz und gewissen sein, welches Gott allein kennet; oder sich der namen machen, das solche unguettigen Dinge bei ihrer regirung eingefuehrt, sondern uns unser gewissen frey lassen, wie Sie das ihre woellen bezwungen und beschweret haben. . . ." Mannhardt cites as his source. Danziger Stadarchiv VII, 167, 30.

fact that he was the well known excommunicated and outlawed leader of the Anabaptists who made extensive visits to the scattered groups of Anabaptists in the Baltic region, from 1546-1553.<sup>84</sup> Also Menno's peace theology as well as his teaching of a visible adult baptized church membership, which the Danzig Mennonites also taught, were instrumental in having his name attached to the group.<sup>85</sup>

The town council was slow to act because it saw the benefit for its territory of these thrifty industrious people. Edicts of suppression and expulsion were passed, but never enforced.<sup>86</sup> Moreover when the Anabaptists were forced off town lands, the Bishop of Cujaven and the St. Bridgette Order of Nuns were happy to accommodate the Mennonites on their estates.<sup>87</sup>

After the Swedish Deluge, largely due to jealousy, the Danzig guilds opposed the Anabaptists and others rebuilding in the suburbs. In 1664, they requested that the activities of the Mennonites be curtailed by forcing them to buy from Polish traders and prohibiting them from importing and selling the imports. They were not successful in enforcing these

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<sup>84</sup>H. S. Bender, "Mennonite" in ME, 1957 ed. See also Schummacher, Niederlaendische Ansiedlungen, 67-73; Simons, Complete Writings, 1030-1035.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Mezynski, 16.

<sup>87</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 48-56.

restrictions.<sup>88</sup>

The Mennonites did not only relate to the guilds and Rat of the city of Danzig. Their presence in Poland necessitated relating to the King of Poland for it was the king who ultimately decided whether the Mennonites could stay in Poland or would be expelled. The attitude of the king towards the Mennonites was therefore crucial for the very existence of all the Mennonites in Poland. His decrees of protection and expulsion played a determinative role, not only in whether the Mennonites stayed in Poland, but also in maintaining group identity. Often he dealt with them as a national body recognizing similarities among the various groups. The king also, at times, dealt with the Mennonites of a local area. The king's attitude and treatment of the Mennonites during the latter half of the seventeenth century can be traced by the royal decrees he issued on behalf of their protection. These decrees sought to protect the Mennonites from being economically exploited, as well as to protect them from religious intolerance.

That the decrees were issued, indicated that the Mennonites were a force to be reckoned with and that there were many who were opposed to the economic success and to the religious heterodoxy of the Mennonites. The opposition and the decrees provided the context and opportunity for the Mennonites to pursue their beliefs and lifestyle. They had to

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<sup>88</sup>Mannhardt, 166.



decide again and again in which direction they would go. Persistently, they responded in defence of their inherited practices. They continued their conservative cultural life and faith. They had fled from the Netherlands in order to maintain their life and faith and they continued to stand up for their faith and practice.

The several unsuccessful attempts at expulsion illustrate the religious toleration still found in Poland for deviants from the major faiths. Toleration was maintained for it served as a prop for the economic benefits the Danzig Rat and landed nobility received as a result of the industriousness and material success of the Mennonites. This toleration occurred during a time when there was a resurgence of Catholicism combined with a wave of intolerance due to the deepening economic and political crisis Poland faced.<sup>89</sup>

On December 22, 1642, King Wladislaw IV (1632-1648) issued a decree of protection against the extortions of the treasurer Haxberg. In his decree, the king appealed to the freedoms that his grandfather, Sigismund Augustus (1548-1572), had issued to the Mennonites. He also referred to the renewal of the privileges and freedoms by predecessors Stephen Bathory, (1576-1586) and Sigismund III (1586-1632), had issued to the Mennonites.

Haxberg, the royal treasurer, in his insatiable greed and antagonism to the Mennonites, was able to persuade the

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<sup>89</sup>Gieysztor, History of Poland, 226-234.

badly informed king to acquiesce to an order demanding the confiscation of all the property of Anabaptists known as Mennonites.<sup>90</sup> The reason given for this attack was that the Mennonites were hurting the commerce of the king's loyal subjects. The decree was to apply to all Mennonite settlements, but Haxberg had his eye especially on Danzig and Ellerwald. The king granted the decree as well as assigning the confiscated property to Haxberg. Haxberg, aware that the Danzig Mennonites would raise serious and possibly effective opposition, did not dare enforce this decision in the cities. He went, instead to the farm villages in the Marienburger Werder to inform the Mennonites of the decree. The Mennonites resisted and produced royal letters of protection that went as far back as 1562. Haxberg then quartered the army on the Mennonites and demanded payment of one hundred and fifty gulden per farmstead. As a result he extorted eighty thousand gulden from the Mennonites.<sup>91</sup>

Since demographic figures for Mennonites are practically non-existent for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is possible to estimate the Mennonite population from Haxberg's figures. The amount of money Haxberg collected represented five hundred and thirty-three and a half farmsteads. This meant that the Mennonites had exceeded the

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<sup>90</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 65.

<sup>91</sup>W. Mannhardt, Die Wehrfreiheit der Altpreussischen Mennoniten. (Marienburg: Selbsverlag, 1863), 79-80.

original rent agreement of five hundred and twenty-eight farmsteads by five and a half. This represented a settlement of some five hundred and thirty-three families, assuming there was one family per farmstead. If we consider an average family at five and a half persons we have a total of some two thousand nine hundred and thirty-two persons. This estimate does not distinguish between Flemish and Frisian. To this, must be added any servants the Mennonites employed. This did not include the Mennonites in the Danzig Werder, nor those living in the various suburbs. According to Hermann Mannhardt, there were another estimated one thousand Flemish living in the Danzig jurisdiction.<sup>92</sup> This brings the total estimated number of Mennonites in the delta to three thousand nine hundred thirty-two, that is, there were about four thousand Mennonites living in Poland by the middle of the seventeenth century. The Mennonites were a fairly significantly sized group in the Vistula Delta, and were quite well established in the region despite the perpetual danger of expulsion.

Noting the freedoms granted by Sigismund Augustus as well as citing the successful reclaiming of land the Mennonites had achieved at great cost to themselves, King Wladislaw IV, in 1642, granted them protection from this extortion, and so, Haxberg had to desist from his extortions. The decree referred to a sum of money the king had received for granting

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<sup>92</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 82-85.

these freedoms. The king made a disclaimer that the money influenced his decision to give the protection, though the fact that he mentions it does suggest that it did play a role.<sup>93</sup>

The 1642 edict also mentioned the conditions of the two Marienburger Werders at the time the Mennonites initially immigrated. In the words of the 1695 German translation, the condition of Werders and the Mennonites was described in the following words.

At that time they came to desert, swampy and unusable places in the Werder which, they through much work, effort, and great expense, cleared the underbrush, built necessary water-mills to pump the water out of the flooded areas, as well as building dams to keep back the waters of the Weichsel, Nogat, Drusen, Haff and Tiege, as well as containing other rivers and streams. They sought to make the land fruitful. In all this they left their descendants an excellent example of hard work and diligence. . . .<sup>94</sup>

The situation was very difficult when the Mennonites first came to Poland not only in the Marienburger Werders, but also in the Danzig lowlands. The dykes built under authority of the Teutonic Knights had not drained the Danzig Werders adequately. There were many shallow lagoons and swamps some of which lay as much as six feet below sea level. A major drainage project was undertaken in 1547-50. The cities of Danzig and Elbing and the Polish barons leased two hundred and fifty to two thousand five hundred acre blocks to Mennonite leasing associations. These associations constituted village

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<sup>93</sup>Szper, Nederlandische Nedersettinge, 210-213.

<sup>94</sup>Translation by the author. See Appendix XII for the 1642 Decree.

communes and drainage companies renting according to the Hollaenderrecht.

This drainage work was a long and tedious process taking three to four generations to complete. It was very labor intensive. The limited labor resources aggravated the difficulty of the undertaking. To make matters worse, swamp fever ravished the settlements. Johann Driedger, in an article on farming in West and East Prussia, says that it is reported that eighty percent of the first settlers died of swamp fever.<sup>95</sup>

In 1650, King Casimir (1648-1668) issued a decree in response to the renewed extortion attempts of Haxberg.<sup>96</sup> The decree referred to the 1642 decree of his brother, reaffirmed it, and then added a statement of protection against Haxberg. It clearly stated that the Mennonites need not pay the exacted amounts and that any decrees that the king had signed against the Mennonites were cancelled and a statement of protection was added.

This renewed extortion was indicative of the continued strong opposition in Danzig to the Mennonites. Their united opposition against Haxberg, a necessity for survival, maintained a strong group identity for the Mennonites. Ever since their arrival in the Vistula Delta, the existence of the

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<sup>95</sup>Johann Driedger, "Farming Among the Mennonites in West and East Prussia, 1534-1945." MOR 31 (1957): 16-24.

<sup>96</sup>See Appendix XIII for the 1650 Decree.

Mennonites depended on the good graces of the Polish king. The uncertainty of continual harassment developed a people who were self reliant, who learned to speak up for their privileges, and who were satisfied if left alone to pursue their livelihood without much involvement with the rest of society.

The Polish King continued to renew grants of toleration and protection to the Mennonites during the latter half of the seventeenth century. The king did not only follow the tradition of his predecessors for it also was in his economic interest to protect the Mennonites. The Mennonites did a thorough job of draining and cultivating the land so their production was considerable. Not unimportant was the fact that the king received twenty thousand gulden annually from the Mennonite agricultural enterprise on his Tafelgut in Tiegenhof.<sup>97</sup>

Despite the edicts of protection, the urban Mennonites faced continual opposition from the guilds in Danzig. During the years from 1629 to 1656 there was not a single meeting of the Danzig Council where the question of the restriction and expulsion of the Mennonites was not discussed.<sup>98</sup> Despite the occasional decree of expulsion, the Mennonites were not driven from their homes in the Danzig suburbs or Werders.

In November 1660, King Casimir issued a decree that proclaimed protection for the Mennonites from the charge of

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>98</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Danzig Mennonitengemeinde, 55.

the heresy of Arianism. In part, the declaration of protection reads:

through this our present declaration we rescind and nullify all previous privileges from wherever they may have come, secretly or otherwise, and from whomever they may have come, regardless of rank or dignity the proclaimer may be, and whether or not he comes from our council, for they are without foundation in our laws and even contradict them. . . . We promise that we and our successors will uphold the privileges of our subjects the Mennonites at Tiegenhof, for them and their children.<sup>99</sup>

This protection from the attack of the charge of heresy was challenged two decades later, when the king and bishop required the Mennonites to defend themselves against the supposed charge of Socinianism. George Hansen and Heinrich von Duehren, representing the Flemish and Frisian groups respectively, appeared before the king and bishop in January 1678 to explain the faith of the Mennonites.

Opposition to the Mennonites continued in spite of the declarations of freedom and protection. At the 1676 Diet, the Wawoid from Pomerania presented an appeal to eject the Mennonites blaming the breaks in the dykes on the continued toleration of the Mennonites.<sup>100</sup> He accused Danzig of being a nest of this evil sect. This renewed attack proved unsuccessful when the Marienburger representative, Kitnowski, and other representatives, defended the Mennonites, saying that the Mennonites were diligent workers, were first to volunteer when the dykes broke, and, in contrast to some other farmers,

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<sup>99</sup>See Appendix XIV for the 1660 Decree.

<sup>100</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 75-76.

kept their yards in good order.<sup>101</sup> Despite the fact that the oppressors of the Mennonites charged the Marienburger representatives with the crime of protecting heretics and threatened them with excommunication, they refused to acquiesce to the bill against the Mennonites. At this point, the representative from Danzig<sup>102</sup> pointed out that there were more Mennonites living on Church estates where they enjoyed more freedoms than in Danzig.<sup>103</sup> Representatives of other major urban centres spoke up in favour of the Mennonites as well.<sup>104</sup>

The Wawoid continued to raise the issue several more times at the diet. Finally, the representative from Lauenburg went to the king and demonstrated that the expulsion of the Mennonites would be an economic loss for the king, but an advantage to the Wawoid. When King Johann III (1674-1696) realized this, he ordered the decree against the Mennonites to be torn up and gave them the 1677 letter of protection, renewing it again in 1694 with added statements of privileges.<sup>105</sup> The King affirmed that more land could be rented

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<sup>101</sup>Crichton, Geschichte der Mennoniten, 25-26.

<sup>102</sup> Crichton, Geschichte der Mennoniten, 26; H. G. Mannhardt, Danzig Mennonitengemeinde, 80. This statement from the Danzig representative represented more the sentiment of the Rat than the guilds.

<sup>103</sup>Crichton, Geschichte der Mennoniten, 26.

<sup>104</sup>W. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 86-87.

<sup>105</sup>Crichton, Geschichte der Mennoniten, 26-27; See also Mannhardt, Wehrfreiheit, 84-91.



by the Mennonites. As a result, some twenty-five farmers and the inhabitants of Tiegenhof received a contract for forty years with the rent renewal written into the contract.<sup>106</sup>

This 1694 Statement of Privilege was addressed primarily to the Mennonites outside of Danzig.<sup>107</sup> It refers to them as Mennonisten und Werderaner. Obviously, the last name came from their successful activity in the delta as well as the designation of their dwelling place. The king affirmed and promised to maintain all previously granted privileges. He then went on to affirm and to accept the responsibility of protecting them. The king proclaimed that any losses that had been incurred due to action taken against the Mennonites was to be repaid. A significant new element in the 1694 decree was the declaration of religious freedom for the Mennonites. The Mennonite church practices and order of church life was proclaimed as valid and acceptable, and to be observed by its adherents. This meant that church discipline could not be appealed to the civil authority, as had been done by Heinrich von Kempen in Elbing.<sup>108</sup> Heinrich von Kempen complained to the Elbing authorities that the Mennonite church had invited outside preachers who had excommunicated him. The Mennonites appealed to the Statement of Privileges they had just received and the Elbing Council confirmed that the Mennonites had acted

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<sup>106</sup>Crichton, Geschichte der Mennoniten, 25-27.

<sup>107</sup>See Appendix XV for the 1694 Decree.

<sup>108</sup>Crichton, Geschichte der Mennoniten, 29.

in harmony with their practices and thus were protected. Kempen would have to comply and repent if he wanted reinstatement into the church.

The Bishop of Ermland made another attempt to discredit the Mennonites in 1696 by arguing that the laws for dissidents did not apply to the Mennonites. He said they were subject to the same treatment as Jews and Arians. Once more, the other nobles came to the defence of the Mennonites, appealing to the Freedom of Religion oath of 1585. King August II affirmed the Mennonite Privileges when he was crowned on September 20, 1697. In 1699 and 1700, the charge of Socinianism was unsuccessfully levelled against the Mennonites for the last time. The other coercive measures (Gewaltsmassregeln) were still threatening. Following the end of the Swedish war, August II prepared a statement of Privilege for the Mennonites, proclaiming it on October 12, 1732. The declaration is a full statement of all freedoms and privileges granted to the Mennonites, especially freedom for the full exercise of their religion according to their custom.<sup>109</sup>

One other hardship the Mennonites experienced was the various money exactions.<sup>110</sup> The Mennonites had to pay protection money or a tax on foreigners. In 1663, when the

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<sup>109</sup>See Appendix IX for a copy of the 1732 Decree.

<sup>110</sup>Danzig Stadbibliothek, Ms. 211, Bl. 705; Danzig Stadarchiv Bd. XXXV, 70; Danzig Stadarchiv Mm. fol 159; Mm. 4, 327, 340. quoted in Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 84-86.

Danzig Council was looking for new sources of income, they levied a foreigner tax on the Mennonites. In 1674, the Danzig Rat was going to remove the levy, but the Third Estate argued that since the Mennonites were non-citizens and since they had a false religion, they should continue to pay the levy and if possible the levy should be increased. The Mennonites protested but without receiving a reprieve. The Danzig Mennonites complained to their brethren in Holland, who in turn appealed to the Dutch government, who, through their ambassador in Danzig, appealed to the Rat. The response was that the Mennonites paid only a minimum tax and nothing was changed. This tax continued into the eighteenth century.

In addition to such exactions, the Mennonites had to produce a gratuity for the king from time to time, as well as give donations to the Catholic and Lutheran churches. H. G. Mannhardt records a few excerpts out of the lost Chronicle of Hansen in relation to the money collected for other churches.<sup>111</sup> He quotes Hansen thus:

[In] 1687, the Jesuit fathers requested us to contribute to the renovations they were making to their church by building a church tower. They were planning to put a clock into it. We gathered 120fl of which 80fl were sent to them.

[In] April of 1688, we were approached by the honourable mayor Schumann, the highest administrator, for a small contribution for the building of the Lutheran Church in Ohraschen. As a result we collected 300fl. which they received with thankfulness.

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<sup>111</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 88. Translation by the author.

The king's proclamations of protection indicate a continual opposition to the Mennonite presence in Poland, particularly in the provinces of Royal Prussia, Danzig and Ducal Prussia. In examining the various decrees and statements of privileges, one can conclude that the king favoured the Mennonites staying in Poland, since again and again, he came out in support of the Mennonites and opposed the charges of the various nobles and guilds.

The Mennonites were not the only minority group whose presence was opposed. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, three main religious groups were given legal status, the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, and the Reformed. Until then the toleration of the Reformed, if not the Lutherans, had been opposed. In 1552, King Sigismund August passed a decree that no Dutch were to live in the Danzig area who were neither Catholic nor Lutheran. In 1561, we find City Regulations stating that Protestant sects should not to be tolerated in the city. In 1566, an order was given that these groups were to leave the city by Easter.<sup>112</sup> This opposition turned to acceptance of the Reformed toward the end of the sixteenth century when several nobles adopted the Reformed Faith.

Several other minority groups received equal or harsher treatment than the Mennonites. One of these groups was the Socinians. The Socinians, who will be more fully discussed in another section in this thesis, were bitterly opposed, not

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<sup>112</sup>Lengnich, Stadt Danzig, 529.

only by the Roman Catholics, but also by the various branches of trinitarian Protestants. In 1638, the Polish Diet ordered their school and press at Rakow to be destroyed. In 1644, a decree of the High Tribunal closed the Unitarian churches and schools at Kisielin Beresteczko and Volhynia.<sup>113</sup>

In 1658, the Socinians were made subject to the old law of King Wladislaw Jagellion. This law against heretics meant that they were subject to losing life, honor, and property unless they converted to Catholicism. A three year grace was given so they could divest themselves of their property, pay their debts, and remove themselves. During this time, they were to refrain from attending church services and serving in public office.<sup>114</sup> They scattered to Transylvania, Hungary, Prussia, Germany, Holland, England, and ultimately even to America.<sup>115</sup> The Mennonites were threatened but never treated as badly as the Socinians.

Another group which was opposed were the Jews. The Jews were first welcomed to Poland during the intensive colonization of the thirteenth century.<sup>116</sup> That welcome had changed

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<sup>113</sup>P. Fox, "The Reformation in Poland," W. F. Reddaway, et. al. de. The Cambridge History of Poland From the Origin to Sobieski (to 1696) (Cambridge: University Press, 1950), 340-341.

<sup>114</sup>W. Mannhardt, Wehrfreiheit, 83-84.

<sup>115</sup>Fox, "Reformation in Poland," 340-341.

<sup>116</sup>A. Bruce Boswell, "Territorial Division and the Mongol Invasions, 1202-1300," W.F.Reddaway, et. al. ed. The Cambridge History of Poland from the Origin to Sobieski (to 1696) (Cambridge: University Press, 1950), 104-105.

to antagonism and hostility by the sixteenth century. The anti-semitic attitudes of the Reformers and the princes forced many Jews to migrate to the east.<sup>117</sup> Luther, in his Von den Juden, speaks of the Jews as "disgusting vermin" and describes their synagogues as "'devils' nests of insolence and lies."<sup>118</sup> Through Luther's instigation, the Jews were expelled from Saxony. John Calvin was not as severe, but supported this anti-semitism, as did Erasmus and the Pope.<sup>119</sup> The only thing that saved the wholesale destruction of Jews in western Europe was the Emperor's confirmations of protection of Jews at the diets of Augsburg (1530) and Speyer (1544).<sup>120</sup>

In Poland, the Jews settled in the eastern territories, for they were not permitted to settle in the German urban dominated Baltic seaboard around Danzig and Elbing.<sup>121</sup> The magnates of the eastern territories required managers for their estates, tolls, transportation and latfundia. This need became the outlet for the Jews. Jews expanded their involvement in a variety of trades and skills, but culturally became more withdrawn because they were foreigners in Poland in a way they had never been in western Europe. Despite the fact that

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<sup>117</sup>Jonathan I. Israel, European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1650 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 11.

<sup>118</sup>Martin Luther, Von den Juden und ihren Luegen (Wittenberg, 1543) Aiii-iv, Fi, Ji, Lii-iii.

<sup>119</sup>Israel, European Jewry, 11-18.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 27.

they were basically excluded from the German speaking area of Poland, the Polish Jews spoke Yiddish when they arrived and switched to High German as is illustrated by the correspondence and records of that time.

The treatment of the Jews, as compared to that of the Mennonites, appears to have been harsher. In 1538, the diet in Piotrkow banned trade in rural areas by Jews. The sejm also denied Jews the right of free trade in the royal cities. Occasionally proscriptions were added to the existing ones. For example, horse trading was prohibited in 1557, employment of Christian servants in 1565, and the old law against lending money to Christians on mortgages was repeated in 1616.<sup>122</sup>

The Jews were either under the protection of the local magnate or king, but not the city councils. Most of the Polish kings confirmed the basic Jewish privileges that Casimir the Great had granted in the fourteenth century. From time to time, they would add new ones as necessity demanded. The basic privileges included security of life and property, freedom of worship, autonomous Jewish community institutions, and various degrees of settlement and occupational activity.<sup>123</sup>

Polish treatment of the Jews was characterized by the same inconsistency as the treatment of the Mennonites. Privileges were granted, not because of a spirit of tolera-

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<sup>122</sup>Weinryb, Jews of Poland, 121.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 123.

tion, but more often because it was to the economic advantage of the king or magnate to do so. Opposition came more from the skilled workers, tradesmen, and guilds who were threatened by the non-guild Jewish workers. Weinryb, in his excellent study on Jews in Poland, outlines the persecution against the Jews over two centuries. There were over fifty-odd persecutions of Jews in Poland during almost two centuries (1542-1787). This makes an average of two persecutions every three years. Western Poland, particularly its principle cities, was the focus of recurrent persecutions. In southern Poland, such abuses were less frequent during this time period.

Comparatively, the Mennonites were treated with considerable more leniency than either the Socinians or Jews. The Mennonites were never expelled as the Socinians or persecuted as the Jews. They were forced to pay unnecessarily high taxes as were the Jews. The Mennonites faced continual harassment from the guilds as well as economic restrictions in Danzig. Both the Jews and Mennonites were given exemptions for religious reasons. The Jews developed a much stronger autonomous governing body than the Mennonites. The Jews were given a form of self rule over their archives, communal property, and welfare provision.<sup>124</sup> The Mennonites also controlled their own welfare provision, but they never formed a ruling council as did the Jews. The village government developed by the Mennonites with an Oberschulz did not carry

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<sup>124</sup>Israel, European Jewry, 185.



the same influence for the Mennonites as did the Council for the Jews. But, like the Jews, the Mennonites took care of their poor, organized fire insurance companies, and gave relief to their brethren, whether in their own community or in other areas.<sup>125</sup> A rather interesting fact is that both groups adopted the High German language. The Mennonites adopted the German language largely due to the fact that they lived among high German speaking people; the Jewish reason is not as clear.

Much of the opposition to the Mennonites was made under the guise of religion, though in essence it was economic. In Danzig, the guilds continually argued that they were losing economically due to the non-citizen Mennonites. It is, however, incorrect to assume that the economic opposition of Danzig was against the Mennonites, Jews and Socinians only. There was rivalry between cities, and as a result, they restricted the economic activity of merchants from other cities as well.

Both the city of Thorn and Elbing sought to receive permission to bring their goods to Danzig for export, and to do the selling and buying themselves. For years they had done this, but during the sixteenth century, the Danzig guilds raised opposition, and, in 1565, the Thorn merchants had to give up doing their own trading. The various groups ex-

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<sup>125</sup>Horst Penner, "Das Verhaeltnis der westpreussischen Mennoniten zum Staat," *MGB* 30, no. 25 (1953):53-57. See also Penner, Ansiedlung mennonitscher Niederlaender, 18-20.

perienced varying degrees of opposition. The Socinians were ultimately expelled for religious reasons. In contrast the Jews and the Mennonites were tolerated and harassed but never expelled. In short the Mennonites were treated like other groups. The value of the minority groups to the king and nobles was the guide as to the treatment administered.

The Flemish Mennonites in Danzig and the Werder retained their ethnic identity. As a minority group they were under pressure to conform or remove themselves. The Mennonites did neither. They resisted being taken over by a foreign culture, adapted to circumstances for survival, and retained their identity. Due to their religious non-conformity, the Mennonites tended to use what has been called the rejection principle of adaptation.<sup>126</sup> The rejection principle worked two ways; first, the larger society pushed them to the fringe, and second, the Mennonites withdrew and made contact with the dominant culture only as livelihood demanded. It did not result in total isolation by the Mennonites nor in total rejection by the society. Because there was tolerance in Poland, the Mennonites had the option of choice. This option helped them stay in Poland and maintain their identity.

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<sup>126</sup>Berry, "Acculturation," 13.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FLEMISH MENNONITES: ADAPTING TO THE NEW HOME

The Mennonites in the Vistula Delta faced a number of difficulties in addition to the ones already discussed. These difficulties came from within as well as from outside the community. Their concern for their ethnicity and continuity affected the Mennonites in their response to the difficulties with which they struggled. The "boundedness" provided separateness from the larger society and thus helped them retain their identity.

The Flemish-Frisian division within the Polish Mennonite Community was an import from the Mennonite community in the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> This division was a liberal-conservative problem as it related to church matters; in particular, it reflected the difference in the stringency of administering church discipline. The Flemish were more stringent than the Frisian in this matter.<sup>2</sup> The church split manifested itself

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<sup>1</sup>The names, Flemish and Frisian, when used in describing Mennonite groups, though originally referring to place of origin, quickly lost their geographic meaning and were used to describe attitude and orientation. See Christian Neff & N. van der Zijpp, "Flemish Mennonites," in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>2</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, "Ein Alter Brauch," MB 59, no. 1 (1912): 5.

more in matters of practice than in doctrine. For example, the Flemish Vermahner or preacher sat while reading the sermon, a practice still in vogue in 1887, while the Frisian preacher stood and spoke from notes but did not read his sermon. For prayer, the preacher in the Flemish group would stand. This same pattern was practiced at baptismal services and communion.<sup>3</sup> A further difference was that baptismal candidates in the Flemish Church had to have two witnesses that affirmed the readiness of the candidates to be baptized.<sup>4</sup> The Flemish baptized by pouring while the Frisian sprinkled.<sup>5</sup> In the receiving of the bread during Communion, the Frisians filed past their elder who put the bread into a handkerchief in their hand, whereas the Flemish remained seated while the elder served them.<sup>6</sup> In the early years, the two groups practiced the same discipline when it came to marriage outside of the church,<sup>7</sup> as is illustrated by the experience of Karl von Ghendt.<sup>8</sup> He joined the Anabaptists while Menno Simons

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Neff & van der Zijpp, "Flemish Mennonites," in ME, 1956 ed.

<sup>6</sup>Christian Neff & N. van der Zijpp, "Frisian Mennonites," in ME 1956 ed.

<sup>7</sup>Hans van der Smissen, "Zur Geschichte Hollaendischen Mennoniten," MB 58, no. 11 (1911): 84-86.

<sup>8</sup>Karl von Ghendt, Het beginsel en voortganck der geschillen, scheuringen, en verdeelt-heden onder de gene de Doops-Gesinden Genoemt worden (Amsterdam: Tymon Houtkaak, 1658), A2-A3. in Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica, eds. S. Cramer &

and Dirk Philips were leading the church. When the Flemish-Frisian split occurred in 1567, he joined the Frisian faction, only to be excommunicated a year later for marrying outside the church. A few years later, Karl von Ghendt joined the Flemish Church, only to be excommunicated again, though the reason is not clear. It was probably because he refused to accept the narrow view of the Flemish that they were the only true church. Karl von Ghendt was considerably more broad-minded than either the Flemish or Frisians and, as a result, he was excommunicated by both. He expressed his dismay as follows:

. . . despite the intense pressure of one party [the Frisians] as well as the other [the Flemish], I could not acknowledge either of them as the only true church and people of God. Though I desired and asked first the one party and later the other to permit me to live quietly and peacefully [with them], [promising] to keep myself aloof of any conflict, but neither granted my request.<sup>9</sup>

A seventeenth century Lutheran historian, Christoff Hartknoch, in discussing this division among the Mennonites, which he had difficulty understanding, said that not only were they called Frisians and Flemish, but other names were ascribed to these two groups. The Frisians were called Bekummertan and Dreckwagen.<sup>10</sup> The first name, Bekummertan, or "Concerned Ones", was applied to them because they were

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F. Pijper (Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1910), 491-564.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Christophorum Hartknoch, Preussische Kirchen-Historia (Frankfort am Mayn, 1687), 857.

concerned about the various splits that had and were occurring among the Mennonites.<sup>11</sup> The latter name, meaning "manure wagon", was given to the Frisians because they easily accepted others into their membership.<sup>12</sup> Karl von Ghendt's experience tends to suggest that the Frisians were not quite as open to other groups as Hartknoch intimates. On the other hand, the Flemish were called the Klarchen, meaning "clear ones," because they prided themselves in having a clear and pure faith.<sup>13</sup> The Flemish-Frisian schism was resolved in Harlingen in 1610 when the Bekummertan joined the Flemish. In East Prussia, the two groups united in 1698, but in Danzig they united only in 1808.<sup>14</sup>

These ascriptions are suggestive of the relationship that existed between the two groups, but they also provide a clue to the resistance to change found in the Flemish group. First, the name Klarchen, given to them by outsiders, reflected their belief that they had the pure faith. That logically resulted in separatistic action when it came to church

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<sup>11</sup>Christian Neff & N. van der Zijpp, "Frisian Mennonites," in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>12</sup>Hartknoch, Preussische Kirchen-Historie, 857.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>H, G. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 89, 104. In Prussia the two groups began holding annual conferences together in 1772 and in 1768 the first reception of members from one group into the other without re-baptism took place. Intermarriage was quietly tolerated after the Petershagen Conference on February 9, 1778. See Neff & van der Zijpp, "Frisian Mennonites," in ME 1955 ed.

matters. This isolation from the Frisians was maintained by forbidding intermarriage to the members of the Flemish Church.<sup>15</sup> This principle of "boundedness," which anthropologist Reminick calls "endogamous marriage", slows down acculturation and permits maintenance of cultural and religious patterns because no threat from the outside is permitted.<sup>16</sup> Refusing to visit the Frisian Church, and requiring baptism of members from the Frisian Church who wished to join the Flemish, also contributed to "boundedness", and served to perpetuate what the Flemish believed and practiced.<sup>17</sup> The Frisians, as illustrated by Karl von Ghendt's experience, also prohibited exogamous marriage and baptized those coming from other groups.<sup>18</sup> It is evident that by such deliberate decisions of separation, the Flemish, as well as the Frisians, consciously sought to maintain their own identity and faith.

The Flemish-Frisian division occurred in the Netherlands when Mennonites from Belgium and Flanders fled north due to persecution, and joined the congregations in the North, especially in Friesland.<sup>19</sup> Four Friesland Mennonite

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Reminick, Ethnicity, 50-51.

<sup>17</sup>Hartknoch, Preussische Kirchen-Historia, 857.

<sup>18</sup>Von Gent, Doops-Gesinden, bl.32.

<sup>19</sup>W. J. Kuehler, Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Doopsgezinden in de Zestiende Eeuw (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1961), 395-435. Much of the discussion on the Flemish-Frisian schism follows Kuehler.

congregations, namely, Harlingen, Franeker, Leeuwarden, and Dokkum, had formed a union in 1560. Provisions of the nineteen articles of union stipulated that a preacher ordained in one congregation would serve the other three as well. Issues of discord would be settled by the preachers of all four congregations. The care of the poor would be a common responsibility. This union had a tenuous base since it abrogated the autonomy of the individual congregations and put the control into the hands of a committee of the whole. This surrendering of the fundamental principle of autonomy of the local congregation, important to the Mennonites, worked as long as things went well. As soon as decisions strongly opposed by one or more of the Union members surfaced, the autonomy principle would take precedence.

The arrival in the North of the first refugees from Flanders, by 1556, injected conflicts due to different backgrounds, different views on dress, and a different attitude towards the holding of material possessions. Christian Neff notes that the popular way of expressing the differences between the two was, "the Flemish are worldly in respect to their dress, the Frisians in their homes."<sup>20</sup>

In 1565, due to their involvement in a violent quarrel concerning the strict enforcement of the ban in Emden and Waterland, two influential preachers in Harlingen, Leenaert

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<sup>20</sup>Christian Neff, "Flemish Mennonites", in ME, 1955 ed.



Bouwens and Ebbe Pietersz, were prohibited from preaching.<sup>21</sup> This prohibition caused considerable dissatisfaction among the congregations since Bouwens had been a most effective church worker.<sup>22</sup> As a result of the prohibition, the Flemish congregation in Franeker elected a Flemish immigrant, Jeroen Tinnegieter, as preacher. The Frisians refused to accept the appointment of this Flemish preacher. As a result, in 1567, the Mennonites in the Netherlands divided into Flemish and Frisian, shattering the union of 1560. Later, these factions splintered into a number of other groups in the Netherlands, including the Waterlaender and Germans (Die Deutschen). All four groups, the Flemish, Frisians, Waterlaender and the Germans, developed congregations in Poland.

When the Mennonites first migrated to Poland, they went as one body, one church. Even though they migrated in small groups, they found each other once they settled in Poland. In the late 1560's there was a considerable influx of Mennonite immigrants in Danzig and Poland due to Duke Alva's "bloodbath"

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<sup>21</sup>Karel Vos, "Leenaert Bouwens," in ME, 1957 ed. The prohibition against the preaching of Bouwens and Pietersz came as a result of opposition to their support of Dirk Philips call for a strict observance of the ban. They persuaded Menno Simons to advocate a similar position. When Menno died in 1561, Bouwens was accused of having a domineering ambition, accepting fifty Talers for spiritual services as elder, and wine drinking. As a result of these charges he stopped preaching. In 1565, Bouwens, with six other elders, was deposed by bishop Dirk Philips. When Philips died in 1568, Bouwens resumed his office as a preacher but now as a Frisian.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. It is said that he travelled extensively and, according to his records, baptized 10,252 persons.

in the Netherlands.<sup>23</sup> Among these new arrivals were representatives of the Frisian and Flemish schism of 1567. At first, the Mennonite church leaders, Elder Quirin Vermuelen, a man of learning and means, and preacher Hans von Schwinden, were able to keep the Prussian group together. But Vermuelen was unyielding in demanding conformity to conservative dress and church discipline. The Frisian element, with its less conservative stance in these areas, resisted his leadership and ultimately appealed to their Frisian brethren in the Netherlands for help to find a new leader.

The Dutch brethren sent Jan Buschaert de Wewer and Jacob van der Molen to Danzig to discuss this problem with the two leaders, but they were unable to resolve the conflict. In 1588, Elder Hilchen Schmit from Montau, who represented the Frisian faction, came to Danzig on authority of the Haarlem Frisian Church, removed both Vermuelen and von Schwinden from their offices, and excommunicated the Flemish group.<sup>24</sup> The Frisian-Flemish schism had arrived in Danzig and would affect the life of the Mennonites in Poland for over two centuries. This schism caused both groups to regroup and maintain their "boundedness", and to maintain themselves as separate bodies with their own tradition. The fact that the Haarlem church could authorize the elder of the Montau church to remove both the elder and preacher from their offices and excommunicate

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<sup>23</sup>Brons, Taufgesinnten, 106-108.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 251-254.

the Flemish faction is indicative of the authority of the Haarlem Church in Poland. It was the authorization from Haarlem that gave Hilchen the power to set the Flemish aside. The fact that a church in the Netherlands had that authority is also an indication that the Mennonite Church in Poland was young and submitted to the decision of what might be considered the mother church.

Anna Brons, wife of an Emden Mennonite Councillor, Isaac Brons in Emden, said that in 1586, two years before the schism, there were five congregations in Poland: Thorn, Graudenz, Danzig, Marienburg, and the Niederung der Weichsel.<sup>25</sup> After the division, several of these congregations became two, as is indicated by the places where the congregations were previously located. The Flemish congregations in Poland during the seventeenth century were Danzig, Heubuden, Ladekopp, Rosenort, Tiegenhagen, Fuerstenwerder and Elbing-Ellerwald, Wintersdorf and Kleinsee, Culmsche Niederung (Schoensee), and Koenigsberg. Frisian congregations for the same time were Danzig, Orlofffelder, Thiensdorf, Markushoff, Montau-Gruppe, Schoensee, Stumsche Niederung (Tragheimerweide), Memelniederung, and Obernessau.<sup>26</sup> The respective demographic totals are unclear,

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 251-252.

<sup>26</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 44-45; Christian Neff & N. van der Zijpp, "Flemish Mennonites," "Frisian Mennonites," in ME, 1955 ed.; Brons, Taufgesinnten, 252.

for at this time very few records, if any, were kept.

Leadership in the excommunicated Flemish group was quickly organized in the usual manner of choosing leaders from within their own midst.<sup>27</sup> In 1588 Gysbert Franssen became their elder. When he died in 1602, Heinrich Pieters van den Bosh succeeded him until 1607. Peter Schmit succeeded Pieters up to the time of his death in 1620. Four other elders, Gert Klassen, 1620-39; Jacob Jacobsen, 1638-48; Jochim Rutenberg, 1649-62; and Willem Dunckel, 1668-90, served the Danzig Flemish church until 1690, when Hansen was elected elder. It seems that for some six years, from 1662, the year of Rutenberg's death, until Dunckel's election in 1668, the Flemish church was without an elder.<sup>28</sup>

Leadership was stable during the seventeenth century, which helped the Church walk through the considerable difficulties of that century. Dunkel served as elder for twenty-two years while van den Bosh served the shortest term of five years. Not counting the six years when there was no elder, the average length of service per elder during the seventeenth century was thirteen years. Such stability lends itself to establishing patterns that afford security. On the other hand, this may also result in a hardening of patterns so that change becomes difficult. Stability in leadership is important for growth and maintaining a sense of heritage. Long-

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<sup>27</sup>Election lists from 1588-1700, DCR.

<sup>28</sup>Seventeenth Century Flemish Election Lists, DCR.

term leadership develops experience for dealing with difficult issues and thus tends to maintain the status quo, which supports group stability. On the other hand, resistance to change may also lead to stagnation and may result in reaction from more aggressive members in the group. Stability in leadership tends to work in harmony with "boundedness".

In 1596, three groups, the Frisians, the Waterlaender and die Deutschen, united to form the Frisian Church of Poland. The Frisian church in the Danzig area was served by the elder from Montau until 1607, when Jan Gerrits van Emden took over the eldership.<sup>29</sup> Gerrits had served with success in several churches in the Netherlands. He moved from Haarlem to Danzig to serve the united Frisian Church, hoping for a more peaceful life than he had had in the strife-ridden Haarlem church. Gerrits visited many of the other Mennonite churches, winning their respect and favour. He was a positive influence in the Danzig and area churches, building a solid foundation for the future of the Frisian church. Smaller in numbers than the Flemish, the Frisians' continued existence was more precarious, though the union of 1596 increased its size and assured its existence.

The antagonism between the groups, as a result of the schism, was sufficient to maintain separate identities in spite of the continued opposition from the society around them. It is probably not far from correct to suggest that,

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<sup>29</sup>Inventaris, B-2925; Brons, Taufgesinnten, 254.

had the Flemish been more open to the Frisians, union would have happened much sooner than it did. As a result, the Flemish began the seventeenth century committed to maintaining a separate identity.

An important dimension in the life of the Mennonite church in Poland was continued communication with her sister congregations in the Netherlands, especially in Amsterdam. One of the evidences for this close connection is that there were several congregations in Amsterdam, Haarlem and Rotterdam that called themselves Danzig Mennonites.<sup>30</sup> The close connection is further evidenced by the correspondence between the Polish and Dutch Mennonite Churches, including correspondence between the Danzig Flemish Church and the Flemish brethren in Amsterdam. Three major issues discussed in the correspondence that pertain to the Polish Mennonites' relation to the Mennonites in the Netherlands were: the Socinian problem, the problems during the "Deluge", and the flood problems. This correspondence is one important aspect of the necessary contact with the Dutch mother church used by the Mennonites in Poland in maintaining ethnic and cultural identity and continuity.<sup>31</sup> The correspondence assisted the Mennonites in maintaining their boundaries as a community.

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<sup>30</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 46.

<sup>31</sup>Amado M. Padilla, "The Role of Cultural Awareness and Ethnic Loyalty in Acculturation," in Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings, ed. Amado M. Padillo (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 50.

The issues discussed in the letters appeal to two important principles held high in Mennonite thought and life, namely, helping those in need and a Biblical view of Christ.

The Socinian question, which surfaced first in the Netherlands and then in Poland, forced the Mennonites to decide where they stood in relation to the deity of Christ. The Socinians were better educated and took an aggressive approach to the Mennonites. In this, the Mennonites faced what Padillo calls the "Educational Level" factor in acculturation.<sup>32</sup> The Mennonites, being at a lower educational level, were threatened by the superior education of the Socinians. The threat, in turn, caused them to seek to build a protective wall around themselves, and to request help from the older and better educated brethren in the "homeland". Padillo found that people with a higher education tend to acculturate more easily.<sup>33</sup> Since the Mennonites had less education than the Socinians, they were resistant to interaction with the better educated Socinians. This resistance lessened the Socinian influence on the Mennonites and thereby slowed down change and acculturation for the Mennonites.

The latter half of the seventeenth century was a time of crises for the Mennonites in Poland. They were subjected to the harassment of war due to the "Swedish Deluge" during the 1650's, to the devastation of their property through heavy

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

flooding due to breaks in the dykes during the 1660's and 1670's, and to the threat of expulsion because of their religion. The correspondence with the Netherlands concerning these crises reveal the character of the Mennonites and their feelings towards Poland, as well as their continued connections with their brethren in Holland. There was no hint of leaving Poland; it was only a question of, "How can we endure this calamity and then start over again?" From this, it is apparent that the Mennonites had adapted to Poland sufficiently to continue the struggle for existence in their adopted homeland. The migration that did take place was from the Koenigsberg area in East Prussia, because the Mennonites there were forced to leave for religious reasons.<sup>34</sup> The Danzig Mennonites, both the Frisian and the Flemish, played the middleman in helping some of them migrate back to Holland.

The correspondence between the churches in Poland and the Netherlands is almost exclusively written in Dutch, a language common to both groups, even though it had been a century since the first Dutch Mennonites migrated to Poland. There was strong affinity between the two, as seen in their continued reference to each other as brethren. All letters begin with a lengthy introduction, and almost invariably included in their opening greeting is the phrase, Seer weerde Vrienden en van Herten gelieffde Broedern,<sup>35</sup> which translated reads "very

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<sup>34</sup>Inventaris, A-1593.

<sup>35</sup>Inventaris, A-1552, A-1558, A-1570.



worthy friends and heartily loved brethren." As one reads these letters, it becomes evident that for the writers this phrase meant more than only a proper form of address. They thought of themselves as true brethren in the faith and therefore could take the liberty to appeal for help. The letters reflect a spirit of mutuality and understanding. They were written as one friend to another, even though they had never seen each other. This literary contact between the Mennonites in Poland and the Netherlands slowed down the process of their acculturation into the Polish society. Instead, it helped them maintain their culture and ethnic identity because it was a continued contact with the homeland, even though very few would have felt at home in the Netherlands by this time.<sup>36</sup>

The letters assume a common acceptance and understanding of the Bible as is evident by the way it is cited and appealed to by both groups. Many of the letters support their appeal for help by citing Scripture. To encourage the Dutch Mennonites to respond generously to the appeal for help the Polish Mennonites would cite such passages as: Matthew 10, where Jesus promises a reward for giving a cup of cold water in His Name; or 2 Tim. 6, where the reader is encouraged to give generously, for the one who sows sparingly will also be

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<sup>36</sup>Berry, "Acculturation", 11. Padillo, "Ethnic Loyalty", 50.

rewarded sparingly.<sup>37</sup> Such acceptance of the authority of the Bible is found in all early Anabaptist writings such as the Schleithem Confession, Simons, and Philips.<sup>38</sup> Although this type of appeal to Scriptural authority in encouraging giving borders on being manipulative, given the attitude and orientation of the Mennonites towards the Bible, it was received as an admonition.<sup>39</sup>

The Treaty of Olivia, in 1660, brought cessation to the conflict with Sweden. This peace gave respite to the war weary inhabitants of the Elbing Werder and the Groote Werder, as well as the other areas which had been subjected to the destruction of the war. As a result of the war, much property was destroyed, looted, and carried off.<sup>40</sup> Many of the inhabitants of the war affected area were well-to-do Mennonite farmers who had fled to Danzig to survive. The Danzig Flemish Church was the recipient of many of these refugees because the refugees were Flemish. The church did all it could to help

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<sup>37</sup>Inventaris, A-1558.

<sup>38</sup>"Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles," trans. John C. Wenger MOR 19, no. 4 (October, 1945): 247-253; Menno Simons, Die vollstaendige Werke von Menno Simon's, trans. J. Funk (Arthur, Illinois: L. A. Miller, 1876, 1926), Zweiter Theil, 68-69; Dietrich Philip, Enchiridion, trans. A. B. Kolb 1910, (Kitchener, Ontario: Pathway Publishing Company, 1978), 306-309.

<sup>39</sup>One illustration of this is the letter the Church of Amsterdam sent to the surrounding churches encouraging response to the need in Poland. Inventaris, A-1568.

<sup>40</sup>The discussion on the effects of the war and the request for help is based on the three letters that discussed the question. Inventaris, C-693.

the unfortunate refugees.

The refugees were in desperate need of clothing, shelter, and food, for they arrived in Danzig with only the clothes on their back. The church in Hamburg, being aware of the influx of refugees to Danzig, wrote the Danzig church to offer assistance. To this generous offer, the Danzig brethren responded that they appreciated the offer but would seek, as long as they were able, to take care of the refugee problem without outside help. However, by October of 1659, they received the first requested monetary assistance from Hamburg. There were some thirty-five refugee families in Danzig by this time, and by 1660, there were ninety families. An average sized family was about five and a half persons. As a result, the Danzig Mennonites experienced an influx of approximately four hundred and ninety-five persons.<sup>41</sup> With so many additional people coming to Danzig a strain on the resources of the Danzig Church was created, since they had, in addition to the refugees, their own poor to take care of. In addition, tension was created from not knowing how many families were still in the Werder and how many might still come to Danzig.

It was out of this desperate situation that in January, 1660, the Flemish Church, together with the elders of the refugees, sent an appeal for aid to the Flemish churches in Amsterdam, Haarlem and surrounding area. Needs had risen

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<sup>41</sup>This average family size is arrived at from the statements found in Inventaris, A-1655, A-1593. Schumacher, Herzogtum Preussen, 43.

beyond the ability of the Danzig and Hamburg churches to handle by themselves. The Flemish Church did not only request relief aid but also asked for prayers for peace. The refugees were confident that once hostilities would end, and the looting would stop, they would be permitted to go back home and things would improve rapidly.

The Amsterdam church took the appeal for help seriously and, by February 25, 1660, circulated it in the churches. The Dutch elders encouraged their people to give generously to the needs of the brethren in Poland as an act of obedience to God. From the thanks expressed, a significant amount of money, though the exact amount is unknown, was gathered and sent to the aid of the Polish Mennonites.<sup>42</sup>

With the cessation of the war, the refugees moved back to the Werder and began the work of rebuilding the devastated farms and villages. A little over a decade later devastation visited the Werder again, but this time it was flooding. In 1674 there was a serious dyke break in the Groote Werder.<sup>43</sup> The brethren had again successfully appealed to Hamburg for aid; however, that help was insufficient and so a letter was dispatched to the Netherlands, dated March 2, 1677.<sup>44</sup> The needs included corn for bread and seed-corn to plant so that they would once more be able to raise their own food. To lend

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<sup>42</sup>Inventaris, C-693.

<sup>43</sup>Inventaris, A-1558.

<sup>44</sup>Inventaris, A-1552.

credance and support to the appeal, the Frisian Danzig Church wrote a letter dated March 9, 1677, sending it along with the letter from the Werder, confirming the facts found in the letter from the Groote Marienburger Werder.<sup>45</sup> The Danzig letter was signed by Heindrich von Duehren, Hans Holtrichter and Heindrich Stuyurfan. The fact that the request was signed by the Frisian Elder von Duehren, indicates that it was a Frisian congregation that was having difficulties in the Werder, for the two groups kept themselves quite aloof from each other, and would only appeal for help to their own group.

Apparently the response from the Netherlands was slow in coming, and so another appeal was dispatched November 24, 1677.<sup>46</sup> This urgent request stated that floods had devastated the Groote Werder four years in succession, making the need so intense and circumstances so harsh that it was difficult to find words to describe the situation. There was a shortage of food in the delta.<sup>47</sup> To strengthen and enhance the appeal, the Dutch brethren were reminded of their Christian obligation to help needy members of the household of faith. People were also encouraged to give because God would reward the faithful. The brethren in Danzig sent a confirmation letter on December 11, 1677, which accompanied

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<sup>45</sup>Inventaris, A-1553.

<sup>46</sup>Inventaris, A-1554.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

the November request to the Netherlands.<sup>48</sup> This time the Danzig letter was signed by von Duehren, Kaltenrichter and Huns Jacobs vun Bruniegd.

Finally, a letter dated January 13, 1678, was sent by the brethren from the Netherlands to the church in Danzig.<sup>49</sup> This letter was forwarded by the Danzig church to the brethren in the Groote Werder. It is not clear whether relief had been sent, but the Brethren in the Werder expressed a thank-you for the response from Holland and apparently some help was received. A further appeal was sent because new destruction had been experienced as a result of ice.<sup>50</sup> The ice flow damaged many buildings and swept a number of buildings down stream. In addition, two windmills used for pumping water had been toppled and several others had sustained severe damage. One house of an older preacher was completely destroyed, while the house of another preacher was seriously damaged.

Due to their extreme poverty, the Mennonites did not have the wherewithal to rebuild the dykes. Fortunately, the desperate circumstances had come to the attention of the king,

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<sup>48</sup>Inventaris, A-1555.

<sup>49</sup>Inventaris, A-1556. The letter from Holland is referred to in this letter but not included in the archival material.

<sup>50</sup>Inventaris, A-1556. The wording used for the appeal for aid is graphic and carries the idea of springing to the aid of a needy person. This suggests that a response was urgently needed. This letter was signed by Frisian elders and preachers, Jacob Bestvader, Hendrik Pender, David Bestvader, and Abraham Quiring.

who took matters into his hands.<sup>51</sup> He sent words of encouragement to the Mennonites, and saw to it that the break in the dyke would be repaired by the Danzig City Council. In addition, the King gave them two tax-free years.

In spite of the continued contact between the Mennonite churches in the Netherlands and Poland, the third and fourth generation Polish Mennonites were becoming less familiar with the Dutch congregations. They were most familiar with the Amsterdam congregation and, as a result, used the mediatorial services of the Amsterdam Church to inform the other Dutch churches of the desperate need, asking it to circulate the appeal letter in the other Dutch churches.<sup>52</sup> The greatest need was for food and money so that supplies could be purchased to rebuild the destroyed buildings, and so they would have enough food until the next harvest. This appeal was again accompanied by a letter from the Danzig Church affirming the need and encouraging circulating the letter in the churches in the Netherlands.<sup>53</sup> The Danzig letter indicated that, unless help would be forthcoming, the people in the Werder would probably starve.

In August of 1678, the Mennonites in the Groote Werder were still languishing in poverty. In a humble, almost embarrassed way, they once more approached the Church in the

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<sup>51</sup>Inventaris, A-1556.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Inventaris, A-1556.

Netherlands for help.<sup>54</sup> The appeal was as urgent as it had been previously. They appealed to the religious sentiments of the Dutch Mennonites, encouraging a generous response by reminding the readers that the one sowing sparingly would also reap sparingly.

The Dutch Brethren again were slow in responding. They inquired to know how many families or households were in need, and the amount that was requested. In September of 1679, the brethren from the Werder responded that there were sixty families in the Werder who did not know where to get their next piece of bread.<sup>55</sup> They, however, refused to ask for a specific amount of money. In the minds of the Polish Mennonites, that was a matter in which God would guide the individual. The elders of Polish Mennonites identified deeply with the need of those suffering in the Werder. They wrote "our eyes are full"<sup>56</sup> as we take up the pen to encourage support for the destitute brethren in the Werder. Their only response to the amount needed was, in accordance with their understanding of Biblical teaching as found in the Epistle of James, that Christians were exhorted to pray for one another and not stipulate the amount needed. They, however, committed themselves to distribute fairly whatever the Brethren from the Netherlands would send.

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<sup>54</sup>Inventaris, B-1558.

<sup>55</sup>Inventaris, A-1559.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.



The Amsterdam Mennonite Church circulated, in the churches, a copy of the 1678 letter for help.<sup>57</sup> The appeal emphasized two points. First, it underlined the need of the Mennonites in the Groote Werder, near Danzig, as serious and desperate. Second, it strongly encouraged the churches to give generously.

The Dutch Mennonites were still not satisfied, and so they requested again, in January 1680, more precise information.<sup>58</sup> They were anxious to help and to do it expeditiously, but they felt that, because they were appealing for donations from the various churches in the Netherlands, more details concerning the need were important. Consequently, they again asked for such facts as exactly how many families or households had been affected by the disaster, and once more asked for a precise sum of money that would be needed to rebuild and begin fresh. Since spring would be coming shortly, and with it seed-time, the information was needed quickly so that the aid would arrive in time for spring seeding.

The Polish Werder churches had already sent that information in the letter of November, 1679.<sup>59</sup> It is apparent that the Amsterdam and surrounding churches had not received that correspondence since they requested this information for the

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<sup>57</sup>Inventaris, A-1560.

<sup>58</sup>Inventaris, A-1562.

<sup>59</sup>Inventaris, 1563.

second time in the letter of January, 1680. The November response from the Werder and the January request from Amsterdam passed each other in the mail. In the November letter, the Polish Mennonites had indicated that they had received help from surrounding churches, but that it was insufficient for their need. By November, three months after their first appeal for help, the number of destitute families had increased to sixty-nine. If one calculates three and a half children plus parents per family there were some three hundred and eighty-five people in dire need of help. If there were any servants in the household, that would increase the number. This number of needy people, in the context of the floods and poverty of the Mennonites in the Werder at this time, placed a heavy load on those Mennonites in Poland not affected by the flood, a load they could not handle by themselves.

The Mennonites who had asked for help found it very difficult to stipulate a specific sum of money that, in their estimation, would help them resolve their difficulties. They said,

. . . that they [Dutch Mennonites] expect us to give a precise amount needed to pay for the damages done by the disaster is a heavy burden on our hearts, yes our shyness does not allow us to desire a certain sum of money. We would have been thankful for and accept with great thankfulness that which would have been given to us.<sup>60</sup>

Reluctantly, they gave an estimate of twenty thousand guil-

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<sup>60</sup>Inventaris, A-1563, Translation by Gerry Hoorman.

ders.<sup>61</sup> This was a significant amount, reflecting the extensiveness of the flood damage. In seeking to determine the buying power of such an amount, a comparison with wages is helpful. Twenty thousand guilders was equivalent to the total annual wages of about one hundred ships-carpenters.<sup>62</sup>

The reluctance in requesting a specific sum of money reflected Mennonite theology; that of not letting the right hand know what the left hand was doing when one was giving a gift. They felt quite strongly that giving was a private matter between the individual and God; therefore, they were hesitant to dictate any amount to anyone who was going to give a donation.

By May 1680, conditions began to improve. Most of the breaks in the dykes were being repaired, and work on removing the sand from the drainage ditches had begun. Isaak Rutgers, agent in Danzig for his father's Dutch banking firm, represented the Dutch Committee of Foreign Needs on behalf of the Polish Mennonites.<sup>63</sup> Rutgers dispersed the donated funds to the needy Mennonites and reported that the Dutch should send more money for the needy, though the urgency was not as great

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>C. R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire: 1600-1800 (London: Hutchinson & Co. Publisher Ltd., 1977), 300-302. Boxer outlines the monthly wages of various seafaring personnel. For example, a ship's carpenter received 30-48 fl., a book-keeper 18-24, artisans such as house-carpenter or mason 15-16, and a blacksmith would receive 12-14.

<sup>63</sup>N. van der Zijpp, "Rutgers", in ME, 1955 ed.

since he had paid out only six hundred guilders from the money sent.<sup>64</sup> Rutger's report was a statement of accountability to the Dutch churches as to how their donations were being used. They were careful to use the money for what it was designated and avoided any circumstances that could be interpreted as improper handling of the funds. In June of that year, a further report was sent to Abraham Jacob Friese in Amsterdam.<sup>65</sup> Accountability in the distribution of the aid was exercised, not only in reporting to the donors on how the money was spent, but also by using the help of those receiving the monetary aid. Rutgers recruited and used the assistance of the Frisian Bishop Heindrich von Duehren and his fellow church worker, Marten Eeker. Careful research was done before the money was distributed, to assure that the most needy would be the first to receive help. Rutgers was quite optimistic that the situation was rapidly improving and so he wrote the Mennonites in Amsterdam that, for now, no more money need be remitted.<sup>66</sup>

The dykes were repaired, the drainage ditches were in the process of being desilted, and the families were moving back to their villages to begin farming again. The Dutch Mennonite church, as well as the Danzig church and the Hamburg church, came to the aid of the destitute Mennonites in the Werder

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<sup>64</sup>Inventaris, A-1567.

<sup>65</sup>Inventaris, A-1560.

<sup>66</sup>Inventaris, A-1568.

during the difficult years of the seventies. That help was channelled through the Frisian church in Danzig under the leadership of Elder Heindrich von Duehren.<sup>67</sup> It was the Frisian church in the Netherlands that responded most vigorously, though the Waterlaender group responded as well. This aid from the Netherlands maintained the connection that had existed between the Mennonite bodies of the two countries, and added the emotional tie of survival to make it even stronger. Help rendered in hard times served to maintain continuity and connections. The increased correspondence and interaction between the two groups, occasioned by the desperate need of the Polish Mennonite Church, deepened understanding and familiarity that had never died, but, during times of plenty, had been less necessary.

The relief aid, which was sent in response to the devastation by war, was channelled through the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church, while the flood aid was channelled through the Frisian Church. Since the two groups had little to do with each other, in spite of the fact that in the Netherlands they had united by this time, was aid channelled only to the respective groups? Despite unclear sources on this issue, it seems only logical that such desperate circumstances would lower the barriers, and cause them to help each other. This

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<sup>67</sup>Both the escort letters, Inventaris, A-1553, of March 1677 and A-1557, written in April, 1678, were signed by Heindrich van Duehren, Elder of the Frisian Danzig Mennonite Church. See also the "Religionspuncton," MS 694; Inventaris, C-695.

is supported by the fact that the church in Hamburg helped in both instances.

A comparison may be made with the relief sent to the Mennonites in southern Russia or Ukraine, during the famine in the early 1920's. North American Mennonites sent a delegation to investigate the situation of the Mennonites in Russia. This investigation was followed up with food shipments for the starving Mennonites.<sup>68</sup> Soup kitchens were set up and the most needy children, women, and also men, received a daily ration. The North American Mennonites not only helped with famine relief, they also provided tractors to help the Mennonites work the Ukrainian steppes in order to raise grain to be able to feed themselves. This, in turn, developed close ties between the Russian and North American Mennonites of which the positive effects were still evident some sixty years later. Rev. John Baerg, of Niagara-on-the Lake, Ontario, talked of his experiences as a young boy in the early 1920's in the Ukraine, remembering both the visit of the North American delegates, as well as the food they, his widowed mother and siblings, received at that time.<sup>69</sup> The twentieth century relief effort was, however, different in three ways from the seventeenth century program. In Poland, the Mennonites who had immigrated needed help, while in Russia the

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<sup>68</sup>G. U. Peters, "Aus dem hungernden Russland," Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalendar, 32 (1923): 78-86.

<sup>69</sup>Interview with Rev. John Baerg, January 17, 1982, when the author visited in his home.

help was given by those who had immigrated to a new homeland, the North Americans. Secondly, delegates from the help-givers, the North Americans, visited the needy area in Russia, while the Dutch requested only written information. Finally, the 1920's relief effort was done at the cost of the life of one of the delegates.<sup>70</sup> In Poland, there was no loss of life to any helper.

For some twenty-five years, the dykes were kept in relatively good repair and flooding was kept at a minimum. Then, in 1709, at the end of the period under discussion in this study, devastation once more ran rampant in the Werders. The church at Ohrloff, with a membership of six hundred and eighty, was in great need because of flooding.<sup>71</sup> The Dutch Mennonite church, De Zon, established a fund for aid to the needy at Ohrloff. The church approved a gift of seven hundred guilders, which was to be paid by church treasurer Dirk Bestvader in equivalent Polish or Prussian currency.<sup>72</sup> Accountability for the proper use of donated funds was insured by having the recipients of a gift sign a receipt for the amount received. The signed receipt was to be returned to the Dutch church.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Guy F. Hershberger, "Historical Background to the Formation of the Mennonite Central Committee," MQR, 44 (1970): 243.

<sup>71</sup>Inventaris, A-1570.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

From 1701-1714, the churches in the Werders continued experiencing difficult circumstances due to flooding and the war with Karl XII of Sweden.<sup>74</sup> The war ended in 1710, but that did not end the trouble for the Mennonites in the Werder.<sup>75</sup> The Danzig Frisian Church, through its leaders, Salomon Vermuelen and Hendrik Gerritsen, reported the severity of the situation to the Dutch Mennonites. For example, the church at Toorn (Thorn) had been subjected to the ravages of the Russian army. The retreating Russian army had confiscated all food that had been saved by the people, which had already been limited because of the damaging flood in 1713. Consequently, many of the church members from the Toorn congregation had joined some of the Kulm members and moved to Samland, near Koenigsberg in Ducal Prussia. The small remaining group, left in most desperate circumstances, would have liked to follow the Kulm group, but due to its poverty and the fact that it was winter, was not able to do so.

The Colmse (Kulm) church suffered in a similar way. They had been robbed and raped by both Polish and Muscovite troops. In addition, the dyke breaks of the summer and December of 1713 ruined their crops, and their houses stood in water up to the roofs. Many wished they had also gone with the settlers to Samland, but due to food shortage and the winter, they were

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<sup>74</sup>Inventaris, C-700.

<sup>75</sup>Inventaris, C-700. Much of the following discussion is based on C-700 and Gieysztor, et. al., History of Poland, 276-279.



forced to stay.

The church at Graudenz, also known as the Montau church, suffered the same as the church in Kulm. In addition, they had an illness among their cattle which resulted in the death of large portions of their herds. With their source of income gone, many of the Mennonites who had debts were unable to pay. Some of the farmers were physically beaten for not paying their debts, while others were imprisoned for defaulting on their payments. Because of their debt load and inability to pay, they were afraid to come to Danzig for fear of being imprisoned, since some of their nobles lived in Danzig. A small group left for Samland, but the rest were prohibited from leaving by their landlord, who was afraid his villages would be depopulated and his land would be left uncultivated.

The Elbing church had not suffered from the devastations of war as had the other three groups, but it had suffered severely from flooding. Their main source of food was the fish which they caught in the water around their houses. Where there used to be well-kept farms and homes, there now was poverty and destruction. Many of the families were suffering intensely.

In contrast, the new settlement in Samland was doing well. Vermuellen and Gerritsen called it the leading of the Lord that the Mennonites had moved to Samland. Prior to the move, the plague had taken about one hundred thousand lives of the people living in Samland, thus leaving many villages

practically depopulated and, as a result, the Mennonites were welcomed to settle in these villages. To lure the Mennonite settlers, they were given a warm welcome, and were granted privileges, such as freedom to expand and the unhindered practice of their religion. The only cloud on the horizon for this new and promising settlement was the poverty with which the Mennonites had come. There was deep concern whether they would have enough monetary resources to pay their rent and build their needed houses.

Vermuelen and Gerritsen were concerned that, unless peace would come to Poland, the Mennonites would all want to migrate to Samland. By the second decade of the eighteenth century, the Mennonites again faced difficult circumstances. They had no food, no credit, and no seed for spring seeding.

The rural church experienced many difficult times, not only during the last half of the seventeenth century, but also during the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Again, the appeals for help went out and the brethren rallied. Vermuelen and Gerritsen, having reported the circumstances of the churches in the Werder and Samland, concluded it by expressing the hope that the various Mennonite bodies would unite as one church in Samland.

The Polish Mennonites' need for monetary help forced continued interaction with the Mennonites in the Netherlands. The correspondence clearly indicates that the Dutch Mennonites had a sense of kinship and responsibility to assist the

Mennonites in Poland. The generous aid sent in response to this sense of responsibility developed a greater awareness of the Mennonites in the two countries and contributed to the continuity of the faith and language of the Polish Mennonites.

The Mennonites had been in Poland for one and a quarter centuries and were still using the Dutch language despite the fact that they lived in a country where Polish, German and Werder Platt were being spoken. The continued use of the Dutch language contributed to the continuity of faith and practice. The non-conformist religion of the Mennonites also contributed to their separateness and group self-consciousness and slowed down cultural adaptation. But since the Mennonites did not live in isolation and because they were active in agricultural production as well as manufacture which required continual interaction with the rest of society, acculturation in some form would eventually take place. That change occurred in the area of language shift.

A question that may be raised at this point is, Why did the Polish Mennonites learn German and Werder Platt rather than Polish? The answer is in part historical and in part political. It has been noted above that the Teutonic Knights controlled the territory that stretched from the eastern boundary of Pomerania east to the Neman River beyond Koenigsberg. Its northern boundary was the Baltic Sea, while its southern boundary stretched south as far as Thorn and the junction of the Vistula and the Drweca River. The Knights

Germanized the local population which included adopting the German Catholic religion and German agricultural methods.<sup>76</sup> Those that resisted being Germanized were removed. In addition the Knights invited German colonists to settle on the vacated territory as well as settle in new areas which were more easily broken up by the German iron plough than the Slavic wooden plough.<sup>77</sup> Many German colonists came.

The Knights were not the only ones who invited German colonists. Henry the Bearded, prince of Wroclaw (Breslaw), developed a systematic colonization plan as well. He designated large areas of land for colonization and then established a town in the centre of it. He assigned a manager of the town, who was responsible to establish several villages, settling them according to the Kulmischenrecht. The Tartar invasion of 1241 had decimated the population, thereby making new settlement possible. Other nobles in Silesia followed his example, including Henry's successors.<sup>78</sup>

Jedlicki argues that the German colonists were polonized and left little Germanic impact on the culture of Poland in western and southern Poland. In the areas settled under the Teutonic Knights, the situation was different, mainly due to

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<sup>76</sup>F. L. Carsten, "Slavs in North-Eastern Germany," in The Economic History Review 11 (1941): 63, 76.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>78</sup>M.Z. Jedlicki, "German Settlement and the Rise of the Teutonic Order," W.F. Reddaway, et. al. ed. The Cambridge History of Poland, to 1696. (Cambridge: University Press, 1950), 128-136.

the greater number of German settlers in these areas.<sup>79</sup> Gieyszter points out that in Silesia, Western Pomerania, and Pruthania, the coming of German settlers ultimately resulted in a linguistic change, as the ruling class, the courtiers and feudal lords came under the influence of the German language.<sup>80</sup> Similarly in Danzig the German population retained the German language.<sup>81</sup> In some of the rural areas, German settlers replaced the Slavs and Pruthanians.

In other areas, the Germans were absorbed linguistically, though many towns adopted what was known as German Law without accepting the German language. The German Law, also designated the Magdeburg Law, was the law that had evolved in Magdeburg. It gave more freedom and power to the citizens for self-government, and in this way, became an inducement to settlers to migrate to Poland.<sup>82</sup> Thus, one may speak of two forms of Germanization. One involved adopting the German language, religion and agricultural methods, while the other involved adopting the German Law without changing the language.

Early in the thirteenth century, the German language was used in administrative court acts in towns where the Germans constituted a large proportion of the population. As early

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 130, 141.

<sup>80</sup>Gieysztor, History of Poland, 97-98.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Jedlicke, "German Settlement," 136-137.

as 1243, Duke Farnim I put the administration of Szczecin, which was being administered according to Magdeburg Law, into the hands of the German community.<sup>83</sup>

Germanization, which included more than a shift to the German language, was a deliberate policy of the Teutonic Knights. They had been invited by Duke Conrad to help in the defence of Poland against the marauding Prussians.<sup>84</sup> The Knights accepted this invitation, but added a secret plan, that of establishing a German State. Conrad gave the territory to them as a privilege. The Knights, however, accepted the sovereignty of the German Emperor Fredrich II and obtained from him confirmation of the rights promised by Conrad. The Emperor, however, illegally described the privilege in terms of ownership. This was the beginning of the expansion of the Teutonic Territory until it stretched from Luebeck all the way to Klaipeda.<sup>85</sup>

By 1370, the Kingdom of Poland was land-locked, with the Knights in control of the territory on the northern frontier of Poland.<sup>86</sup> This was not what had been planned by Conrad, and so his successors slowly began to win back the lost territories. The Polish victory over the Knights at Gruenwald

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 99, 119.

<sup>84</sup>For expansion of Teutonic Knights see Jedlicki, "German Settlement," 140-147; and A. Giesztor, History of Poland, 110-113.

<sup>85</sup>See the map in Appendix I.

<sup>86</sup>See map in Appendix I.

in 1410, was the beginning of the demise of the Teutonic Knights. By 1525, the Knights had dissolved as a Monastic Order and their territory came under Polish hegemony as Royal Prussia and Ducal Prussia.<sup>87</sup> Ducal Prussia was ruled by the Grand Master of the Order now turned Duke while Danzig became a city under Polish vassalage. The full acceptance of this did not happen until the early sixteenth century. Thus, the German language was entrenched in the territory under Teutonic rule before the Poles took control. It should also be remembered that the power of the King was limited. Poland's centralized government functioned primarily through the voluntary cooperation of the nobles.<sup>88</sup> Thus, seeking to enforce the Polish language would have been difficult.

This does not mean that there were no voices opposing this Germanizing activity. Already in the latter half of the fifteenth century, Jan Ostrorog,<sup>89</sup> Wajewoda of Pozenan, had advocated substituting Polish for Latin in official records. He also vehemently opposed German influence in Poland, such as the right of appeal of towns to Magdeburg and the use of the German language in the towns, monasteries, and especially in preaching. Boswell quotes him thus:

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<sup>87</sup>See map in Appendix II.

<sup>88</sup>See chapter II above for a discussion of this.

<sup>89</sup>A. Bruce Boswell, "Cultural and Social Conditions in the Middle Ages," in The Cambridge History of Poland, ed. W. F. Reddaway, J. H. Penson, O. Halecki and R. Dyboski (Cambridge: University Press, 1950), 162-163.

What stupidity, what carelessness, what shame, disgrace and ignomy! What need (or rather folly) brought on us this insult, that in a glorious and free kingdom the practice should continue of seeking justice in Magdeburg? And from whom? From dirty, filthy artisans . . . who are so far from being educated that they should be despised as the worst rabble. As if in the whole of our kingdom not one just and expert judge should be found! As if we lacked men who were wise, sensible and educated! Blush for the faint-heartedness with which you have exposed yourselves to the contempt of foreigners! . . . In many of our towns and temples sermons are given in German. . . . Since between these two languages (as in other respects) nature itself has implanted eternal disagreement and hatred, I admonish you not to preach in that language. Let him who would dwell in Poland speak Polish.<sup>90</sup>

Here is a voice for nationalism and the unity of Poland at a time when there was a resurgence of expansion of the Polish kingdom. This attitude was also manifested by the 1543 decree of the king, that documents of the courts of law were to be issued in Polish rather than the standard Latin.<sup>91</sup> That same year the decisions of the Cracow Sym were published in Polish, the first legal documents published in that language. Such actions indicate that German and Latin were widely used but not without some opposition.

The delta territory which had been ruled by the Knights was the territory to which the Mennonites migrated. The Knights had done everything in their power to make their territory German, seeking to fulfill their dream of establishing a German State in the East. Therefore, German was the language of the territory to which the Mennonites came. The

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Giesztor, Histry of Poland, 199.



fact that it was under Polish hegemony had not eliminated the German language from the territory. Just as founding towns, which adopted German Law, did not mean that the towns spoke German, neither did the overlordship of the Polish King mean that German was no longer spoken. Areas, such as the Chelmno territory, were colonized only by Germans and therefore were most Germanized. Bruno Schumacher emphasizes the Germanization of the Prussian territories by the Teutonic Knights, but notes that, by 1525, much of their success in settling the delta had been devastated by the the thirteen years war (1454-1466) and the more recent Polish-Prussian War (1519-1521). Consequently there was a need for new immigrants to settle in Prussia.<sup>92</sup> The Teutonic Germanizing through German colonization had laid a foundation for the German influence in the area. The new wave of colonization during the fifteenth and sixteenth century built on this past. This new immigration wave to Prussia included Germans, but also Dutch, Scottish, Bohemians and Poles.

This was the language situation of the delta when the Mennonites migrated to Poland. The Mennonites have historically been reluctant to change their language, but, with time, they have adopted the language of their new homelands.<sup>93</sup> The

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<sup>92</sup>Schumacher, Herzogtum Preussen, 2-3.

<sup>93</sup>This pattern is seen in Poland where the shift was from Dutch to Werder Platt and High German. The same pattern occurred in Russia, where the Act of Russification, which included making Russian the first language in school, gave impetus to change to Russian. The pattern has been repeated

Mennonites adopted the Werder Platt or Plattdeutsch (Low German), as it is often called, which had become an international language during the period of the supremacy of the Hanseatic League.<sup>94</sup> Low German, as a result, had been used in commercial transactions and replaced Latin as the official business language. This, coupled with the colonization policy of the Teutonic Order, resulted in many Low German colonists settling in the Baltic coastal regions.<sup>95</sup> These colonists, as well as Dutch traders, spread their language where they went. The Werder Platt emerged out of the interaction of the various dialects and became the business language of the area.<sup>96</sup> Karl Bischoff describes it as the language of authority, administration, business, recorded history and religious devotion.<sup>97</sup> Just as the Platt came to prominence through the Hanseatic league it declined with the demise of the league. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Low German was no longer used for written communication though it

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in the move to North America, where English has been adopted and Latin America where only in the last decade have serious attempts have been made by Mennonites to learn the Spanish.

<sup>94</sup>Rueben Epp, "Plautdietsch: Origins, Development and State of the Mennonite Low German," Journal of Mennonite Studies 5 (1987): 62.

<sup>95</sup>Karl Bischoff, "Mittelniederdeutsch," in Handbuch zur niederdeutschen Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, ed. Gerhard Cordes and Dieter Moehn (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1983), 99.

<sup>96</sup>Bischoff, "Mittelniederdeutsch," 104-111.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 99.

was still used as a household language but not for business or worship.

Linguistic conversion in the delta from Platt to German, or High German as the language is often referred to, had received impetus not only from High German speaking Nobles and settlers but also from the spread of the Reformation teaching by German speaking scholars and Luther's High German Bible. This linguistic change to High German was virtually complete by the turn of the sixteenth century.<sup>98</sup>

When the Mennonites moved to the Vistula Delta during the sixteenth century, they not only were surrounded by Low German speaking people but High German as well.<sup>99</sup> With the advent of the Reformation, High German or New German (Neudeutsch) became an international language and also found its way to the Vistula Delta. When, in 1525, Duke Albrecht declared for a secular state and the Reformation, the door was opened for the Reformation teaching and High German. The influence of Luther's translation of the Bible then had its full impact. Similarly, Luther's Bible left its impact on the province of Royal Prussia. The Mennonite colonists then arrived in the midst of a people who spoke Plattdeutsch, but who had adopted the High German as the more acceptable language. Polish, where spoken, was used by the native Polish population, which had

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<sup>98</sup>Epp, "Plautdietsch," 64; F. L. Carsten, "Slavs in North-Eastern Germany," in The Economic History Review 11 (1941): 61-76.

<sup>99</sup>Gieysztor, History of Poland, 154.

little influence on the German people.

In addition, the Mennonites came with a language that had some affinity to the Platt they found in the Delta and to the people who spoke it. Polish was more difficult to learn, and there was less affinity to the Polish people. It is for these reasons that the Mennonites picked up the Werder Platt and High German instead of Polish.

For utilitarian reasons, the Mennonites adopted the Werder Platt and High German rather than Polish. This is illustrated by the response the Mennonites have given to learning a new language in their migrations to various countries. In the Ukraine they learned Russian only as dictated by the needs of circumstances. Similarly they have learned English and Spanish for utilitarian reasons. In many of the Mennonite Churches in Russia they still preach in German while in Latin American countries German is the language of worship as well.<sup>100</sup> Among the Mennonites that have migrated to various countries almost complete linguistic conversions has happened only in English speaking North America.

Herbert Wiebe,<sup>101</sup> in discussing the language shift of the Polish Mennonites, suggests that during the two centuries

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<sup>100</sup>Based on discussion with Russian Mennonite delegates to the Mennonite World Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba, July 24-29, 1990 and the author's visits to Mennonite Churches in Mexico, Belize, and Paraguay, 1983, 1984, 1987.

<sup>101</sup>Herbert Wiebe, "Die Mennoniten im Weichselgebiet," MGB 2 no. 112 (December, 1937): 32.

of Polish rule, the Polish language found no entrance among the Mennonites. Rent agreements and other government records were regularly written in Polish, but among the Mennonites these agreements and correspondence were all written in German. The town administrators who had limited jurisdiction carried on their correspondence in German. According to Wiebe, his conclusion was based on his examination of many purchase and rent agreements of the seventeenth and eighteenth century.<sup>102</sup> The Mennonites knew German as well as their Dutch. In addition, the town records of Montau, begun in 1630, were written exclusively in German.<sup>103</sup>

Wiebe's statement betrays an unnecessary German bias. His emphatic statement that Polish found no entrance seems overstated. In contrast, Giesztor and Jedlicki tend to play down the German factor. Evidence, as noted above, suggests German was the major language in the delta. But there is also evidence that Polish was spoken by some. For example, in the town records of Montau there was a note about Hansz Wohlgemuth of Sanskau whose wife died in 1750. As a result, he paid his wife's portion of the estate to their four children. Each child received six hundred and fifty Gulden. The sons received an additional thirty-six Gulden so that they could learn Polish.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 32, n.9.

The concern here was that the sons would learn Polish. Thus, Polish was not spoken regularly by the Mennonites. Second, the father felt it was important that his sons learn Polish. This indicates that Polish was known though not used extensively. This further suggests that the Mennonites did interact with Polish speaking people, and, as a result, at least one father was concerned enough to be willing to incur the expenses for his sons to learn Polish. Evidently it was felt that it was not necessary for girls to learn Polish. This could be due to the fact that it was the men who did the business and so it was important for them to know the language.

This language shift would create a cultural shift which, in turn, would result in subtle shifts in the faith, and ultimately the practices of the community, but it would not destroy the ethnic identity of the Polish Mennonites. The significance and effect of language shift in terms of what it does to ethnic identity is illustrated by anthropologists Vladimir Nahirney and Joshua Fishman in their studies of American ethnic groups.<sup>105</sup> According to Nahirny and Fishman the ethnic experience of the grandson, who has adopted the language of the new homeland, is different from that of the immigrant grandparents, who experienced the mother tongue in the country of origin. For the grandparents, their language

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<sup>105</sup>J. Nahirny and J. Fishman, "American Immigrant Groups: Ethnic Identification and the Problem of Generation," Sociological 13:311-326; Reminick, Ethnicity, 35-40.

had housed the conceptual structures and ways of thinking and feeling providing the matrix of expression and experience of ethnicity in their country of origin, which is quite different from the experience of their children and grandchildren. Thus a language shift, though it may not destroy group identity, creates changes within that group. The entrance of German would ultimately create a wedge between the Mennonites in Poland and those in the Netherlands, which resulted in the two national groups developing into distinct Mennonite communities. Adopting the new language would ultimately serve as the avenue for outside influences to enter the Mennonite community and thereby result in further cultural changes, but much of that would happen a century later than the time under study.

The Dutch language that the immigrants brought with them was their language of school and church for years. The Flemish church records were written in Dutch until 1784.<sup>106</sup> Dutch was still being read when the first Mennonites migrated to Russia in 1789. They took with them several books written in the Dutch language, including The Martyrs' Mirror, and Hansen's Fundamentbuch der Christlichen Lehre.<sup>107</sup>

The language question involves several important dimensions. First, it relates to the whole matter of acculturation

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<sup>106</sup>Krahn, Dutch Anabaptism, 283, n. 37. Krahn cites Walter Kuhn, Geschichte der deutschen Ostsiedlung in der Neuzeit, (Koehlen, 1957), 64, as support for this statement.

<sup>107</sup>Abraham Friesen, Eine Erkl aerung ueber einige Glaubenssaetze der sogenannten Kleine Gemeinde (Danzig: Gerhardschen Offizin, 1845), 32.

and continuity of life and faith as it had been brought from the Netherlands. Adopting the High German as the preaching language and the Werder Platt as the home language was a clear indication that the Mennonites, who came to Poland as a separate group, were beginning to adapt to their environment. The Mennonites, the Flemish more so than the Frisian, were culturally isolationist, as is evidenced by their attitude towards such cultural issues as new fashions in clothes. For the Flemish Mennonites, the question of new fashions related to the larger question of their definition of worldliness.

The following free translation of a saying which the Flemish commonly used about the Frisians, reflects the difference.

Those wearing hooks and eyes  
 God will save  
 Those with buttons and pockets  
 The devil will catch.<sup>108</sup>

The conservative orientation of the Flemish is further illustrated by the April 20, 1659 decision of the Flemish Groninger Sozietat in the Netherlands prohibiting the wearing of shoes with high heels or adorned with buckles. They also stipulated that the houses should not be painted in a variety of colors or be beautified with various drawings.<sup>109</sup> This culturally conservative attitude explains, in part, why there

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<sup>108</sup>Herbert Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 54. The German is as follows, "Die mit Hacken und Oesen wird Gott erloesen. Die mit Knoepfen und Taschen wird der Teufel erhaschen."

<sup>109</sup>N. van der Zizpp, "Groninger taufgesinnte Sozietat," in ML, 1928 ed.



was so little change in the practices and belief system of the Flemish Mennonites.

The language shift was a struggle for the Mennonite communities, with the younger generation being ready to change while the older generation resisting the change. This struggle is indicative of the rooted traditionalism on the part of the identity maintenance faction, and the readiness for change on the part of the others who were interested in a greater acculturation. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Flemish in relation to the language issue were facing the tension of what Padilla calls the "generational level" in the acculturation process.<sup>110</sup> In his study of the acculturation of Mexicans into the American culture, he found that the generational level played an important role in the whole assimilation process. In his study he developed a four generational model where the fourth generation usually is acculturated. The Mennonites had been in Poland longer than four generations when the language shift was completed. This suggests that resistance on the part of the older generation to adapt to the use of the German was a first generational response even though they were not the first generation to migrate.

Language shift was a cultural adaptation that began for the Polish Mennonites during the latter half of the seventeenth century. Padillo's generational principle of cultural

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<sup>110</sup>Padillo, "Cultural Awareness," 75.

adaptation is operational in this process. The young people were beginning to read German better than the Dutch. This would necessitate a change, which took a hundred years to complete: from 1671, when Hansen's first German book was written, until the sermons were regularly preached in German in 1774. It took two hundred and twenty-five years for the Mennonites in Poland to adopt the language of their environment. In contrast, the Mennonites who came to Canada from Russia in 1874, changed from German to English in less than a century. They had been in Russia a little less than a century and had not adopted the Russian language before the first group migrated to Canada.

One of the privileges granted to the Mennonites, when they migrated to Russia, was that they could maintain their German language and use it as the language of instruction in school as well as the language of worship.<sup>111</sup> The same privilege was granted to them when they migrated to Canada in 1874-1880.<sup>112</sup> In 1916, the Mennonites in Manitoba faced the Public School Attendance Act, which made school attendance compulsory and English as the medium of instruction.<sup>113</sup> The Mennonites, in Russia as well as in Canada, used the German

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<sup>111</sup>P. M. Friesen, Die Alt-evangelische mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland in Rahmen der mennonitischen Gesamtgeschichte (Halbstadt: Raduga, 1911), 70-74, 90-100.

<sup>112</sup>E. K. Francis, In Search of Utopia, (Altona: D. W.Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1955), 36-50.

<sup>113</sup>Francis, Utopia, 161-187.

language in school and worship while Plattdeutsch was the language used in many homes. When English became compulsory, for example, in the schools of Manitoba, the change to English was rapid. But not every Mennonite group adapted. Several thousand Mennonites looked for a new home in Mexico and Paraguay rather than learn English.<sup>114</sup> In comparing the speed of language change of the Polish Mennonites with that of the Canadian Mennonites, the modifying factor of compulsion must be taken into consideration. Also, the move from the private school, where German was the language of instruction, to the public school, where English was the medium of instruction, played a very effective role in leading to the acceptance of English.

The Mennonites came to Poland with the Dutch language and therefore faced the option of either learning German or Polish. The Mennonite churches all switched to German. The rural churches in the delta made the change to German sooner than the urban Danzig church. For example, the church in Heubuden switched to the High German in the mid eighteenth century. Danzig followed during the next two decades.<sup>115</sup>

Two major factors, were significant in the earlier change to German in the rural areas. First, the rural Mennonites did not experience as intense nor prolonged opposition from the

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 187-194.

<sup>115</sup>Ernst Crous. "Wie die Mennoniten in die Deutsche Volksgemeinschaft hineinwuchsen," MGB 4, no. 1 (August, 1939): 14-15.

neighbors as did the skilled workers and artisans in Danzig. The landowners, who profited from the industriousness of the Mennonites, came to the protection of the rural Mennonites again and again. As a result, the barriers between the two were less severe; therefore, influence and communication were more likely to occur which, in turn, would result in the Mennonites picking up the German language. On the other hand in Danzig, persistent opposition tended to isolate the Mennonites from the rest of the population. Those who opposed them remained hostile, and, as a result, contacts between Mennonites and non-Mennonites were limited. Because they were ostracized and opposed, as noted in the previous chapter, the Mennonites formed a closed community for protection. Consequently, there was a slower acceptance of German in Danzig and area. The rural churches were more amenable to external social influence than were the churches around Danzig because of a more friendly and hospitable environment. The contact principle, as suggested by Berry and Padillo, explains the difference in the speed of language shift.<sup>116</sup>

Economics was a second factor which influenced and encouraged the move to German. Very few groups, and this held true for the Mennonites as well, would learn a new language unless there were very significant reasons for doing so. Trade and livelihood are two such reasons, and in the delta

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<sup>116</sup>Berry, "Acculturation," 11. Padillo, "Cultural Awareness," 50.

where the Mennonites lived that required learning the German and Werder Platt. Consequently, the language shift began slowly, with only those who had significant contact with the "outside" society learning the language. Anthropologist John Edwards, in discussing the role of language and shift in language, points out that "economic success and communicative efficiency militate against the viability of 'small' languages in contact with powerful ones."<sup>117</sup> In the presence of the powerful German and Werder Platt and the pressure of economic necessity, it was only a matter of time before the Dutch would give way to the other two languages. This language change did not, however, change the conservative practices or stance of the Flemish. It is not until well into the Prussian period, over a century later, that the Flemish began to lose their conservatism and became socially acculturated.<sup>118</sup> This is not surprising, since, as Edwards points out, language shift does not necessarily change group identity.<sup>119</sup>

The experience of the Mennonites who migrated to Manitoba, who knew only German and Platt, illustrate such a process. In order to buy and sell, essential for existence in North America, a few immigrants to Canada learned English to be able to communicate with the outside world. In the community, they

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<sup>117</sup>John Edwards, Language Society and Identity (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1985), 163.

<sup>118</sup>Crous, "Volksgemeinschaft," 14-15; Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 121-133.

<sup>119</sup>Edwards, Language Identity, 163.

continued talking Platt. With time more contacts with the outside world required more exposure to the "foreign" language and then, with the impetus of the Manitoba School Act, the new language eventually replaced the old one.<sup>120</sup> The Manitoba Mennonites continued to use the German in the church services until the seventh decade of the twentieth century and the Platt as the language at home just as long. This Canadian experience illustrates what happened in Poland.

In 1671, Hansen prefaced his German articles on faith by saying that the young could read German better than Dutch.<sup>121</sup> In spite of this, Dutch remained the language of the church for another hundred years. The first German preaching in the Grossen Werder was in 1757 by Abraham Buhler.<sup>122</sup> According to H. G. Mannhardt<sup>123</sup>, the first sermon preached in High German in the Danzig Flemish Church was spoken by Gerhard Wiebe, a guest speaker from Elbing, in 1762.<sup>124</sup> The second time this happened in Danzig was five years later in 1767, when Cornelius Regier, a guest preacher from Heubuden, preached in Danzig. It was only in 1771 that, for the first

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<sup>120</sup>Francis, Utopia, 161-175.

<sup>121</sup>Georg Hansen, Ein Glaubens-Bericht fuer die Jugend 1st ed. (Cuauhtemoc, Mexico: Imprenta Rempel, 1963), "Vorede," 3.

<sup>122</sup>Johannes van der Smissen, "Ueber die ersten Anfaenge der Mennoniten in Preussen," MB, Juli (1854): 61.

<sup>123</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 107.

<sup>124</sup>Walther Mitzka, "Die Sprache der Deutschen Mennoniten," Heimatblaetter des Deutschen Heimatbundes Danzig 8 Heft 1 (Danzig: A. W. Kasemann, 1930): 10.

time, one of the Danzig preachers, Cornelius Moore, preached in High German. In 1774, Peter Tiessen and Jakob de Veer were elected as ministers in the Flemish church in Danzig.<sup>125</sup> The former gave his first sermon on November 27, and the latter on December 11. Both spoke High German and used this as their language in preaching.

This transition to the German was not made without opposition. The spans between the preachings speak for themselves. Hans van der Smissen also notes that the baptismal services were conducted in Dutch until 1778.<sup>126</sup> Opposition to the language change was led by Hans von Steen, minister and elder in the Flemish Danzig Church from 1743-1779.<sup>127</sup> According to Cornelius Krahn<sup>128</sup>, once von Steen passed from leadership, the switch to the German language came rapidly. In his later years, von Steen instructed Catechism in the High German as well as accepted the fact that all his co-ministers preached in High German.<sup>129</sup>

The course and completion of the linguistic shift reflected the weaning of the Polish Mennonites from the mother church in the Netherlands. It is also the slow, but sure, sociological shift to a self identity as a body of Mennonites

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<sup>125</sup>van der Smissen, "Mennoniten in Preussen," 61.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>127</sup>Cornelius Krahn, "Steen, Hans von," in ME 1955 ed.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 107.

in Poland, though not without affinities to the Dutch Mennonites and later to the Mennonites in Russia. The Germanization was also the beginning of the acculturation process which found its culmination towards the end of the nineteenth century when the Mennonites began to compromise their strong stand on non-participation in the military.<sup>130</sup> The language shift was not causative, but it was preparatory to the greater adaptation by the Mennonites to the society around them.<sup>131</sup> The linguistic shift removed a barrier that had kept the Danzig Flemish Church isolated until they adopted the new languages. Having adopted the new language, there was an open path of communication that would permit new ideas to penetrate and gradually change the thinking of the Mennonites, which in turn, would cause them to change their faith and practice.

The language shift did not cause the Mennonites to lose their group identity or ethnicity. Neither did it result in assimilation or integration into society. This suggests that, important as language is for group cohesiveness and identity, shifting to another language does not by itself easily cause the group to disintegrate. The Mennonites in Poland remained a unique group with a clear identity during the last half of

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<sup>130</sup>H. G. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 167-167, 175-177. See also W. Mannhardt, Die Wehrfreiheit, 191-202.

<sup>131</sup>This effect of language is illustrated by Hans-Juergen Goertz, "Nationale Erhebung und religioeser Niedergang: Missglueckte Aneignung des taeuferischen Leitbildes im Dritten Reich," Umstrittenes Taeufertum, 1525-1975, ed. Hans-Juergen Goertz (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 259-289..



the seventeenth century. This conclusion is in harmony with the findings of John Edwards in his study of the Irish language, which at one time was strong in the face of competition and Gaelicised new settlers. Ultimately, it lost out to English but this occurred in the course of a struggle that took over two centuries and involved other factors besides language.<sup>132</sup> Edwards further says that a language can only remain alive if it is in circumstances where it is used regularly across a broad range of domains. If this core area shrinks, the language will die and a shift will take place. He concludes that group identity survives language shift, as is illustrated by the Irish who have a strong Irish identity today, which does not involve the use of the Irish language in a communicative way.<sup>133</sup>

Linguistic matters are dependent on other sociopolitical factors. Pragmatic considerations play an important role in the language maintenance or shift. In Poland, the shift to German was pragmatic. This is seen in Carsten's study of the Slavs in North-Eastern Germany who became Germanized for economic reasons.<sup>134</sup> This is what happened to the Mennonites in Poland. They experienced a language shift without losing their identity. As Edwards suggests, language is important,

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<sup>132</sup>Edwards, Language Identity, 63-64.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 163-164.

<sup>134</sup>Carsten, "Slavs in North-Eastern Germany," 63-66. See also Edwards, Language and Identity, 92-93.

but other factors, such as religion, are more significant in maintaining group identity.<sup>135</sup> Edwards goes on to say,

The essence of group identity is individual identity and the essence of individual identity, ultimately, is survival, personal security and well being. To the extent to which language hinders these things, it will be deemed a negotiable commodity.<sup>136</sup>

As the German language appeared among the Mennonites, it found acceptance for pragmatic reasons, but it did not destroy them as a group. German would change things for the Mennonites, but it would still permit them to retain their identity. The language shift was an act of survival and in that sense, could be considered an attempt to maintain group identity. Certainly, Hansen's concern was to teach the faith to the young people so that they would remain true to the faith and practices they had received from their forebears.

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<sup>135</sup>Edwards, Language and Identity, 93.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 98.

## CHAPTER 5

### GEORG HANSEN: CHURCH STATESMAN

In studying the leader of a group, one approach to evaluating and analyzing a leader's effectiveness is to compare him with his predecessors and contemporaries. Such an approach provides an estimate of his relative significance and is also helpful in examining his accomplishments thereby evaluating him on his own achievements. A powerful leader will influence the people he leads, and in that way assist in either maintaining group boundaries and identity, or moving the group toward assimilation and acculturation. Georg Hansen, a deacon, preacher and ultimately elder in the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church, was one of several strong leaders among the Mennonites.

The name Hansen does not sound traditionally Dutch nor German. In the lists of family names of Mennonites living in the Vistula Delta, we find the name, Hansen, appearing in four separate records: the 1657 Danzig Flemish Church Ministerial Election List, the Danzig Flemish Church Book, the 1681 register of Mennonites in and around Danzig, and the 1776

Konsignation.<sup>1</sup> The first listing of a person by the name of Hansen is found in the Flemish Church register in the city of Danzig dated 1657.<sup>2</sup> Since no first name is mentioned, it is impossible to identify that person. In the ministerial list<sup>3</sup> of 1657 we find an Abraham Hansen listed as a deacon. In 1662, he was elected to be a preacher. He served as Vermahner (preacher) until his death on October 6, 1677. From the records it is impossible to establish whether the Hansen in the ministerial list and in the church record are the same person. Another person listed in these records with the name of Hansen is the subject of this study, Georg Hansen, who, in 1665, was elected first as deacon and then as minister in the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church.<sup>4</sup> Whether Abraham and Georg were related cannot be determined from the available records. The third listing is found in the 1681 list of Danzig, where we find a merchant who is a widower by the name of Abraham

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<sup>1</sup>The Ministerial List is found in Danzig Church Records; the Danzig Church Books have been lost but Gustav Reimer had access to it, Gustav E. Reimer, Die Familiennamen der westpreussischen Mennoniten found in Penner Die Ost- und Westpreussischen Mennoniten, 91-121; Horst Penner in Die Ost- und Westpreussischen Mennoniten, has a copy of the 1681 list as well as the "Konsignation," 469-471, 415-468. See also Karl-Heinz Ludwig, Zur Besiedlung des Weichseldeltas durch die Mennoniten (Marburg, 1961), 157-269.

<sup>2</sup>Gustav Reimer, Die Familiennamen der Westpreussischen Mennoniten, 2nd ed., Schriftenreihe des Mennonitischen Geschichtsverein No. 3 (Weierhof, 1963), 109.

<sup>3</sup>Ministerial List, 1657-1677, DCR.

<sup>4</sup>Ministerial list of 1665, DCR.

Hanssen Devers.<sup>5</sup> Since Hanssen is the middle name, we have the suggestion that Abraham must have had a mother whose married name was Hanssen. The fourth listing of the Hansen name is found in Special-Konsignation, where a widow Hansin is mentioned in the list of 1776.<sup>6</sup> She is described as a poor woman resident in the village of Robach earning her living as a maid. The woman had three children: two daughters and one son. Whether there is any affinity between the four has not been determined.

Postma, in his study of names, claimed that the name Hansen hardly originated in Friesland.<sup>7</sup> It is possible that this may be a case where a Mennonite girl married a Hansen, who converted to Mennonitism, and thus added a possibly Scandinavian name to the Church register. It is also possible that this is a case of a Hansen family converting to the Mennonite faith, joining the Mennonites, and thus injecting the name into the genealogical stream. This could have happened in Hamburg, or it could have been a Scandinavian trader carrying on a business in one of the Dutch seaports.

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<sup>5</sup>Penner, Westpreussischen Mennoniten, 471. Devers is a corruption of De Veer. The name is spelled with a double s in the list.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., See also Horst Penner, Die Ost- und Westpreussischen Mennoniten in ihrem religioesen und sozialen Leben in ihren kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Leistungen, I (Weierhof, Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1978), 436.

<sup>7</sup>Johan Sjouke Postma, Das Niederlaendische Erbe der pruessisch-russlaendischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika (Leeuwarden: A. Jongbloed, 1959), 90.

There is evidence that such inter-marriage or joining the Mennonites by conversion did occur. In the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church records, we have the occasional Polish name.<sup>8</sup> The records list a Maria Rogalski, an obvious Polish name, married to Claas Dyck. Information is lacking whether Maria's family was already part of the Mennonite church or whether she was a Polish girl who had fallen in love with a Mennonite boy and married into the Church. Maria gave birth to a daughter, Catherina, in 1748, who married widower Arendt Fast in 1770. The Fast's had ten children, two dying a few months after their birth. Since family lines were traced patriarchally, the Rogalski name did not enter the list of family names at that time.

Another example is Magdalena Sawatzki, born in 1739, to Hans Sawatzki and Catherina Jantzen. In this instance, the Sawatzki name would have become part of any genealogy of Mennonites, provided Hans had converted to Mennonitism. Since the records identify the Sawatzki's only as parents of Catherina, rather than listing them and their children, one can surmise that Sawatzki joined the Mennonites, but absolute evidence is lacking.

Another possible origin of the Hansen name was the common practice of developing a family name from the father's given name. Gustav Reimer provided an illustration by showing the origin of the name, Gertzen. In the name, Heinrich Gertzen

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<sup>8</sup>Danzig Family Register, 20, 24, DCR.

von Elft, Gertzen means "son of Gert."<sup>9</sup> Similarly then, as Postma also indicates, Hansen could have been derived from, Sohn von Hans (son of John), which was then shortened to Hansen.<sup>10</sup> Gergen, the Dutch spelling, or Georg, the High German spelling, and George the English spelling, all refer to the same name. Thus, Georg Hansen may mean George, son of John. This practice of identifying children by the father's name was a regular practice, not only in Scandinavia, but also in other parts of Europe. According to Reimer<sup>11</sup>, this explains the origin of the name Hansen. Postma identifies the name as belonging to his "general" category, which meant the origin of the name could not be identified.<sup>12</sup> It is a name that was found among the Mennonites in the Vistula Delta by 1657 without clear evidence that it had its origin in the Netherlands.

There is a question about how the name, Hansen, should be spelled. Enoch Seeman, in his defence against the ban which was put on him by Hansen, spelled it Gergen Hanszen.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup>Reimer, Familiennamen, 95.

<sup>10</sup>Johan S. Postma, Das niederlaendische Erbe der preussen-russlaendischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika, (Leeuwarden: A. Jongbloed, 1959), 90.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 84-91, 105.

<sup>13</sup>A Bibliography of Anabaptism, ed. A.J. Klassen and Nelson Springer, 2 vol. (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1977), 1:450.

Danzig Church Records spell it Gergen Hanson.<sup>14</sup> Gustav Reimer, in his Die Familiennamen der westpreussischen Menoniten,<sup>15</sup> spells it Hansen or Hanssen.<sup>16</sup> The widow in Rosenort provides a third spelling, Hansin.<sup>17</sup> The difference in spelling is probably due to the use of the Dutch, Platt, and High German language in the delta region, or possibly careless spelling on the part of the government officials. The several spellings do create some difficulties in tracing genealogical lines. In this study the Hansen spelling will be used.

Biographical sources for Hansen are almost non-existent. Consequently, one has to glean such information from his own writings as well as the writings of his contemporaries. A marginal note in the Danzig Church records listing the elders, (Aeltester), preachers and deacons both for 1694 and 1696, tell us that Georg Hansen died January 16, 1703<sup>18</sup>.

Robert Friedman suggested that Hansen was almost seventy years old when he wrote Spiegel des Levens in 1699, which was

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<sup>14</sup>Ministerial List, 1665, DCR

<sup>15</sup>Reimer, Familiennamen, 101f, 109.

<sup>16</sup>He has taken this spelling from Kirchenbuecher der Menonitengemeinde Danzig.

<sup>17</sup>Reimer, Familiennamen, 109.

<sup>18</sup>Ministerial List, 1694, 1696, DCR.



published posthumously in 1705.<sup>19</sup> Friedman's suggestion would make Hansen 74 years old at the time of death. As support for his statement, Friedman cited the Mennonitischer Lexicon, and Catalogus. Upon investigation of these sources, no reference to Hansen's age was found in either of the two. Friedman must not have read Spiegel des Levens; had he, he would have found it unnecessary to make an educated guess about the age of Hansen.

In the "Introduction" (Vorreden) to Hansen's Spiegel des Levens, it is stated that Hansen was sixty-three years old when he wrote the book in 1699,<sup>20</sup> thus making Friedman's estimate out by some seven years. By subtracting Hansen's age from the date of writing, we arrive at the conclusion that Hansen's year of birth was 1636. Hansen claimed to have served the church for thirty-five years at the time of writing Spiegel des Levens. By doing the required mathematical subtraction, the date of writing, 1699, minus the thirty-five years of service, we arrive at the conclusion that Hansen was elected to the position of deacon and preacher in 1664 at the age of twenty-eight.

This calculation creates a minor discrepancy. According to the Church Records noted above, Hansen was elected deacon

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<sup>19</sup>Robert Friedman, Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries (Goshen, Indiana: The Mennonite Historical Society, 1949), 134.

<sup>20</sup>G. Hansen, Spiegel des Levens (Amsterdam: Barrent Visser, 1705), "Voreden"

and preacher in 1665. This one year difference concerning the time of election may be explained by the fact that Hansen was in his thirty-fifth year of ministry when he wrote Spiegel des Levens. According to the Church Records, he was elected deacon in March of 1665, and preacher in June that same year. Hansen's comment on his thirty-five years of ministry was made in December of 1699,<sup>21</sup> only three months prior to the thirty-fifth anniversary of his election as a deacon. It is not uncommon to give the full years of service when one is close to completing that year. If one permits this leeway, the discrepancy is removed without distortion of any facts, and we have Hansen's age data.

We may conclude that Hansen was born in 1636. He was elected deacon and preacher at the relatively young age of twenty-eight in 1665, and elected as elder in 1690, when he was fifty-four years of age. Hansen died in January, 1703, at the age of sixty-seven.

Elder Dunkel, Hansen's predecessor, had died on March 31, 1690 and so was unable to ordain his successor.<sup>22</sup> Following Dunkel's death, the Danzig Flemish Church was without an elder for four and a half months, until August 13, when Hansen was elected Elder. Due to the death of Dunkel, elder Niefeld, a guest Elder, most probably from one of the other Flemish

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Note in the Election List of 1683.

congregations, ordained him on November 24, 1690.<sup>23</sup>

Mannhardt made an appropriate assessment of Hansen when he said that the real spiritual leadership must have been given to Hansen during Dunkel's eldership, 1668-1690<sup>24</sup>, for it was Hansen who was the Flemish spokesman at the 1678 Interrogation. This is further supported by the fact that Hansen wrote the doctrinal definitions of the Flemish Church before his election as elder. Hansen's Ein Glaubens-Bericht Fuer die Jugend (1671), was used for instruction of baptismal candidates until 1768 when Hans von Steen issued a shorter statement and catechism.

It was the practice of the Mennonite churches to elect from their own congregation a leadership team of several ministers and deacons under the leadership of an elder (Aeltester)<sup>25</sup>. In 1554, at the Wismar conference of Mennonite elders in Mecklenburg, Germany, with Menno Simons present at the meeting, nine resolutions relating to church life and order were drawn up. Resolution nine stated that "no one is permitted to preach or teach unless he has been

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<sup>23</sup>Note added to election list of 1690, DCR. The year of ordination is clear but the month is almost illegible on the record. The few letters that can be deciphered suggest that the month was November.

<sup>24</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 73.

<sup>25</sup>See N. van der Zijpp, "Ministry (Dutch)," in ME, 1957 ed.; Cornelius Krahn, "Ministry," in ME, 1957, ed.; Cornelius Krahn, "The Office of an Elder in Anabaptist Mennonite History," MQR 30 (1956): 120-125; Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 106; Danzig Church Election Lists 1658-1807, DCR.

ordained for this purpose by the church or elder."<sup>26</sup>  
 According to Robert Friedman, the 1579 "Emden Protocol,"  
 asserted that,

Bishops and preachers (dienaren) are chosen by the congregations under God's guidance by majority vote with fasting and prayer unto the Lord. Such ministers are ordained by the laying on of hands of the elders.<sup>27</sup>

The Flemish procedure of having a leadership team, electing their leaders from their own membership, who served without remuneration, was in direct continuity with the practice of their earliest forefathers.<sup>28</sup> Not only were the leaders elected from the congregation, but elections followed an hierarchical order: deacon, preacher, and elder. No one was elected preacher without first being elected a deacon. To be eligible for the position of elder, one had to be a preacher. Deacons were not eligible for the highest position. All male members of the church were eligible to be elected as a deacon.

The practice of the Polish Flemish Mennonites was the general pattern of all the Mennonite groups until the latter

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<sup>26</sup>"Successio Anabaptistica, Dat is Babel der Wederdopers," Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica ed. S. Cramer & F. Pijper, ('S Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1910), 53.

<sup>27</sup>Robert Friedman, "The Office of Elder in Anabaptist-Mennonite History," MOR 30 (1956): 121.

<sup>28</sup>In Hartknoch, Kirchen-Historie, 857, he refers to the leadership pattern in both Frisians and Flemish churches, stating that the preachers and elders served without remuneration.

part of the seventeenth century.<sup>29</sup> A seminary was established by the Dutch Mennonites in Amsterdam in 1680. It closed its doors in 1706, only to open them again permanently in 1735. This move to trained leaders signalled a change in the appointment of church workers in the Netherlands. In Rotterdam the functions of elder were taken over by the preachers and as early as 1687, no new elders were elected. The change to hired and trained ministers resulted in shifting to one man leadership. Another change that resulted from this move was that a minister no longer held one charge for life. In the Netherlands, this shift took place during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The new pattern spread to the neighboring Mennonite churches in Germany. In Poland the election pattern was used in the rural churches until the demise of the Mennonites in 1945. In the urban centres such as Danzig and Elbing the change to hired ministers took place in the early nineteenth century. Jacob van der Smissen was the first hired minister in Danzig in 1826.

The various elections of Hansen followed the established order. First, on March 16, 1665, he was elected as deacon, then on June 29, of the same year, he was elected as preacher (Vermahner in German and Vermaaner in Dutch). Twenty-five

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<sup>29</sup>The brief discussion on leadership pattern is based on Krahn, "Office of Elder," MOR, 30 (1956): 120-127; Menno S. Harder, "Education, Mennonite," ME, 1956 ed.

years later in 1690, Hansen was elected Elder.<sup>30</sup> This procedure was followed again in 1678 when Christof Engman was elected deacon in February and minister in November. Engman was elected Hansen's co-elder in 1694.<sup>31</sup> Occasionally, the time lapse between election as deacon and minister was only a matter of minutes. In 1801 the Danzig Flemish Church needed to elect a preacher and a deacon. The procedure they followed was first to elect two deacons and then, at the same meeting, to elect a preacher from those two deacons.<sup>32</sup>

During the seventeenth century, the Danzig Flemish Church had a leadership team of an elder, two preachers, and three deacons. That made for a team of six men. Occasionally there were three preachers, as well as four deacons.<sup>33</sup> The leadership team was called der Lehrdienst, (the Teaching Team) or Der Ehrsame Dienst, (The Honorable Service).<sup>34</sup> Most of the men elected to office had limited education and no formal

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<sup>30</sup>Christian Neff and N. van der Zijpp, "Hansen," ME, 1956 ed. See for example the election of Jochum Rutenberg as deacon in 1633 and preacher in 1640, DCR.

<sup>31</sup>Ministerial lists for 1678 and 1694, DCR. The same procedure is noted in the case of the election of Gert Classen as deacon 1606, preacher in 1611, elder in 1621. He died in 1639. The name is spelled Classen and Claessen. Ministerial lists for 1606, 1611 and 1636, DCR.

<sup>32</sup>Election record for 1801, DCR.

<sup>33</sup>Ministerial Election Records show three preachers for the following years: 1649, 1651, 1661-68. Four deacons were indicated for the following years: 1665, 1678, while 1649 listed only two deacons.

<sup>34</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 106; Friedman, "Office of Elder," MQR, 30 (1956), 121-124.

pastoral training, except the training they received by serving with senior, more experienced, preachers and elders. Once elected to any of the leadership offices, they served the church in one of the three offices for the rest of their life.<sup>35</sup> Exceptions to a life-time term of service were removal from office due to moral failure or heresy and also for reasons of ill health. Peter Fenske, who was elected as deacon in 1655, was removed from his office in 1657.<sup>36</sup> No reason is given for the removal, but because terms of office were for life, one may assume some difficulty arose that resulted in such action.

Because the ministers and elders were not remunerated, the leaders continued to be active in their secular vocations in addition to serving the church.<sup>37</sup> Georg Hansen took on his leadership roles within this context, applying his many abilities as time and opportunity provided, meanwhile earning

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<sup>35</sup>The election lists clearly show that an elder was replaced only upon his death, and then at times not immediately as was the case of Hansen. The lists show the same for the deacons and preachers. Only after one of them had died was a new one elected, unless they felt they needed additional help. See ministerial election lists, DCR.

<sup>36</sup>Ministerial Election Lists for 1655, 1657, DCR.

<sup>37</sup>For the Danzig Flemish church this practice continued until 1826, when the Flemish church in Danzig hired a theologically trained preacher in the person of Jacob van der Smissen. In the rural churches the practice of unsalaried untrained ministerial continued and was still in practiced in 1945. See Mannhardt, Danziger MennonitenGemeinde, 157-158; Krahn, "Ministry", ME, 1959 ed.; Friedman, "Office of Elder," 124.

his livelihood as a shoemaker.<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately, we do not know whether Georg Hansen was married or if he had any children. We have no information about his parental lineage, whether he was from an Anabaptist family who migrated from the Netherlands, or whether he or his family joined the Mennonites once they were in Poland.

Ethnic identity and group maintenance is affected by the leadership given to the particular group. Leaders develop and propagate the ideology as well as seek to maintain boundary lines. It does not follow that the group will always practice what they are taught, but there will be an inner impetus to remember what their group stands for. Hansen was a leader who worked hard to maintain boundaries. The process of electing leaders in the church in Poland maintained the pattern developed in the Netherlands. Hansen supported and followed the practice which, in turn, worked toward maintenance of ethnic identity.

Such lay leadership pattern was very different from the way the Lutherans and Roman Catholics handled their training and appointment of church leaders. In the Catholic Church, leaders were trained and then appointed by the hierarchy. In the Lutheran church, the congregation had some say as to who would become their pastor, but he was first trained in the accepted schools and then appointed. The Mennonite ordering of church life with lay leadership was democratic in principle

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<sup>38</sup>Hartknoch, Preussische Kirchen-Historie, 857.



and spirit. All male members, meaning all baptized males, had the right to cast their ballot; in addition, all male members were candidates for the office of deacon.<sup>39</sup> There was no theology of hierarchical power, but rather a concept of equality pervaded. The elected officials were men from among the Gemeinshaft, appointed to do specific functions. Practically, the members tended to look to the leadership as being in positions of authority. The Lehrdienst (Teaching Team) guided the church, but all major decisions were made at meetings of the male members. In comparison to the autocratic rule of kings, nobles, and Catholic Church, the Mennonite democratic pattern was much ahead of its time. It was a radical contrast to the experience of the German peasants, whose request to have a say on who should be their pastor was declined.<sup>40</sup> The Mennonites used this democratic principle right from the inception of their church. This made the Mennonites unique in their social environment, threatening both king and bishop in their absolutist approach to ordering the affairs of kingdom and church. This helped to set boundaries for the Mennonites, not only by inclusion but also through antagonism of those who feared and rejected such democratic principles. The democratic way of running the

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<sup>39</sup>Female suffrage had not yet arrived, and from that perspective the pattern was less than democratic.

<sup>40</sup>"The Twelve Articles, 27 February-1 March 1525," in The German Peasant War of 1515, ed. Janos Bok (London: Frank Cass, 1976), 13-25.

church made every male member responsible for decisions and thereby functioned as a factor in maintaining group identity.

Hansen's concern to maintain boundaries for the Flemish was evidenced by his concern for the young people particularly susceptible to external cultural influence. Two of his writings are written with a concern that the young people would better understand the faith and consequently follow it. Following the teaching of the church, according to Hansen's exposition, would work itself out in maintenance of identity. Hansen's concern was that the young people would keep themselves separated from the world.

Hansen's 1671 Glaubens-Bericht fuer die Jugend, was written in response to the language shift from Dutch to German. Since the young were more knowledgable in the German than the Dutch, he attempted to meet that need. In the "Introduction" to his Glaubens-Bericht he explains,

I have heard many complaints that we have many who have written about our faith in the Dutch. Why do we not have something in German since our young people read German better than Dutch? It is this that has prompted me, inspite of my limited gifts, to write a short statement in German.<sup>41</sup>

His 1690 Confession was written to help clarify to young people what the church believed. This attempt at influencing young minds was an integral part of seeking to perpetuate and maintain Mennonite identity. In this Hansen followed an effective method as is indicated by Charles Erasmus, anthro-

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<sup>41</sup>Georg Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, (1671), 3-4. Translation by the author.

pologist from the University of California in Santa Barbara, when he found in his studies of Hutterites, that the concern for teaching the young was an important factor in maintaining group boundaries and identity for the Hutterites.<sup>42</sup>

His claim of having limited gifts and abilities indicate a man of humility.<sup>43</sup> In his other writings, one senses a similar attitude. It is not completely clear whether this was genuine humility, a way of speaking, or whether it was a statement betraying a poor self image. It appears the last option would be ruled out by the fact that he was not afraid to speak up for the faith. His response to Erforscher der Wahrheit was not necessary nor requested, but was written because he believed it important to answer the questions that had arisen about Mennonite beliefs. His statement of his limited gifts is an understatement.

To be able to present what was considered heretical doctrine in such a way that charges of heresy would be dropped was no small achievement. Hansen accomplished this at the 1678 Interrogation.<sup>44</sup> Such achievement bespeaks a person who was committed to his beliefs, but more than that, it manifests a keen mind and a man of courage. The writings of Hansen

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<sup>42</sup>Charles Erasmus, "Anarchy, Enclavement, and Syntropy in Intentional and Traditional Communities," in Persistent Peoples: Cultural Enclaves in Perspective, ed. George P. Castile & Gilbert Kushner (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), 196.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>"Interrogt Trif," MS 694.

reveal a man who knew his Bible well, was widely read and had an ability to express himself.<sup>45</sup> First of all, he cited Biblical references and quoted the Scripture prolifically in the Mennonite manner. The many Biblical references he cited and quoted reveal a profound familiarity with the Bible. It also indicated a high view of the authority of the Bible. He assumed that if there was Biblical proof for his statement the argument was settled. This emphasis on the Bible is quantitatively illustrated by the fact that a count of Biblical references cited in Spiegel des Levens, and Glaubens Bericht Fuer die Jugend, shows an average of just over ten references per page in the former work and just over five references per page in the latter.<sup>46</sup>

Hansen's breadth of knowledge is indicated by the number and variety of authors he quoted or referred to. Quite naturally he knew the writings of Menno Simons and quoted him as an authority when Hansen wrote his Antwoort zum Erforscher. But included among the authors and writings he referred to were: translations of the Bible by Luther, the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed;<sup>47</sup> the conclusions of the Church

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<sup>45</sup>See Appendix XVI for a list of books he knew were familiar to him. Hansen, Antwoort, 125-128.

<sup>46</sup>A random count was conducted by randomly opening the books at 6 pages and counting the number of references referred to or quoted.

<sup>47</sup>Hansen, Antwoort, 48.

Council in Carthage in 260;<sup>48</sup> John Eck;<sup>49</sup> Augustine;<sup>50</sup> Philip Melanchthon;<sup>51</sup> Thielman J. van Braght;<sup>52</sup> and Dirck Philips.<sup>53</sup>

Hansen, a shoemaker, fits the stereotype of that profession in the early period of Modern European History. He comes across as a learned, articulate and confident craftsman. Hobsbawm has shown that many of the radical leaders that brought about social change whether through revolution or peaceful means were craftsman.<sup>54</sup> He says,

. . . the political activities of urban journeymen and skilled pre-industrial workers are fairly well known; or to be more exact, the fact that they were politically extremely active and conscious is familiar to everyone. Who says cobbler says Radical, and much the same went for many of the other small crafts and their journeymen.<sup>55</sup>

Hansen reflected well this tradition in the sense of being articulate and an active leader though not in the sense of being a revolutionary. Some of Hansen's knowledge and insightfulness may be ascribed to his natural ability and initiative, but where did he get his learning? The answer to

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>54</sup>Eric J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels (Manchester: University Press, 1959), 108-125.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 109.

Hansen's learning is rooted in the educational activity of the Mennonites. But the educational activity does not only speak to Hansen's knowledge, it also speaks to the whole question of ethnic identity and group maintenance. Among Mennonites indoctrination or teaching of the young played an important role in retaining and perpetuating ethnic identity.<sup>56</sup> The Mennonites had a strong tradition in education and this was an important factor in retaining group identity and theological cohesiveness. Hansen used the educational process to clarify his position as well as defend it despite the threatening consequences should he not be taken seriously.

Primary sources are limited in the area of schooling among the Mennonites. While most of the evidence is indirect there is enough of it to form an image of its function in the Mennonite community. Menno Simons had been trained for the priesthood, that is, he was as well trained as many in the state church. His attitude toward education was well stated in his 1554, "Incarnation of Our Lord." Having been charged with despising learning he responded,

Learnedness and proficiency in languages I have never disdained, but have honored and coveted them from my youth; although I have, alas, never attained to them. Praise God, I am not so bereft of my sense that should disdain and despise the knowledge of languages whereby the precious Word of divine grace has come to us. I could wish that I and all pious hearts were at home in them if only we would employ them in genuine humility and

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<sup>56</sup>Erasmus, "Intentional and Traditional Communities," 192-211.

to the glory of our God and the service of our fellows.<sup>57</sup>

This attitude towards learning affected Menno's work and encouragement of schooling. In his, "The Nurture of Children," written in 1557, he advised parents that they should keep their children from "good-for-nothing children," and instead, "Direct them to reading and writing. Teach them to spin and other handicrafts suitable, useful, and proper to their years and persons."<sup>58</sup> Thus, while Anabaptism was in its early stages of development, Menno made a strong statement in favour of schooling.

Herbert Wiebe suggests that for Mennonites school and church were tied together.<sup>59</sup> Teachers were involved in the work of the church, such as reading the Scriptures and occasionally preaching. School involved both religious instruction as well as learning to read and write. Mennonites ran their own private village school, or cooperated with the Lutherans if they were in the minority. The finances were prorated on the basis of the amount of land the villagers owned.

In the upper Vistula Delta, schools were operating in the sixteenth century in Montau and Great Lubin. In Ober- and Niedergruppe, the privilege of running their own school was

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<sup>57</sup>Simons, Complete Writings, 790.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 951-952.

<sup>59</sup>Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 10. The discussion about school follows Wiebe, 10-13.

written into the Mennonite rent contracts of 1694. This suggests that the Mennonites had their own schools and were concerned they might lose them.<sup>60</sup>

Instruction was given primarily in winter, when it was less busy on the farm. The teachers, like the ministers, had a vocation such as tailor or cobbler alongside that of teaching, since school was taught only for about half of the year. Payment for teaching included both money, as well as gifts in kind.

Education for the Mennonites was a logical development from their practice of believer's baptism. This required the baptismal candidate to study the catechism, and the Bible in order to understand his or her faith. Baptismal candidates were required to recite their catechism as well as be able to express their faith. Hansen's Glaubens-Bericht, is a clear indication that the young people were able to read and, by 1670, in both Dutch and German. Since the young were more fluent in reading German, he wrote to meet that need. This could only happen if there was teaching in this area. Since both men and women had to make a public confession of their faith, girls received training as well. That both men and women could read is assumed by Hansen, both in his introduction when he says the young people read German better than the Dutch, and in his exhortations in his writings for the reader

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 12.



to read the Scripture references cited.<sup>61</sup>

That Mennonite women of the sixteenth century could read is illustrated by Menno's correspondence to a widow in 1549, which was an appeal to Leonard Bouwen's wife in 1553, and a letter of comfort to the wife, Ein Edes, in 1557.<sup>62</sup>

In 1719, Elder Hendrik Berents Hulshoff, from the Groeninger Alten Falminger, and his brother Arent, visited the Flemish churches in Prussia.<sup>63</sup> They spent the month of July in the Schwetz-Neuenburger Niederung area, where Hulshoff was warmly welcomed and asked to preach. While in Poland, he baptized thirty-one persons, conducted a ministerial election, helped clear up a discipline problem and conducted a Communion and foot-washing service. But, more importantly, he had brought with him a large basketful of books to be distributed among the poor, of the Flemish and other Mennonite groups. A letter of thanks from the Waterlaender church in Schoensee indicates that despite the fact that the Flemish and Frisians considered themselves distinct from each other, that separation was not always adhered to.<sup>64</sup> Included in the shipment of books were Bibles, the Martyrs' Mirror, song books, and writings by Dirk Philips and Menno Simons. This is an

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<sup>61</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 1-2, 160.

<sup>62</sup>Simons, Complete Writings, 1028-1029, 1038-1040, 1052-1054.

<sup>63</sup>Inventaris, A-1574, A-1581. The discussion about Hulshoff and Alle Dirks is based on these letters.

<sup>64</sup>Inventaris, C-739.

indication that the Polish Flemish could read and that they required their baptismal candidates to be able to read. Alle Dirks, who had been responsible for gathering the books for Hulshoff, shipped a second order of books in 1726, consisting of two hundred New Testaments and some songbooks.

In an abstraction of names of Mennonite boys who attended the Elbing Gymnasium from 1600-1784, we find some fifty-five names that were clearly identified as Mennonite.<sup>65</sup> Of these fifty-five names, there were twenty-two boys listed for the seventeenth century, the earliest one in 1600. A few of the ages were noted, the youngest was six years old. They came from such places as Elbing, Danzig, and Batavus. At least three were from the Netherlands. The boys attending the Gymnasium ranged in age from seven through twelve, with an occasional thirteen year old.

Attending the Gymnasium exposed the boys to non-Mennonite culture. Despite this exposure, there is no sense of this experience leading the Mennonite church towards greater assimilation and acculturation. Partly this was due to the youthfulness of the boys and their relatively small number. It is also possible that evidence that would indicate greater impact, at least in individuals, may be lost. Whatever the case, we see here an interest in education. Such interest was also manifest by sending sons to the Netherlands for what

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<sup>65</sup>Kurt Kauenhoven, "Mennonitensoehne auf dem Gymnasium in Elbing, 1600-1784," MGB, n.f. 18 (1961): 17-19.

was considered a superior education.<sup>66</sup> Education, instead of undermining ethnic cohesiveness and group identity, was used to build and maintain it. Certainly, Hansen's knowledge was used towards this end, as a cursory reading of his writings quickly indicates.

Strong leadership by Hansen, the economic opposition from the guilds, an educational program, insistence on endogamous marriages,<sup>67</sup> a theology of separation from the world, religious opposition from a rejuvenated Catholicism, and the effects of war and flood disasters all worked in maintaining boundaries for the Mennonites. The Mennonites were a people who were separate, yet everyone was aware of their presence and their contribution to the welfare of society. The charge of the guilds that the non-citizen Mennonites were stealing the bread from the guildsmen children is adequate proof, even if overstated, of the economic competition from the Mennonites. It must be noted that Mennonites were not the only ones considered as outsiders or undesirables. Jews and other sects, such as the Socinians, were given similar treatment.<sup>68</sup>

The Mennonites built hospitals and homes for their old people, helped their neighbors including those that were not

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<sup>66</sup>Postma, Niederlaendische Erbe, 117.

<sup>67</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 147-155.

<sup>68</sup>Paul Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig bis 1626 (Danzig: Neudruck Ausgabe, 1918-24), 2:435-236.

Mennonite, and helped beyond the call of duty when the dykes broke.<sup>69</sup> The activities of the Mennonites were not only altruistic, they also knew how to protect themselves and did so whether by money payments or hiring substitutes to do their military service. Hansen more than once was the channel of the gratuity or payment. One can argue that, had Poland given greater freedom of religion and worked cooperatively in trade and agriculture, it could have had greater benefit from the the Mennonites.<sup>70</sup>

This separateness, whether voluntary or enforced, did not necessarily mean backwardness. The Mennonites were known for their successful farming as well as their well run and well kept farms. As one writer suggests, it was obvious which was a Mennonite farm and which was a farm owned by a non-Mennonite farmer.<sup>71</sup>

The first records of births, deaths, baptisms, marriages and ministerial elections in the Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church were kept by Hansen.<sup>72</sup> A perusal of the existing

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<sup>69</sup>Horst Penner, "West Prussian Mennonites Through Four Centuries," MOR 23 (Oct. 1949), 241; Wiebe, Siedlungswerk, 6, 11-13.

<sup>70</sup>The success of the Mennonites in Prussia, after the partition in Poland, once they had come to terms with the German Prussian government, is seen in their widespread contributions in agriculture and community affairs. See Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 201.

<sup>71</sup>Johann Driedger "Farming among the Mennonites in West and East Prussia, 1534-1945," MOR 31 (1957) 17-19.

<sup>72</sup>Unruh, Niederlaendische Hintergruende, 101.

Danzig Church records show that there were a total of two hundred and forty-three persons baptized during Hansen's eldership. This averages out to almost seventeen per year, which compares to an average of sixteen per year from 1667, the first available records, to 1690, the year Hansen was ordained elder.

Another dimension of Hansen's leadership and theology which played a deciding factor in keeping the Flemish separate, was his position on church discipline, in particular, the ban. Westelraet, an elderly man and close friend of Hansen, had asked Hansen about the rightfulness and advisability of strict administration of the ban. On January 2, 1667, Hansen responded to Westelraet with a strong defence of the strict use of the ban.<sup>73</sup> Hansen argued that a banned person should not be admitted into the preaching service. In his lengthy defence, Hansen cited the old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament, mustering all the Biblical authority he could find in defence of his position. In part, Hansen was motivated out of a concern for the purity of the church. This concern for purity, "eine Gemeinde ohne Flecken oder Runzel" (a church without spot or wrinkle), had the effect of setting boundaries for the Flemish Church and, as a result, reinforced its separateness and identity.

Church discipline was a significant part of Anabaptist-Mennonite theology from its early beginnings. The second

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<sup>73</sup>Hansen's Letter to Westelraet.

article of the 1527 Schleithem Confession outlines the procedure to be used in dealing with a member who is living in sin.<sup>74</sup> The 1632 Dortrecht Confession of Faith discusses the ban in Articles VI and VII.<sup>75</sup> Menno Simons and Dirk Philips wrote about church discipline as well.<sup>76</sup> Hansen in his own writings discussed the issue of how to deal with sin in the church.<sup>77</sup> The concept of a pure church, which underlies this teaching on church discipline, was based on such Biblical references as Matthew 18:15-20 as well a logical outgrowth of the practice of adult believer's baptism and church membership. Since a person could only become a member when he or she was in the late teens or early twenties, membership was a volitional decision of that person including a commitment to a life of discipleship, that is, following the teachings of the Bible and the Church. Failure to comply with the expected standards resulted in some form of church discipline ranging from an admonition to excommunication. Included in excommunication was the practice of shunning, which meant that the

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<sup>74</sup>"Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles," trans. J. C. Wenger in J. C. Wenger, Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1949), 208-209.

<sup>75</sup>"Third Confession," in Thielman J. van Braght, The Bloody Theater of Martyrs Mirror of the Defenceless Christians trans. Joseph F. Sohm (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 11th ed. 1977), 43.

<sup>76</sup>Simons, Complete Writings, 407-418, 455-486; Philips, Enchiridion, 223-241.

<sup>77</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 174-232.

church members ostracized the excommunicated member until he recanted of his wrong doing and was restored to membership.

A problem that grows out of the pure church concept is the question, which misdemeanors do you punish and what kind of punishment do you administer. This is further complicated by the problem of consistency in application. As a result, application of this teaching entailed considerable risk for disunity within the church if the punished members felt the discipline was unfairly administered. Hansen manifested his conservative theology when he excommunicated the portrait painter Enoch Seeman.

Portrait painting was an ethical issue for Hansen and the Flemish, because for them it violated the second commandment of the decalogue, which says,

You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.<sup>78</sup>

Hansen interpreted the commandment as forbidding the painting of portraits but not necessarily other works of art such as landscape paintings. He also did not rule out the painting of signs that shopkeepers painted and hung outside their places of business advertising their wares. It is difficult to determine why this distinction was made since the commandment

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<sup>78</sup>Ex. 20:4 RSV.

does not seem to make that distinction. It would appear that the commandment is concerned about making images for purposes of worship rather than being concerned about artistic representations. One may conjecture that one of the reasons Hansen took this approach was that man was created in the image of God and so he felt that by painting portraits the painter was making an image of God.

Another reason why Hansen took such a strong position against portrait painting was possibly due to the fact that he interpreted it as an impingement and encroachment of the surrounding culture into the Flemish Church. There is a long negative tradition within the Mennonite Church towards art, painting portraits as well as taking photographs.<sup>79</sup> Harold S. Bender in his article "Art" indicates that the Old Flemish Church in the Netherlands excommunicated members for hanging oil paintings and other decorations on their walls as well as for "the foolishness of having themselves painted".<sup>80</sup> Among the Mennonites this resistance to art has continued to the twentieth century, though in a large segment of the Mennonite family of churches this has changed to acceptance.<sup>81</sup>

This negative attitude, according to Bender, is rooted in the second commandment but also in the theology of noncon-

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<sup>79</sup>Christian Neff, "Bildende Kunst," in ML 1913 ed.; Harold S. Bender, "Nonconformity," in ME 1957 ed.

<sup>80</sup>Harold S. Bender, "Art," in ME 195 ed.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.



formity. The concept of nonconformity is not unique to Anabaptists or Mennonites. Christian history reveals many attempts at taking discipleship, that is following Jesus' example, seriously, which involved coming to grips with the problem of the relation of the Christian to the world, to society, and to culture. This is seen in the early church, in the monastic solution to worldliness in the medieval church, the Waldenses, the Anabaptists and Mennonites during the Reformation, as well as the pietistic movements including the Moravians and Wesleyans.<sup>82</sup> In Hindu and Buddhist monasticism we see similar attempts at resisting what is considered negative aspects of culture.<sup>83</sup> Hansen therefore struggled with the question of Seeman not only from the theological aspect of image worship but also from the perspective of relating to contemporary culture. With his conservative orientation and his concern to maintain separation from the world, he resisted the encroachment of culture in the form of portrait painting. As one looks at the excommunication by Hansen of Seeman this context must be kept in mind for it

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<sup>82</sup>G. J. Heering, The Fall of Christianity, trans. J. W. Thompson (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1930), 34-64; Derwas J. Chitty, The Desert City (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1966), 1-46; "The Sayings of the Fathers," "The Conferences of Cassian," and "The Rule of Saint Benedict," in Western Asceticism ed. & trans. Owen Chadwick (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958); Bender, "Nonconformity," in ME 1957 ed.; Cecil John Cadoux, The Early Church and the World (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1925), 297-354.

<sup>83</sup>A. S. Geden, "Monasticism" (Buddhist), and "Monasticism" (Hindu) in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics 1981 ed.

helps to better understand the actions Hansen took in relation to Seeman.

There is reference to a writing by Enoch Seeman, Offenbarung und Bestrafung des Gergen Hansens Thorheit.<sup>84</sup> In this treatise, Seeman responded to his excommunication by Hansen. Seeman, an artist, after moving around somewhat, came to Danzig where he married Susanna Ordonn. On the basis of his work he was made a "free master", and permitted, without guild membership, to paint portraits, but was not permitted to keep apprentices. From 1683 to 1698, he served as City Painter. The church opposed the painting of portraits, probably on the basis of the first commandment, and so forbade him to engage in such work. He was encouraged by Hansen to paint landscapes instead. Seeman responded by suggesting that the signs of the various Mennonite shops were also out of order and should be taken down. The signs were not removed and Seeman received complaints from the landscape painting guild. Consequently, he went back to painting portraits.

Hansen would not tolerate this and so put Seeman under the ban in 1697. Seeman felt this was unjustified and responded with a lengthy defence of himself and condemnation of Hansen. This was to no avail, for the congregation rallied behind their elder and Seeman was not reinstated. Subsequently, Seeman moved to Warsaw in 1698, pursuing his artistic work

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<sup>84</sup>Franz Harder, "Seeman, Enoch, Sr.", ME, 1959 ed. To date all attempts at locating the book have been unsuccessful.

in that city until 1704, when he moved to London where he died, date unknown. Seeman fathered seven children, four of whom are named in various publications. Only two are mentioned in the church books of Danzig.<sup>85</sup>

This incident does suggest that Hansen was a strong leader. The issue over which Seeman was excommunicated was no longer an issue fifty years later. This is seen in that, by mid-eighteenth century, we find a pastel drawing of the elder of this same church, Hans von Steen.<sup>86</sup> One is left to wonder whether the support for Hansen's action was as unanimous as has been suggested. If a painting of an elder could be made just fifty years later, one could surmise that portraits were accepted by the common people long before the elders would allow a portrait of themselves to be painted. This further implies that Seeman's ban came just prior to a shift in attitude towards portrait painting.

This treatment of Seeman seems harsh. There is, however, another side to Hansen. In his Bericht fuer die Jugend, one senses a soft and loving tone. Again and again the phrase, Ach meine lieben Kinder, or similar phrases are repeated as he appeals to the young people to respond to the teaching of the Bible. The tone is that of a concerned parent rather than that of a censorious critical parent. This same spirit comes through in his Fundamentbuch, where he uses similar terms of

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 79.

endearment.<sup>87</sup>

Hansen evidenced strong leadership in church discipline and he gave equally effective leadership in maintaining relations with those ruling the Mennonites whether that was king, town council, or mayor. The Mennonites paid for their privileges. Haxberg's extortion has been noted above. The monies paid to state officials for privileges granted bordered on being extortion money as well. At the Interrogation of 1678, a sum of money was requested by the authorities. Mannhardt, referring to a lost source written by Hansen, quotes Hansen concerning this payment:

As a result of the examination we were fully exonerated from all suspicion. However it cost a large sum of money again. It was hard to raise the amount but God helped us to do this.<sup>88</sup>

The Mennonites were granted privileges but always for a price. A question that is prompted by this statement is whether the Mennonites ever struggled with the ethics of such payments? That they did not appreciate such levies is noted from the tone of the statement, but one does not sense a question of the rightness of the issue. On the contrary, it appears that Mennonites felt it was justifiable to make a money payment in lieu of personal involvement in matters such as military participation or in maintaining their privileges. Certainly Hansen appears to have had no ethical difficulties.

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<sup>87</sup>For example see Hansen, Fundamentbuch, 119, 175, 186.

<sup>88</sup>Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 78.

He did not appreciate having to make the payment but resigned himself to the fact that it would have to be done just as they had paid on previous occasions.

Hansen, though a strong leader even before he was in the elder's position, was not an isolated figure. He worked in close harmony with his fellow preachers, deacons and elder. Even the short statement of faith that he wrote for the Interrogation in 1678 was not his own production alone. In the concluding paragraph, Hansen says,

The preceding Confession of Faith was signed by Wilhelm Dunkel and Gergen Hanssen and sealed by the grace of the bishop upon the kings command given over, in the year of our Lord, January 20, 1678.<sup>89</sup>

This spirit of working together is in harmony with the concept of a communal leadership. The Danzig Flemish church had several preachers and deacons in addition to their elder. This is also in harmony with the brotherhood concept that was an undergirding principle of the Mennonites. It may also be assumed that with a major undertaking, such as answering before the bishop and the king, any spokesperson would look for help and support for developing such a statement. The life of the church was at stake and so Hansen would want to be sure to reflect what the church believed. A further consideration is the fact that Hansen was not the elder but was chosen to be the spokesman for the church in lieu of the elder. With appropriate humility, Hansen made sure the elder

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<sup>89</sup>Hansen, Fundamentbuch, 30.

Dunkel was in agreement with what he was going to say.

It was Hansen's leadership that helped the Danzig Mennonite Flemish Church through the crises years of the latter half of the seventeenth century. He left an influence, not only in his personal presence and action, but also through his writings. His Glaubens-Bericht served as the book of instruction in the faith for almost a hundred years, and thus was formative in the shaping of the theology of the Polish Flemish Church. His influence continued through his writings which were taken along to Russia and North America.

Hansen became a significant link in the continuity process among the Mennonites because of his ability to articulate the faith of the Flemish both in spoken and written word. He was a spokesman for maintaining the traditions and resisted change as illustrated by the Seeman situation.

## CHAPTER 6

### GEORG HANSEN; OPPOSITION AND CONTINUITY

Georg Hansen wrote his treatises as tracts for the times. His first work entitled, Ein Glaubens-Bericht fuer die Jugend,<sup>1</sup> was written in 1671. Hansen's Confession oder kurzes, einfaltiges Glaubensbekenntniss der Mennoniten in Preussen, die man die"Clerken" nennt, im Jahre Christe 1678<sup>2</sup> was produced for the January 20, 1678 interrogation by Bishop Sarnowski. Both Elder Dunkel and Hansen signed this statement, indicating that it reflected the teaching of the Flemish Danzig Mennonite Church.<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Stanislau Sarnowski submitted forty-eight questions to the Flemish church. In consultation with Elder Dunkel, Hansen worked out the answers. The answers, published under the title, Interrogt Trif Mannonisten soman Clarchen nennet Beantwortet von Georgen Hansen Ihren Vermahner 20 Jan.

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<sup>1</sup>Georg Hansen, Ein Glaubens-Bericht Fuer die Jugend (Danzig: n.p., 1671), 1-318.

<sup>2</sup>Georg Hansen, Confession oder kurzes, einfaltiges Glaubensbekenntniss der Mennoniten in Preussen, die man die "Clerken" nennt, im Jahre Christe 1678, (Danzig: Handwritten, 1678), 497-513. MS 694, Biblioteka Gdanska.

<sup>3</sup>Hansen, Fundamentbuch, 30.

in 1678,<sup>4</sup> were submitted to Bishop Sarnowski at his residence on January 20, 1678. At the conclusion of these questions and answers, Hansen said that these were submitted to the Bishop so that he could properly evaluate the basis of the Mennonite church service.<sup>5</sup> Shortly after the meeting with the Bishop, on request of those who had not been able to be present at the Interrogation, Hansen published an expanded version of the answers. The book containing these expanded answers was entitled, Erklaerungen der Antworten, die den 20. Januar des Jahres 1687 auf Fragestuecke in der oeffentlichen bischoeflichen Residenz-Sitzung zu Danzig durch mich gethan, und allen meinen lieben Mitgenossen zur Erbauung vorgest-  
ellt.<sup>6</sup> These three writings, Confession, Antwort, and Erklaerungen der Antworten, though originally written in German, were printed in one volume, in Dutch, in 1696, in what was known in its shortened title, Fundamentboek, or, in

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<sup>4</sup>Georg Hansen, Interrogt Trif Mannonisten soman Clarchen nennet Beantwortet von Georgen Hansen Ihren Vermahner 20 Jan. in 1678, MS 694, Biblioteka Gedanska, 373-374.

<sup>5</sup>Georg Hansen, "Antwort der Mennoniten," in Fundament Buch der Christlichen Lehre welche unter den Mennoniten in Preussen (die man zu Danzig "Clerken" nennt) gelehrt wird, trans. Isaak Peters (Elkhart: Mennonitisches Verlagsanstalt, 1893), 46.

<sup>6</sup>Georg Hansen, Erklaerungen der Antworten , die den 20. Januar des Jahres 1678 auf Fragestuecke in der oeffentlichen bischoeflichen Residenz-Sitzung zu Danzig durch mich gethan, und allen meinen lieben Mitgenossen zur Erbauung vorgestellt in Fundamentbuch, 50-333.



German, Fundamentbuch.<sup>7</sup>

In 1680, a booklet was published entitled, Erforscher Der Wahrheit.<sup>8</sup> The booklet consisted of twelve queries concerning issues of doctrine. Hansen decided to respond to those queries and consequently wrote, Einfaeltige Antwoort der Mennonisten die man Clerchen nent auff den Erforscher der Wahrheit.<sup>9</sup> The date of Hansen's Antwoort is not known. At the end of the copy used for this research is a note stating that "A' 1706, den 10 Mertz gecopiert in Schottland vor Dantzig".<sup>10</sup> The initials of the copiest are J.D.V., Isaac de Veer.<sup>11</sup> According to the Danzig ministerial election records and lists of the Flemish Church, an Isaac de Veer was elected deacon in February, 1703. In March of that same year he was

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Friedman, Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries (Goshen: The Mennonite Historical Society, 1949), 132. H. G. Mannhardt, Die Danziger Mennoniten Gemeinde: Ihre Entstehung und ihre Geschichte von 1596-1919 (Danzig: Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 1919), 77-78. For full title of Fundamentbuch see note 5 above.

<sup>8</sup>Erforscher der Wahrheit (n.p., 1680), 1-16.

<sup>9</sup>Georg Hansen, Einfaeltige Antwoort: Der Mennonisten die man Clerchen nent auff den Erforscher der Wahrheit (Danzig, n.p., 1706), 17-136. The queries of the Erforscher and Hansen's answers were published in one volume of one hundred and thirty-six pages. The date when these two were published together is not known. The date given for the publication of Hansen's response is 1706 three years after his decease, while the date for the Erforscher's publication is 1680.

<sup>10</sup>Hansen, Antwoort, 136.

<sup>11</sup>The library card in the Rare Book Collection in Goshen College Mennonite Historical Library, identifies the copier as Isaac de Veer as well.

elected as preacher and as elder in 1726. He died in 1745.<sup>12</sup> It is most probable that it was this de Veer who did the copying.

The other document, with which Hansen's name is connected, is a statement of faith and a catechism for older youth entitled, Confession, oder Kurtzer und einfaeltiger Glaubens-Bericht der alten flaemischen Tauff-Gesinnten Gemeinden in Preussen: In Fragen und Antworten verfasst, der erwachsene Jugend zum noetigen Unterricht.<sup>13</sup> This Confession was published with a catechism, two prefaces, selections from von Bracht's Martyr's Mirror, several prayers and Scripture "house-tables" relating to domestic life.<sup>14</sup> The Confession claimed to be a hundred years old, and copied from the original, which had been written in Prussia, then sent to the Netherlands. It had been signed by four elders in Amsterdam, four elders in Prussia and a total of seventy ministers.

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<sup>12</sup>Ministerial Lists 1726-1743, DCR. Gustav Reimer "De Veer," in ME, 1955, incorrectly gives the date for Isaac de Veer's death and termination of office as 1739. The 1743 Ministerial list in DCR clearly includes him as elder and then adds the note that he died in 1745.

<sup>13</sup>Confession, oder Kurtzer und einfaeltiger Glaubens-Bericht der alten flaemischen Tauff-Gesinnten Gemeinden in Preussen: In Fragen und Antworten verfasst, der erwachsene Jugend zum noetigen Unterricht (Danzig: n.p., 1768). Since the book has four distinct sections and there are two page numbering systems this book will be referred as follows, Confession, Vor-Rede 1; Confession, Vor-Rede 2; Confession, Vorbericht; and Confession. The last designation refers to the section that includes the Statement of Faith, quotations from the Martyrs Mirror, selected prayers and domestic "house-tables".

<sup>14</sup>Confession, Title page.

These signatories had signed the Confession as a basis for a church union in 1743.<sup>15</sup> A copy was needed in Danzig, and so the original was ordered from Amsterdam; a copy was made and then the original was not returned, but stored in Danzig.<sup>16</sup>

Since this thesis examines the question of the continuity of Hansen's teaching with that of Dutch Anabaptism, it is necessary to determine whether the 1768 Confession is Hansen's. If it is Hansen's it needs to be used for comparative purposes: both in comparing it with Hansen's Statements of the seventeenth century, as well as with the thinking of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. Further, if it is his, is it a copy of the 1678 Statement or is it a copy of a Confession written by Hansen but has since been lost. If this Confession dates back to Hansen's 1678 Statement, its longevity serves as an indicator of Hansen's quality as a leader and thinker, as well as indicating the impact he left on the faith of the Polish Mennonites. In particular, this would highlight the influence of the Flemish since Hansen was their leader. That he was not the author of the whole book is obvious, for it is clearly stated that the rest of the book was written by someone else.<sup>17</sup>

This 1768 Confession has nineteen articles, while the one found in the Fundamentbuch, as well as the one submitted to Bishop Sarnowski, which are clearly Hansen's, have only eigh-

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<sup>15</sup>Confession, Vor-Rede 2, 39.

<sup>16</sup>Confession, 30.

<sup>17</sup>Confession, Vor-Rede 2, 34.

teen.<sup>18</sup> The additional article is on the Incarnation. Reference is made to a book which contains the published Confession and identifies the writer as H. von Danzig.<sup>19</sup>

It seems from the rest of the discussion in the "Vor-Rede" that the H. refers to Georg Hansen. This would be consistent with the way he signed his writings; usually he initialed them with a modest G.H. or simply with an H. The handwritten copy of the Statement of Faith that Hansen produced in 1678 is slightly different from the one printed in the Fundamentbuch, though this may in part be explained by the fact that the latter is a translation of the former.<sup>20</sup> The original copy was in German, then it was translated into Dutch, and then Isaak Peters translated from the Dutch back into German. The discrepancy is not so much in the translation as it is in the Scriptures cited, the order in which the statements appear, and the number of articles in the statement.

The following outline of the articles of faith, as given in the original 1678 copy and the 1768 Confession, indicates the differences in the content of the articles, as well as the different order in which they were written.

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<sup>18</sup>Hansen, Fundamentbuch, 29, and Glaubensbekenntnis.

<sup>19</sup>Confession, Vor-Rede 2, 32.

<sup>20</sup>Hansen, Glaubensbekenntnis, MS 694, 497-513.

## 1768 Confession

## 1678 Confession

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|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. About God.</li> <li>2. About Christ the Son of God.</li> <li>3. About the Holy Spirit.</li> <li>4. About the Trinity.</li> <li>5. About the Incarnation of Christ</li> <li>6. About the Fall of the Human Race and Justification through Christ the Redeemer.</li> <li>7. About the church of God.</li> <li>8. About Sending and Election of Preachers.</li> <li>9. About Christian Water Baptism.</li> <li>10. About Holy Communion.</li> <li>11. About Foot-washing.</li> <li>12. About Church Discipline.</li> <li>13. About Separation and Shunning those Disciplined.</li> <li>14. About Holy Marriage.</li> <li>15. About the Office and Power of Government.</li> <li>16. About Swearing the Oath.</li> <li>17. About Revenge.</li> <li>18. About the Freewill of Man.</li> <li>19. About the End Times.</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- About God the Father.</li> <li>- About Christ the Son of God.</li> <li>- About the Holy Spirit.</li> <li>- About the Trinity.</li> <li>- About Adam's Fall and Justification.</li> <li>- About the Church of God.</li> <li>- About the Sending and Election of Ministers.</li> <li>- About Baptism.</li> <li>- About the Communion Service.</li> <li>- About Foot-washing.</li> <li>- About Marriage.</li> <li>- About Church Discipline.</li> <li>- About Shunning those Disciplined.</li> <li>- About the State.</li> <li>- About Swearing the Oath.</li> <li>- About Revenge</li> <li>- About the Freewill of Man.</li> <li>- About End Times.</li> </ul> |
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The Confession in the Fundamentbuch had the same number of articles and order as the 1678 Confession outlined above. In comparing the two outlines above, it is apparent that the 1678 Confession did not have a statement on the Incarnation. Another difference was that the 1678 Statement had the statement on marriage following foot-washing, while the 1768 statement had it after shunning, but just before that on the State. The flow of the 1768 Confession seemed to be smoother,

since Foot-washing was quite easily connected with the following statements on Discipline. If this was the case, the order could have been changed for that reason. It is, however, doubtful that the publishers would have tampered with the Confession, especially since they emphasized that it had been copied word for word.<sup>21</sup>

The additional article on the Incarnation is difficult to explain, if this was Hansen's 1678 Confession. If the copiest modified the Confession, it would again contradict the claim of word for word copying and translating.<sup>22</sup> The fact that the 1768 Confession was a translation from the Dutch to the High German could possibly explain some of the difference in wording and would not rule out Hansen's authorship. The publisher in the second "Vor-Rede" made the point that Hansen's 1678 Confession was written in High German and Latin, not in Dutch.<sup>23</sup> It is possible that Hansen wrote another Confession, but the evidence for that is lacking. Therefore, one is led to conclude that we are dealing with some other Confession than the one Hansen wrote in 1678.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Confession, 30.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Confession, Vor-Rede 2, 40.

<sup>23</sup>Confession, Vor-Rede 2, 33.

<sup>24</sup>Christian Neff & Harold S. Bender, "Catechism", in ME, 1955 ed. The article lists this as Hansen's 1671 Glaubens-Bericht and then adds the 1778 Confession without identifying it as being from the hand of Hansen. The way the encyclopedia article lists the Confessions it leaves the implication that they are two different Confessions. The article adds to the title "Preussen im Jahre 1730". This would suggest a 1730

Comparing the content of the various articles lends support to this hypothesis. If it is not a completely different Confession, it is at the very least, a seriously edited version. The 1768 Confession shows considerable editorial work. For example, in comparing the statement about God in the three Confessions, the 1768 statement, the one in the Fundamentbuch, and the copy of the original one, one finds that the 1768 cites twenty-eight Biblical references in comparison to fourteen and twelve references, respectively, for the other two.

In comparing the references cited for the statement on God, it is found that the 1678 Confession and the Fundamentbuch Confession have a total of nine identical citations. In contrast, the 1768 Confession has only four in common with the 1678 Confession and none in common with the Confession in the Fundamentbuch. There were only two references in the 1678 Confession that were not duplicated in the other two Confessions. The Fundamentbuch Confession has three references not found in the other two, while the 1768 Confession has twenty-four Biblical citations not found in the other two. The following table lists the references as they appear in each of the Confessions.

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writing date possibly. That is also the date the book gives for the union of the churches of Prussia with the Netherlands. See Confession, 39.

1678 Confession-Fundamentbuch Confession-1768 Confession

Psalm 90:1	Psalm 90:1	Romans 10:9
Deut. 6:4	Ex. 6:3	Deut. 6:4
Gen. 1:1	Gen. 1:1	Ps. 42:3
I Cor. 8:6	Isa. 66:1	Lev. 19:2
Isa. 66:1	Wisdom 11:23	Ps. 11:7
I Tim. 6:16	Isa.40:12	Gen. 17:1
Wisdom 11:24	4 Esdras 8:21	Acts 17:24
Isa. 40:12	Job 9:5	Ps. 90:21
Ps. 103:8	Sirach 16:12	I Tim. 6:15
Ps. 86:11	Heb. 7:4	Jn. 4:24
Sirach 16:12	Heb. 11	Jer. 23:23
Heb. 7:4	I Tim. 1:17	I Kings 8:27
Heb. 11		Ps. 139:2
		Heb. 4:13
		Matt. 22:37
		Eccl. 12:13
		Acts 4:12
		Matt. 28:19
		Eph. 3:14-15
		I Cor. 8:6
		I Pet. 5:7
		Ps. 103:13
		Ps. 103:18
		Ex. 34:6
		Joel 2:13
		I Pet. 4:17
		Heb. 12:6
		Prov. 3:11

In the 1768 copy, the Apocryphal citations were noticeably absent, while the other two cited the identical Apocryphal references. This suggests that the 1768 translators, assuming they were using Hansen's Confession, did not approve of the use of the Apocrypha as Scripture, and consequently deleted those references.

A further difference was the wording. Since the Dutch copy was not available, the two translations were compared with the original handwritten statement. The 1678 edition and the copy in the Fundamentbuch are very similar. The Fun-



damentbuch copy tends to be smoother, suggesting the work of the translator. In contrast, the 1768 Confession is more wordy than either of the other two. The opening words of the 1768 statement make it obvious that it was being used as a common statement for a body of preachers and elders. The following partial quotations from the first article of the three Confessions, the first quote is taken from the handwritten copy, the second quote is copied from the Fundamentbuch, and the third comes the 1768 Confession, illustrate the point.

Von Gott Dem Vater

Wir lehren und glauben aus Gottes Schrift dass da von Ewigkeit ist gewesen ein einiger, ewiger, allmaechtiger, lebendiger Gott, der ein Schoepfer Himmel und Erde ist, von welchem alle Dinge sind die im Himmel, auf der Erde und unter der Erde sind ein grossmaechtiger Gott, dass es der Himmel sein Stuhl und der Erde sein Fusschemel ist .  
 . . .<sup>25</sup>

Von Gott dem Vater

Wir lehren und glauben aus der heiligen Schrift, dass Er von Ewigkeit gewesen ist: ein einiger, ewiger, allmaechtiger, lebendiger Gott (Ps. 90:1-2; 2 Mose 6:3), der ein Schoepfer ist Himmels und der Erde (1 Mos. 1:1), von welchem alle Dinge sind, die im Himmel, auf der Erde und unter der Erde gefunden werden. Ein grossmaechtiger Gott, welches Thron der Himmel, und die Erde seine Fussbank ist. Jes. 66:1.<sup>26</sup>

Wir Elteste und Diener sagen (als Vorsteher und Zeugen) von wegen unserer Gemeinde also dass:

Wir glauben von Herzen und bekennen mit dem Munde, das da ist ein Einiger, Lebendiger, Heiliger, Gerechter und Allmaechtiger Gott, ein Schoeppfer und Erhalter alle Dinge, der da ist von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit, der Selige und allein Gewaltiger, ein Koenig aller Koenige und Herr aller Herren. Der allein Unsterblichkeit hat, der da

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<sup>25</sup>Hansen, Glaubensbekenntnis, MS 694, 497.

<sup>26</sup>Hansen, Fundamentbuch, 7-8.

wohnet in einem Licht, da niemand zu kommen kan, welchen kein Mensch gesehen hat, noch sehen kan, den Gott ist Geist, ein Gott der Ferne und Nahe ist.<sup>27</sup>

According to the "Vorbericht," the 1768 Confession was used as a statement of union between the Flemish Mennonite Church in Poland and the Flemish church in the Netherlands, on July 9 and 16, 1730.<sup>28</sup> The Dutch churches involved included Amsterdam, Haarlem, Overyssel, Giethorn, Zuytveen, Blocrskyl, and Sapmeer in Groeningerland.<sup>29</sup> The churches in Poland were not identified by congregation. This statement of union implies a strong continuing connection between the Dutch and the Polish Mennonite Flemish churches as late as the mid eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup>

A further difference is the Biblical citations. The original Confession cites Ps. 90:1, while the 1768 Statement refers to Ps. 90:2. In each case the citation is used to support the statement that God existed from eternity. Both Biblical references support that idea, with Ps. 90:2 probably somewhat clearer. Probably due to the editing process, the 1768 Confession chose the more specific verse.

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<sup>27</sup>Confession, 2.

<sup>28</sup>Confession, Vorbericht, 39.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>This strong affiliation is also supported by the volume of correspondence during the eighteenth century as found in the Mennonite Archives in Amsterdam. See J. G. Dehoop Scheffer, Inventaris der Archiefstukken Berustende Bij de Vereendigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente Te Amsterdam (Amsterdam: Uitgegeven en ten Geschenke Aangeboden Door den Kerkerood dier Gemeente, 1883.), Part 1, 263-290, Part 2, 378-394.

A second variation on citing a reference is I Tim. 6:16 in the original statement, as compared to I Tim. 6:15 in the 1768 Statement. The difference again probably is the result of the editing process in the 1768 Statement. Verse fifteen was used to underscore that God is Lord of Lords, while verse 16 was used to support the idea of the immortality of God, as well as the idea that God dwells in unapproachable light. The proof-text, if the two are from the same author, was changed from supporting the concern of the 1678 Statement to supporting the concern of the 1768 writer.

A final variation was the citation from the Apocryphal book of Wisdom. Since the 1768 Statement omitted all references to the Apocrypha, this was a difference from the 1678 Confession and the one in the Fundamentbuch. The original handwritten statement cited Wisdom 11:24, while the other cited Wisdom 11:23. In both cases, the citation was quoted in support of the idea that the world, in the eyes of God, is as a drop of dew that falls to the earth. According to an English translation of the Apocrypha,<sup>31</sup> as well as Luther's translation of it,<sup>32</sup> both express the idea that the world is like a drop of dew in verse twenty-two. Thus, both citations were just short of the mark. This may have been due to an error of the eye or hand, or it may have been due to different

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<sup>31</sup>The Apocrypha of the Old Testament: Revised Standard Version (New Jersey, Camden: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1957), 98.

<sup>32</sup>Die Apokryphen, trans. Martin Luther (Stuttgart: Wuerttembergische Bibelanstalt, n.d.), 22.

verse divisions in the translations of the Apocrypha being quoted.<sup>33</sup> These minor differences in references do not disallow the authorship of Hansen, but rather indicate the activity of the translator.

Even when discounting these minor variations in citing Biblical references, the additional statement on the Incarnation points to the conclusion that it is difficult to maintain Hansen's direct authorship of the 1768 Confession. Two possible solutions commend themselves in seeking to explain these variations. First, the 1768 Confession, used for the union of 1743, was an independent statement of faith whose author was not listed, or was and is unknown. Secondly, the 1768 Confession was an expanded revision of Hansen's 1678 Statement. This latter conclusion commends itself because it recognizes the consistent tradition that it was Hansen's.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the titles of the two are very similar, which points to a possible common origin. Therefore, to call it Hansen's Confession is saying more than the data warrants.

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<sup>33</sup>In Confession, Vorbericht, 40, the writer alerts the reader that since verse divisions in the various Bibles are not the same, he is using the one recently printed in Koenigsberg by Christoff Kanter. Similarly the biblical references used in Dietrich Philips, Enchiridon (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonitisches Verlaghaus, 1917), are such that unless you had a copy of the same Bible used by Philips it would be difficult to find the references because the verse references are different from those in most Bibles today.

<sup>34</sup>The following suggest it is Hansen's Confession of Faith, Friedman, Mennonite Piety, 133, n. 2; Christian Neff & N. van der Zijpp, "Hansen, Georg", in ME, 1956 ed.; MB (1857), 7, 39, 63; Christian Neff, "Hansen, Georg", in ML, 1937 ed.

The position advocated by Friedman and others that this Statement is Hansen's requires revision.<sup>35</sup>

In reading Hansen's writings, it became apparent that he frequently cited the Apocrypha. In terms of the method of citation, his citations from the Apocrypha were identical to the way he cited the canonical writings.<sup>36</sup> This raises the question of his attitude toward the canonicity of the Apocrypha. It is a question because Protestants do not accept the Apocrypha as canonical: that is, they do not accept it as authoritative for doctrine and practice, while the Roman Catholic Church recognizes twelve of the fifteen Apocryphal books as canonical.<sup>37</sup> The question of the canonicity of the Apocrypha had implications for the Polish Mennonites, for the acceptance or rejection of the Apocrypha would affect the attitude with which they would be perceived: unfavourably by the Lutherans and favourably by the Catholics.

The problem of the canonicity of the Apocrypha goes back to the second century before Christ, when the writings called

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<sup>35</sup>Friedman, Mennonite Piety, 132. See also ML, 1913 ed.

<sup>36</sup>The phrase Canonical Writings refers to those writings Christians accept as the Word of God, those writings they claim as being authoritative for determining faith and practice. See for example, L. F. Hartman, "Canon," in NCE, 1960 ed.

<sup>37</sup>C. StuhlmueLLer, "Apocrypha of the Old Testament," in NCE, 1960 ed.

the Apocrypha first appeared.<sup>38</sup> Initially, the Jews in the diaspora used it extensively. But, due to the Christian use of it, they rejected the Apocrypha towards the end of the first century, after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Early evidence suggests that the Apocrypha was used quite extensively, both in the eastern as well as in the western church, though agreement on its canonicity or non-canonicity was lacking.<sup>39</sup> From the fourth to the sixteenth century the question of the canonicity of the Apocrypha received limited attention.<sup>40</sup> Without having found a unanimous resolution,

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<sup>38</sup>The term Apocrypha is defined differently by Roman Catholics and Protestants. For the Roman Catholic Church it refers to the writings that Protestants call Pseudepigrapha. In this essay, the word Apocrypha is used with the Protestant meaning, namely, referring to that collection of writings which appeared in the Septuagint and Vulgate, but were not included in the Jewish and Protestant Canon. The fifteen books of the Apocrypha in the order they usually appear in English versions are: 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to the Book of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiastics or Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach, Baruch, The Letter of Jeremiah, at times appended to Baruch, Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Mannasseh, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees. See T. W. Davies, "Apocrypha," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, et. al. ed. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, rev. ed., 1979. "The Canons and Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent," trans. 1848 by Rev. J. Waterworth (R.C.) in Creeds of Christendom, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1919), 79-83.

<sup>39</sup>Opposing their canonicity was Athanasius, "Festal Letter of 376," as well as Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, vi, 5. In favour of the canonicity of the Apocrypha were Augustine, De doctrina christiana, and the two Councils of Carthage, 397 A. D., 419 A. D.

<sup>40</sup>For example, Pope Gelasius (492-496) issued a list of canonical books which included the Apocrypha, Cassidorius (556) and Isidore of Seville (636), placed Jerome's canon, which omitted the Apocrypha, and Augustine's, which included the Apocrypha, side by side without commenting on which was

the question was focused again during the Reformation. Martin Luther spoke out against its canonicity. In the "Introduction" of the German translation of the Apocrypha noted above, Luther is quoted as saying, "Those are books not parallel with the Holy Scriptures, though it is good and profitable to read them."<sup>41</sup> John Calvin took the same position as did the Anglican Church.<sup>42</sup> The Roman Catholic church decided at the Council of Trent in favour of twelve of the fifteen Apocryphal books.<sup>43</sup> From the sixteenth century tension over this question has continued between the various religious bodies, with the Protestants rejecting the Apocrypha, and the Roman Catholic Church giving limited acceptance.

What position did the Mennonites take on the canonicity of the Apocrypha? The various statements of faith issued by various Anabaptist/Mennonite bodies, starting with the 1527

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accepted. In 1442, Pope Eugenius IV issued a Bull proclaiming the books of the Latin Bibles as inspired which gave canonical status to the Apocrypha. On the other side we find two bishops of North Africa, Primasius and Junilius (ca. 550), reckoning only twenty-four books as canonical and rejecting the canonicity of the others. Included in the phrase, "Among the others" was the Apocrypha. Cf. G. L. Robinson, rev. H. K. Harrison, "Canon of the Old Testament," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1979 rev. ed.

<sup>41</sup>Die Apokryphen, 3.

<sup>42</sup>John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Faith, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, 20 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 2:1179. "Articuli XXXIX. Ecclesiae Anglicanae. A.D. 1562," authorized version of John Cawood, 1571, in Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 4th ed., rev. & enl. 3:489-491.

<sup>43</sup>"Canons of Trent" trans. Waterworth, 1848, Creeds of Christendom, ed. Philip Schaff, 6th rev. ed., 2:81.

Schleitheim Confession, did not issue a statement listing the books considered canonical. The Confession of Faith of the Hessen Brethren of 1578 contains a statement on the Bible in which they acknowledged the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, without listing the books included in the Testaments.<sup>44</sup> After each article there is a list of Scriptures cited in support of the statement. These Scriptures are introduced by the phrase, "witness or evidence of Scripture" (Zeugnus heiliger schrift). In those lists of Scripture six Apocryphal books are cited and included in the lists without any reference as to whether they were considered as less than Scripture. The books cited are 4 Esdras (2 Esdras), Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, Tobit, and Judith.<sup>45</sup> This could mean that the Apocrypha was included in their Old Testament. Any reader not familiar with the question relating to the Apocrypha when reading this Statement of Faith, would certainly conclude that the Hessian Brethren accepted the Apocrypha as Scripture.

The Mennonite Dordrecht Confession of 1632 (Article Five) spoke "Of the Law of Christ, which is the Holy Gospel, or the

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<sup>44</sup>"Das Bekenntnis der Schweizer Brueder in Hessen", Guenther Franz, et. al. eds. Urkundlichen Quellen zur hessischen Reformationsgeschichte: Wiedertaeuferakten, 1597-1626, (Marburg: N. G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1951), 407. A copy of this Statement is also found in MQR 23 (1949): 22-34.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 404-440.



New Testament."<sup>46</sup> The article discusses Christ instituting the New Testament. It is quite clear that this had no reference to the book designated, the New Testament, but rather that that phrase referred to the Gospel message. For a group who professed to go back to apostolic Christianity and its subsequent focus on Scripture, omitting a statement listing the canonical books seems a serious oversight. However, this may be explained by the fact that there was a common understanding as to which were the canonical books. It would appear that the exact number of books considered canonical was not a major issue at the time. From the way the Mennonite writers referred to Scripture, it is evident that the limits of the Canon were taken for granted and so they may not have felt the need to speak to the question.<sup>47</sup>

In the Catechism printed with the 1768 Confession,<sup>48</sup> the writer gives a clear statement on which books belonged to the Canon and the Apocrypha.<sup>49</sup> The unknown writer of the

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<sup>46</sup>Thielman J. van Bragt, The Bloody Theatre or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenceless Christians, trans. from 1660 ed. by Joseph F. Sohm (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1950), 40.

<sup>47</sup>The first Statement of Faith with a direct article on the Bible is a Dutch Confession of 1659 drafted by van Aldendorp, van Heuven, Andries, and van Maurik. A second one is the 1766 Cornilis Ris Confession. It is only in the twentieth century that we have Mennonites issuing theoretical statements about the Bible. One illustration is the 1921 statement of Christian Fundamentals of the Mennonite Church. Harold S. Bender, "Bible," in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>48</sup>See discussion of Confession above.

<sup>49</sup>Confession, 36-37.

Catechism asked twelve introductory questions to establish some boundaries. Question eight asked, "What is to be understood by the words, Holy Scripture?" The answer given is, the Old Testament beginning with Moses and ending with Malachi, and the New Testament beginning with Matthew and ending with Revelation. Question nine asks whether there were any other books. To this, the answer is, yes, there were other books called Apocrypha which are found at the end of the Old Testament. Question ten asks, "Does the Apocrypha belong to the Holy Scripture?" The answer given was that,

Since there was insufficient evidence to indicate that the Apocrypha was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit it would be unwise or foolish (bloede) to consider them as inspired.<sup>50</sup>

However, the Apocryphal books were considered as being profitable for reading, since many good practices and ideas were found in them. By 1768, the Flemish Church had a catechism which clearly delineated which books they considered to be Scripture.

That the Anabaptists and Mennonites considered the Bible as authoritative in faith and practice is shown by the way they spoke about the Bible. For example, Menno Simons frequently underlined the authority of Scripture. He said,

All Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament, rightly explained according to the intent of Christ Jesus and His holy Apostles, is profitable for doctrine, reproof.... But whatever is taught contrary to the Spirit and doctrine of Jesus is accursed of God.... Therefore we counsel and admonish all... to take good heed to the Word

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

of the Lord.... [The Scriptures are] the true witness of the Holy Ghost and the criterion of your consciences. . . . Do not depend upon men, put your trust in Christ alone and in His Word. . . . The whole Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, were written for our instruction, admonition, and correction, . . . they are the true sceptre and rule by which the Lord's kingdom . . . and congregation must be ruled and governed.<sup>51</sup>

The 1578 Confession of faith, drawn up by the Swiss Brethren in Hesse, said,

We believe, recognize, and confess that the Holy Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments are to be described as commanded of God and written through holy persons who were driven thereto by the Spirit of God. For this reason the believing born-again Christians are to employ them for teaching and admonishing, for reproof and reformation to exhibit the foundation of their faith that it is in conformity with Holy Scriptures.<sup>52</sup>

These statements on the authority of Scripture did, however, not define the limits of what they considered Scripture. Both Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, two early key leaders of the Mennonites who emigrated to Poland, frequently quoted the Apocrypha. Simons cited The Wisdom of Solomon, Susanna, Tobit, Sirach, and 2 Esdras.<sup>53</sup> Philips, in his "Spiritual Restitution", cited Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, 2 Esdras, and Tobit.<sup>54</sup> These references to Apocryphal books

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<sup>51</sup>Simons, Complete Writings, 312, 62, 89, 138, 159, 160.

<sup>52</sup>MOR, 23 (January, 1949): 37.

<sup>53</sup>Menno Simons, Complete Writings, 68, 74, 84, 85, 177, 337, 338, 344, 346, 369, 389, 398, 939, 949.

<sup>54</sup>Dietrich Philip, Enchiridion or Handbook of the Christian Doctrine and Religion, compiled from the Holy Scriptures for the benefit of all lovers of Truth, trans. A. B. Kolb (Alymer, Ontario: Pathway Publishing Company, 1978), 326, 327, 328, 333, 343, 354, 355.

were cited just as any other canonical books, and were mixed in with other canonical references without any suggestion of being less authoritative.<sup>55</sup> The obvious impression the reader is left with is that the Apocryphal references were considered as authoritative as any reference from the Old or New Testament. This would suggest that they considered the Apocrypha or at least the books cited, as canonical.

That Protestants considered the Apocrypha important books for Christians to read, even though they did not consider them as authoritative as the Old and New Testament, was evidenced by the fact that Protestant Bibles, published up to 1827, included the Apocrypha placing them at the end of the Old Testament.<sup>56</sup> At a very minimum, usage indicates that the Apocrypha was recognized as important for the Protestant wing of the church.

Hansen quoted the Apocrypha, but did he discuss which books were to be considered as canonical? The second question in Erforscher der Wahrheit, asked whether only the Calvinistic/Reformed Church had a definite list of canonical books.<sup>57</sup> The second question went on to ask whether the other churches had an authentic translation? Hansen's answer to the question

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<sup>55</sup>For example, in Philips, Enchiridion, 328, one finds the following four references cited in support of the same statement, Wisdom of Solomon 2:23, Gen. 1:27, Sirach 17:3, James 3:9. This is just one illustration of many.

<sup>56</sup>T. W. Davies, "Apocrypha," ISBE, 1979 rev. ed.

<sup>57</sup>Erforscher, 3, 44.

is his clearest word on the limits of the canon.

He answered that the Mennonites were not aware of a specific list of canonical books.<sup>58</sup> He went on to say that the only books they had were the ones used by Jesus and the apostle Paul. Then citing Luke 16:29, Hansen said, "Thank God we have Moses and the prophets." This was followed by naming the prophets who were considered as acceptable. The list, footnoted with 4 Esdras 1:39, included the following: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Then he cited Hebrews 11:32 and thanked God that they had the books that told them the stories of Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephtha, David and Samuel. This he followed up by citing 4 Esdras 2:11 and adding Isaiah and Jeremiah to the list.

The above information allows one to conclude that the only section of the Old Testament that Hansen did not clearly refer to was the poetical section. But since David was mentioned, the Psalms should be considered as included. The books that seem to be omitted would be Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes. That Hansen was thinking of the various Old Testament books is seen by his reference to the stories of various heroes of the Old Testament.<sup>59</sup> In his listing of Moses and the prophets, Hansen did not mention a single Apocryphal book. This could be interpreted to mean

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 44-49.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 44.

that he did not consider the Apocrypha as canonical. It is difficult to make that statement because of the way he used the Apocrypha. The Erforscher asked that the answer to his questions be supported by Scripture.<sup>60</sup> Hansen did that by using 2 Esdras. Hansen said, "We have Moses and the prophets who have been named for us by the prophet Esdras."<sup>61</sup> Hansen took as authoritative the listing found in the Apocryphal book. This strongly implies a canonical status to the book. Such a conclusion is further supported by the fact that Hansen also cited the book of Hebrews to complete his listing of prophets. He used a New Testament canonical book and an Apocryphal book in identical ways.

The question concerning an authentic translation was answered by the statement that the Mennonites did not have their own translation.<sup>62</sup> As a result, the Mennonites used the translations issued by the Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Reformed. Hansen said that they did not bind any one to a particular translation, each one was free to use his own preference. Personally, Hansen preferred Luther's translation.<sup>63</sup> Acceptance of the use of the Roman Catholic translation by the Flemish would suggest acceptance of the Apocrypha. In comparison to the attitudes of the Reformed, Lutherans, and

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

Catholics, this was a liberal ecumenical approach to the question of translations. This liberal attitude was possibly due to the fact that there was no one among the Mennonites who knew the original languages so as to be able to produce their own translation.<sup>64</sup>

The evidence concerning Flemish acceptance of the canonicity of the Apocrypha is ambivalent. Hansen's statements were silent on the canonicity of the Apocrypha, while his usage indicates acceptance. In light of the fact that Hansen gives no official listing of canonical books, and in light of the way he uses the Apocrypha, the evidence tends to suggest that Hansen considered it canonical.

The charge of heresy, as well as the charge of belonging to an illegal religion, was brought against the Mennonites, whether they were Flemish or Frisian. The Interrogation of 1678, during which Bishop Sarnowski ordered both Danzig Mennonite Churches to appear before him to answer questions concerning their faith, became an occasion for boundaries to be defined in terms of the belief system. The Interrogation was part of the growing hostility against the sects during the seventeenth century. Rejuvenated Catholicism under the leadership of the Jesuits was set on removing what were considered heretical groups. In 1658 the Socinians had been

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<sup>64</sup>Jan Gerrits' request to Hans de Reis to come to Danzig to help in the struggle against the Socinians indicates that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, neither Gerrits nor other Polish Mennonites could read the Bible in the original languages. See Inventaris, 2930.

expelled from Poland. Attempts at connecting the Mennonites with the Socinians had been unsuccessfully tried. The guilds in Danzig more than once complained against the Mennonites seeking to use their religious nonconformity to expel them from the city as well as hinder their trade. Haxberg's extortion and the Pomeranian Wawoid's opposition had sought to bring the Mennonites into disrepute. All of these factors culminated in the Interrogation of January 1678. The interrogation was under the general direction of Bishop Stanilas Sarnowski.<sup>65</sup> Included in the panel were the Pastorius Parochy from the Ste. Mary's Church in Danzig, the Bishop's secretary, two Carmelite monks and two Bernnadiener monks. The questions were asked by the Jesuit Father Haiki.

This Interrogation was part of the process whereby doctrinal boundaries for the Mennonites, especially the Flemish, were delineated, which, in turn, served to determine "boundedness" and group identity. Hansen's doctrinal teaching and writing then became determinative for Flemish group membership. Von Duehren's responses were much less clear and did not become as determinative for the Frisians as Hansen's did for the Flemish.

The Frisian minister, Heinrich von Duehren, was given forty questions which he was asked to answer on January 17,

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<sup>65</sup>Interrogat Trif, MS 694, Biblioteka Gedanska.



1678.<sup>66</sup> Von Duehren was not sure of himself and so he sent the questions to Amsterdam, requesting that the Dutch Frisian elders give some help in answering the questions. After dragging their feet for some time, they eventually sent their response on March 3, 1678.<sup>67</sup>

In comparing the answers given by von Duehren with those sent from Amsterdam, both are characterised by the brevity of their answers.<sup>68</sup> One must assume that at the Interrogation more words were used than are found attached to the questions. From Hansen's fuller account of the Interrogation and his experience one may legitimately conclude that the answers found written after the questions are a secretary's brief notation.<sup>69</sup> From the brief notations on van Duehren's question sheet, it is apparent that he had difficulty answering several of the questions, for several times the only

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<sup>66</sup>Religions Puncton der Mennonisten so man die Bekumerte nennet in gegenwart der Erleuchsten Gnaden Heiligsten Stanislaw Sarnowski Lesslauischen und Pomerischen hiesigen Bischof dero Ermahnern Heindrich von Duehren vorgehalten und von ihm beantwortet wie folget den 17 Januar 1678. MS 694, Biblioteka Gdanska, Pan W. Gdansku.

<sup>67</sup>Inventaris, C-696.

<sup>68</sup>Comparison of answers of van Duehren and the Netherlands is based on Religions Puncton, which has von Duehren's answers and Inventaris, C-96, which has the response from Amsterdam.

<sup>69</sup>Hansen, Fundamentbuch, 307-319. This is but one example where Hansen, in his expanded answer, speaks of the interchange he had with the interrogators. It appears that the discussion was open, courteous but pointed. The question being discussed was whether the Mennonites considered their church a catholic church. See also the discussion about rebaptism, pp. 231-238.

answer noted is "hallucination". Examining a few questions illustrates the brevity of the answers as well as von Duehren's difficulty in handling the interrogation. Question eight asked whether the visible flesh of Jesus was divine. Von Duehren's answer was described as an hallucination while the answer from the Netherlands was a short no.<sup>70</sup> Question eleven asked, "Was Christ true man and true God"? The answer from Amsterdam was a short "yes" with no further explanation. Von Duehren answered the question with the same brevity.

A comparison of the two sets of answers brings out some differences in thinking between the two. It becomes apparent that the Frisian Church in the Netherlands had more sympathy with Socinian thinking than the Danzig Frisian Church. Duehren's answer to question fourteen, whether Christ was a creature according to his human nature, was again described as an hallucination, while the Netherland's answer was that He was a creature in his human nature. Question seventeen asked whether Christ had two wills. Duehren answered yes.<sup>71</sup> The answer from the Netherlands said that Christ had only one will and that was to do the will of God. This response could be read to lean towards Socinianism, for it could be read to say that Christ was the son who did the Father's will and thus was less than God. Some of the answers were the same, but from the above noted differences, it would appear that the Frisian

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<sup>70</sup>Religions Puncton, Question 11.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid.

Mennonite Church in the Netherlands was, by 1678, moving in a rationalistic direction in its understanding of the Bible and Christianity.

Forty-eight questions were sent to the Flemish Vermahner and elder. For the Flemish, Hansen, even though he was not the elder, was the spokesperson. The Flemish delegation appeared before the Bishop on January 20, 1678. It is unclear why the Frisians had to answer only forty questions, while the Flemish were asked to answer forty-eight. It is possible that due to the larger size of the Flemish group that they received a somewhat more thorough examination. In examining the two sets of questions, it becomes apparent that the Flemish questions are more detailed.<sup>72</sup> For example, the question on the Lord's Supper and Foot-washing were two questions in the Flemish questionnaire, while it was only one in the Frisian. When one calculates the ratio of questions on a given topic in each of the Interrogations, of the forty questions addressed to the Frisian elder, 52.5% were concerned with questions about Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity. For the Flemish, 58% of the questions dealt with the topics just mentioned. On the other hand, the Frisians faced 15% of the questions relating to baptism, while for the Flemish this section had 12.5% of the questions. The essence of the questions being asked were the same even though they were

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<sup>72</sup>Religions Puncton. and Interrogat Trif Mannonisten so man Clarichen nennet Beantwortet von Georgen Hansen ihren Vermahnern, 20 Januar in 1678, MS 694, Biblioteka Gdnaska.

fewer in number in the instance of the Frisians.

The brief answers following each question provide an insight into both spokespersons, as well as to some of the differences between the Frisian and Flemish. When von Duehren was asked, "Was Christ a person before the Incarnation?" he answered very briefly with a simple "no".<sup>73</sup> Hansen, on the other hand, answered this question with a "yes".<sup>74</sup> This reflects a difference in theology or a lack of understanding on the part of those who answered. Question thirty asked whether the Frisian group believed the ordinance of Footwashing was essential for salvation. Van Duerhen answered that some held that it was essential for salvation while others did not.<sup>75</sup> He held the view that it was an exercise of humbling oneself before fellow believers but not essential for salvation. Hansen, on the other hand, emphatically stated that Footwashing was essential for salvation.<sup>76</sup> A further difference reflected in the answers was the attitude toward marrying someone from another group. Von Duehren said that they were reluctant to permit such unions.<sup>77</sup> If anyone married someone outside of the group without permission, that person would be excommunicated. Restoration to the church

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<sup>73</sup>Religions Puncton, question 6.

<sup>74</sup>Interogt Triff, question 10.

<sup>75</sup>Religions Puncton, Question 30.

<sup>76</sup>Interrogat Triff, Question 38.

<sup>77</sup>Religions Puncton, Question 31.

would take place after that person had humbled himself or herself. Humbling would involve a public confession of wrong doing and a request for restoration. Hansen's question on marriage was different. He was asked whether marriage was considered a sacrament, to which he replied that it was not. The question of inter-marriage was not asked. But in fact, as far as intermarriage with other groups, the Flemish were more restrictive than the Frisians. Von Duehren's response implied the possibility of receiving permission to intermarry without impunity, but that was not the case with the Flemish.<sup>78</sup> It was not until 1778 that intermarriage was quietly accepted.<sup>79</sup> The first acceptance of a member into the other group without re-baptism occurred in 1768.<sup>80</sup>

The above mentioned differences are relatively minor, but reflected some of the reasons keeping the two groups from recognizing each other as fellow believers, much less seeking union. Points of agreement in the answers of the two leaders were observed in such significant matters as: belief on the Trinity, the full deity and humanity of Christ, the personhood of the Holy Spirit, Christ's virgin birth by Mary, and rejection of infant baptism. Such agreement on key theological issues affirmed what the Lutheran historian, Hartknoch,

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<sup>78</sup>Christian Neff, N. van der Zijpp, "Flemish Mennonites," in ME, 1955 ed.; "Frisian Mennonites", in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

said when he described the two Mennonite groups as being the same in beliefs with a few minor differences.<sup>81</sup>

Attempts to charge the Mennonites with heresy was part of the continuing opposition to the Mennonites. Especially was this true in the ongoing debate with the guilds, as well as with such political leaders as the Pomeranian Wawoid. This kind of opposition raised for Hansen and his Flemish followers the continuity of faith questions and, ultimately, the question of group identity. Many attempts were made to associate Mennonites with Socinianism. One of two things happens when a tradition is confronted by an alien tradition: either there is assimilation by adaptation, or there is resistance to the alien tradition.<sup>82</sup> Shils points out, that at times, the challenged tradition seeks to refute the challenger by rational argument, or to annihilate them as occurred in India in the relations between Hindus and Muslims, and in Roman Catholic countries through the Inquisition.<sup>83</sup>

A further response that may occur is that the challenged tradition becomes more rigid, seeking survival through blocking the approaches of the challenging culture. On the other hand, it may also happen that the challenged faith tradition may become inclined to doubt the truth held, and

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<sup>81</sup>M. Christof Hartknoch, Preussische Kirchengeschichte (Frankfurt am Main: 1686), 858.

<sup>82</sup>Edward Shils, Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 98.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

assimilation begins.<sup>84</sup> Hansen and the Flemish, as well as the Frisians, faced with the challenge of the Socinians and the Catholics responded in self defence by rational explanation and through withdrawal. By doing so, they maintained their faith as well as their ethnic identity. Their response was a means of survival. With this charge of Socinianism, the guild opposition was able to get the Roman Catholic hierarchy mobilized against the Mennonites, for the hierarchy was concerned about the spread of the Socinian heresy. If the Mennonites could be identified with them, they would receive similar treatment.

Anabaptist-Socinian connections can be traced to the middle of the sixteenth century. The Polish Socinians<sup>85</sup> felt they had much in common with the Hutterites in Moravia, and so initiated unsuccessful attempts at union with the Hutterian Brethren.<sup>86</sup> A majority of the Polish Socinians lived in and around Rakow. Very few penetrated the delta region during the

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Several names have been given to this group. The names include Socinianism, which comes from an early leader Faustus Socinus; Arians, tying them to the Christological debate of the first Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325; and Polish Brethren.

<sup>86</sup>Stanislau Kot, Socinianism in Poland, trans. Earl Morse Wilbur (Boston, Beacon Hill Press, 1957), 31-49; Kasper Braitmichal, et. al., Geschichtbuech und kurtzer Durchgang von Anfang der Welt wir Gott Sein Werck inn Seinem Volck auff Erden Angericht, Gehandelt unnd Triben hat Demanch, (1665), in A.J.E. Ziegelschmid, Die Aelteste Chronik der Hutterischen Brueder, Ein Sprachdenkmal aus fruehneuhochdeutscher Zeit (Ithaca, New York: The Cayuga Press, 1943), 440-458.

sixteenth century, though by 1605 we find the able Socinian leader, Christoff Ostorodt leading a church at Buskow near Danzig.<sup>87</sup>

As early as 1598, the Polish Arians had visited the Netherlands in the interest of some of their students at the University of Leiden. One of the visitors was the leading Socinian theologian and writer, Christoph Ostorodt. While they were visiting Amsterdam in 1598, their books were confiscated and they were banned, though not before visiting with a few of the leading Mennonites such as Peter Janz Twisck and Hans de Reis.<sup>88</sup> The Socinian efforts in the Netherlands seeking to establish a church met with little success, as did their attempts at developing ties with the Mennonites.

In 1610, Valentinus Smalcus and elder Hieronymous Moscorovius had a conversation in Lublin with three Mennonite leaders of Danzig and surrounding area.<sup>89</sup> As a result of this conversation, Smalcus wrote a statement of faith which was circulated among the Polish Mennonites.<sup>90</sup> The Socinians were interested in closer contact with the Mennonites, and if possible, wanted to unite with them. The Mennonites resisted these overtures largely because of the anti-trinitarian stand

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<sup>87</sup>Earl Morse Wilbur, A History of Unitarianism (Boston Beacon Press, 1945), 1:417.

<sup>88</sup>N. van der Zijpp, "Socinianism", in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>89</sup>Inventaris, B-2928.

<sup>90</sup>Inventaris, B-2932.



of the Socinians. Ulrich Pius Herwarth, a preacher of the Polish Brethren in Danzig, sought to engage Jan Gerrits van Emden, elder of the Frisian church, as well as other Polish Mennonite leaders, in a debate, in order to prepare for a merger.

The Socinians had suggested it was necessary for a church leader to know Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Gerrits knew none of these languages, nor did he have the level of education of the Socinians. Sensing his, Jan Gerrits wrote for help to Hans de Reis and other leaders in the Netherlands.<sup>91</sup> Jan Gerrits informed de Reis that two members in their church, a couple, were considering joining the Polish Brethren. Moreover, the Polish Brethren were urgently requesting a conversation between the Socinian leader Ostorodt and the Mennonite leaders, with the aim of amalgamation. Gerrits refused the invitation, in all probability due to his and his co-worker's sense of inadequacy in the face of the aggressive, assured, and learned Socinians. Jan urgently requested not only help via correspondence, but he begged de Reis to come to Poland in order to help them in the difficult struggle against the Socinians. By resisting a meeting with the Polish Brethren, the struggle grew more intense because the Polish Brethren were insistent about the meeting. In addition, one couple was interested in joining the Socinians, and a number of the Frisian members were attending the Socinian services, thereby

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<sup>91</sup>Amsterdam Inventaris, Letters B-2926, B-2927.

adding to Gerrits' anxiety. This request for someone to come from Holland to help was denied by the Dutch brethren.<sup>92</sup>

In late 1612, Gerrits wrote another unsuccessful appeal for help from the Dutch Mennonites. When he received two letters<sup>93</sup> from the Socinians urging a meeting looking toward unification without any discussion about theological issues, Gerrits wrote the Frisian leaders a third urgent appeal for help in 1613.<sup>94</sup> Gerrits complained that the Socinians were drawing members from the Mennonite church and so urged de Reis once again to come. He asked de Reis to bring with him Rippert Enkens, who had been attracted to Socinianism but who ultimately rejected its teachings and was once more an active member in the Frisian Mennonite Church.<sup>95</sup> Having been thoroughly exposed to the Socinians without joining them, Gerrits thought Enkens would be helpful in the disputes. Gerrits found the Socinians friendly and good people, which made them attractive to the Mennonites. His objection to them was that they denied several key Mennonite doctrines, including the deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, and coming judgement.

Hans de Reis never visited Poland. In June, 1613, a letter, signed by six Dutch Church leaders, was dispatched to

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<sup>92</sup>Inventaris, Letters B-2932, B-2934.

<sup>93</sup>Amsterdam Inventaris, Letters B- 2928, B-2930.

<sup>94</sup>Inventaris, B-2932

<sup>95</sup>Inventaris, Letter B-2925, B-2932.

Jan Gerrits in Danzig, informing the latter that it would be impossible for de Ries or any other leader to come to Prussia.<sup>96</sup> There were two reasons why it was impossible to comply with the requested visit. First, there was a dispute in the Dutch churches, and so it was felt it would be poor judgement and leadership if any elder or teacher would be separated from his congregation for any length of time. A visit to Danzig would require a considerable amount of time, especially since the purpose was to help to work through the Socinian problem. A second reason that de Ries gave was that with the disunity in the church in the Netherlands, no one could be authorized to go in the name of the church. The Elders were afraid that if any Elder or teacher took this authority upon himself, it would just aggravate the divisions with which the church was struggling.

With the advent of the Thirty Years War, communication between Danzig and the Netherlands declined even more. A letter from 1629 by Gerrit Klassen, an Old Flemish leader, spoke of a problem in Rotterdam which he was trying to help solve.<sup>97</sup> It is not clear what that problem was. A letter by elder Jan Jacobs in 1640, indicates that the problem was finally settled through the mediation of the Danzig Flemish

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<sup>96</sup>Inventaris, Letter B-2934; W. J. Kuehler, Geschiedenis van de Doopsgesinden in Nederland Tweede Deel, 1600-1735 (Haarlem:H. D.Tjeenk Willinnk & Zoon N.V., 1940), 53-55.

<sup>97</sup>Inventaris, Letter C 423.

Church.<sup>98</sup> It is apparent that the Rotterdam church held a high regard for the Mennonite church in Danzig. Little more is heard of the Socinian issue until the 1640's.

The reason the Socinians had an ecumenical spirit towards and interest in the Mennonites was, that despite serious differences in doctrine, the two groups had several similarities in doctrine. The Mennonites considered the differences critical and therefore resisted Socinian attempts at getting together to work toward unity and amalgamation. The Socinians, on the other hand, felt there were sufficient significant similarities that warranted strong efforts seeking to unite the two groups. Some of the Reformed also felt the similarities between the two groups was strong. In 1650, the Reformed writer, John Hoornbeek said, "A Mennonite is an unlearned Socinian; a Socinian, however, is a learned Mennonite."<sup>99</sup> The affinity between the Mennonites and the Socinians was also indicated by the fact that a number of Mennonites were attracted by Socinianism.<sup>100</sup>

What were some of the issues that made the Socinians believe there was sufficient commonality to work towards a merger? On the question of sacraments, both groups denied the

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<sup>98</sup>Inventaris, C--424.

<sup>99</sup> John Hoornbeek, Summa Controversarium, 1650. Cited by N. van der Zijpp, "Socinianism," in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>100</sup>Inventaris, B-2932.

sacramental position.<sup>101</sup> The Mennonites took a completely different position on the efficacy of the sacraments from that taken by the Lutherans or Catholics. The latter two groups considered baptism and the communion service or mass as rituals whereby God's grace was mediated to the participant. The Mennonites in contrast considered these rituals as signs of spiritual or religious realities without any mediation of grace from God to man. For the Mennonites they were important but not conveyers of salvation.

The Socinians held to two rituals, baptism and the Lord's Supper and to them, as to the Mennonites, they were merely signs signifying spiritual realities but no grace was mediated with the ritual. Baptism was administered as a sign of conversion and was to be administered only to consenting adults. To the Polish Brethren, baptism was an outward act by which converts to Christianity, that is Socinianism, openly acknowledged Christ as Master. It required faith and repentance. The Mennonite position, as stated by Hansen, was almost identical. He said that baptism was administered to

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<sup>101</sup>Inventaris, B-2937; Christof Astorodt, "Ein dogmatisches Sendschreiben des Unitariers Ostorodt," in AFG, trans. Theodor Watscke 12 (1915): 137-154. B-2937 is a nineteen page article discussing the Socinian interpretation of baptism, communion and the ban. Neither the author is identified nor is the date of composition given. The Archives has placed among the materials from 1613 which suggests it comes from that time period. Astorodt's article is his work of 1591 addressed to the Anabaptists in Strasbourg with whom he had had some contact in his travels. In it, Astorodt, a Socinian teacher in Poland, outlines the Socinian view of baptism and communion.

individuals who were beyond the age of innocence but only upon the baptismal candidate's repentance from sin and confession of faith.<sup>102</sup> Similarly the communion service was a commemorative ritual whereby the participants were reminded of the death of Jesus. Again there was no sacramental action, that is, mediation of God's grace, involved.

The Socinians emphasized the New Testament over the Old Testament. For them the New fulfilled the Old and had priority in authority.<sup>103</sup> The Mennonites, but also the Catholics and Lutherans, held the same point of view. To them the Old had to be understood in light of the New. Hansen did not have a statement on this in his 1678 Confession, but in his response to Erforscher der Wahrheit, he clearly spelled out the priority of the New Testament.<sup>104</sup>

Reaction to Reformed teaching was evident in the Socinian argument against predestination, on the one hand, and on defending the free will of man on the other.<sup>105</sup> Hansen discussed the concept of the freewill of men in his Glaubens-Bericht, article twenty.<sup>106</sup> He did not discuss the concept of predestination, but clearly denied it when he said that

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<sup>102</sup>Hansen, Glaubens Bekenntniss, Article 8.

<sup>103</sup>The Racovian Catechism, trans. Thomas Rees (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), 1.

<sup>104</sup>Hansen, Erforscher, 36-40.

<sup>105</sup>Wilbur, History of Unitarianism, 1:414.

<sup>106</sup>Hansen, Glaubens Bericht, 271-279.

God's action and power in the life of man was conditioned and determined by the choice a person made. He said, "Hierin kann Gott Niemand widerstehen..." (In this God cannot stand against anyone.)<sup>107</sup> Both the Socinians and Mennonites rejected the Reformed teaching of predestination while affirming the freedom of choice.<sup>108</sup>

The Socinians were opposed to swearing the oath.<sup>109</sup> Non-swearing of oaths, according to Christian Neff and Harold S. Bender, was the one practice that has been most consistently maintained among all the Mennonite groups from the very beginning.<sup>110</sup> Starting with the Schleithem Confession in 1527, and continuing to the twentieth century, each Confession of Faith includes a statement on the non-swearing of oaths.<sup>111</sup> Georg Hansen spoke to this question in article fifteen in his 1678 Confession submitted to Bishop Sarnowski.<sup>112</sup> Hansen used thirteen pages to discuss the non-

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 278; Braitmichal, et. al., Geschichtbuech, 451.

<sup>108</sup>By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Socinians had adopted a moderate position on predestination as well as abandoned their strong position against use of arms and non-participation in civil government.

<sup>109</sup>Racovian Catechism, 213-215; N. van der Zijpp, "Socinianism", in ME, 1959 ed.

<sup>110</sup>Christian Neff & Harold S. Bender, "Oath", in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>111</sup>Howard J. Loewen, One Lord, One Church, One Hope, and One God: Mennonite Confessions of Faith (Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1985).

<sup>112</sup>Hansen, Glaubensbekenntnis, Article 15; Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 249-261.

swearing of oaths in his Glaubens-Bericht. The Socinian position on the non-swearing of oaths was not as absolute as the Mennonite position. The Socinians said that swearing an oath was permissible in certain weighty matters.<sup>113</sup> They maintained that using the oath lightly was forbidden.

Adult baptism was advocated by the Unitarians as well as the Mennonites, which made the Socinians Anabaptists.<sup>114</sup> In a 1591 letter to the Anabaptists in Strasbourg, Ostorodt responded to what appears to be a letter a Mennonite elder had written to him. In his letter, he outlined the major teachings of the Socinians. In his statement on baptism, he emphasized that immersion was the only true baptism.<sup>115</sup> Ostorodt argued that the mode of baptism, which, according to him had originally been immersion, was changed to effusion when the churches started baptizing infants. They changed so that the children would not drown.<sup>116</sup> In this, Ostorodt was incorrect. The Greek Orthodox church practised trine-immersion during the Reformation and does so today.<sup>117</sup>

Adult believer's baptism was a foundational teaching held

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<sup>113</sup>Racovian Catechism, 213-215; Christoff Ostorodt, Unter-  
richtung von den Vornemsten Hauptpuncten der Christlichen  
Religion (Rackaw: Sebastian Sternatzki, 1625), 160-164.

<sup>114</sup>Ostorod, "Sendschreiben," 150, note 1; Racovian  
Catechism, 249-252.

<sup>115</sup>Ostorod, "Sendschreiben," 137-154.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Timothy Ware, The Orthodox Church (Middlessex, England: Penguin Press, 1967), 283-285.



by the Mennonites.<sup>118</sup> In the Mennonite Church, with some exception, the mode was pouring, the predominant mode at the time of the Reformation.<sup>119</sup> With the exception of the mode, Ostorodt's, as well as the Racovian Catechism's, argument for adult baptism on confession of faith was identical to the Mennonite practice and rationale. Both groups argued that baptism must come on repentance of sin and confession of faith. Since infants and small children were incapable of doing this, they should not be baptized.<sup>120</sup>

The Socinians, as well as the Mennonites, considered the Communion Service as a memorial service. Each time they had a Communion Service they were remembering the death of Christ. Since both groups rejected sacramental grace, taking the bread and the wine was no more and no less than a time to remember.<sup>121</sup> Ostorodt took issue with the Catholic use of wafers instead of bread. He attributed the change to an adaptation for the sake of the children so they would not choke.<sup>122</sup>

Another point of commonality was the teaching of non-resistance. Both groups refused to take up arms or serve in civil office. For both, using arms or the power of the state

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<sup>118</sup>Harold S. Bender, "Baptism" in ME, 1955 ed.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup>Racovian Catechism, 249-262; Hansen, Erforscher, 210-221; Wilbur, Unitarianism, 1:331.

<sup>121</sup>Racovian Catechism, 263-276; Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 124-142.

<sup>122</sup>Ostorod, Sendschreiben, 150.

was a contradiction of their understanding of what it meant to love one's enemies to overcome evil with doing good.<sup>123</sup>

With so many points of similarity, it was natural for the more liberal Socinians to desire amalgamation. The question is open whether the Socinians had ulterior motives for the attempted merger with the Mennonites. It is possible they entertained the idea that amalgamation with the Mennonites might give them better protection from the attacks of the king and Bishop.

There were two reasons why the advances of the Polish Brethren were unsuccessful: doctrine and social class. In the area of doctrine, the major obstacle was the antitrinitarianism of the Brethren. Ostorodt explained the relationship of the Godhead as being unitary and therefore the Son as not of the same essence as the Father.<sup>124</sup> Ostorodt and his fellow Brethren accepted the virgin birth, but according to them that did not mean that Christ had existed in eternity past. He had his beginning when he was born. He was a son of God, but not deity. Similarly, the Holy Spirit was considered as an impersonal power rather than a person as held by the Mennonites. The Mennonites in Poland, both the Flemish and the Frisians, were not ready to unite with such a group. This was true of the Mennonites in Holland and Moravia, as well as in

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<sup>123</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 262-270; Racovian Catechism, 221-227; Wilbur, Unitarianism, 1:398.

<sup>124</sup>Ostorodt, "Sendschreiben," 140-141; Racovian Catechism, 33-36.

Poland. The Hutterites insisted that the Unitarians accept the Hutterian Confession before they would consider joining, but this the Socinians rejected.<sup>125</sup>

Another area of disagreement in doctrine was the Socinian denial of the atoning dimension in the death of Jesus. Ostorodt said that such a concept portrayed God as an angry judge and contradicted what the Bible taught about a loving God.<sup>126</sup> In addition, they denied the taint of original sin.<sup>127</sup> Salvation for the Socinians meant in faith accepting the teaching of Jesus as being true, which then led a person to repentance from personal sin and doing the will of God but there was no need for salvation from the effect of original sin. This different interpretation of the atonement, salvation, and sinfulness of man made the union impossible for the Mennonites.

The second obstacle to the attempted union was the difference in class and education. The Mennonites were mostly artisans, peasants and craftsman. In contrast, many of the Socinians were converts from the nobility and gentry. The cultural, educational, and class differences complicated the

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<sup>125</sup>Braitmichal, Geschichtbuech, 441-443.

<sup>126</sup>Wotschke, "Sendschreiben," 143-144; Wilbur, Unitarianism, 1:415.

<sup>127</sup>Wilbur, Unitarianism, 1:415.

union attempts.<sup>128</sup> The Polish Brethren were not ready to accept the lower intellectual and cultural pattern of the Mennonites, and the latter also resisted change. And so attempts at union failed in Moravia, the Netherlands, and Poland.<sup>129</sup>

With so much in common between the two groups, as well as an awareness of the interaction between the groups, it was not difficult to associate the Mennonites with Socinianism. In particular, the denial of the trinity and deity of Christ, and the non-sacramental position concerning communion and baptism, made the Socinian doctrine untenable and heretical for the Catholics. If Mennonites thus could be identified with such an heretical group, they would no longer be tolerated. In all probability, Mennonite leaders were aware of such implications without verbalizing them to the Socinians. It is for this reason that many of the questions asked of Hansen and von Duehren focused on the trinity.

The Socinian approach to the Mennonites challenged especially the Frisian elders, for it was they who were under

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<sup>128</sup>Robert Friedman, "The Encounter of Anabaptists and Mennonites with Anti-Trinitarianism," in MOR 22 (1948): 156; Robert Friedman's review of Stanislaus Kot, Socinianism in Poland, in MOR 33 (1959): 354.

<sup>129</sup>An impact of these contacts with the Socinians was left on the Mennonites, particularly in the Netherlands. During the latter half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch Mennonites turned toward a greater rationalistic orientation in harmony with the mood of the times as illustrated by Spinoza and Descartes. In Poland the resistance to the Socinians remained firm.

the most direct attack by the Socinians. Jan Gerrits, their elder, struggled to deal with the difficult situation during the second and third decade of the seventeenth century. The Socinian struggle was thus more a Frisian one than Flemish, but it did not leave the Flemish untouched. The letters the Socinians wrote indicate that they were interested in all the Mennonites. The letter by the Socinian teacher, Smalcus, and elder, Heironymus, was addressed to "der gantzen Gemeine derer die bey und zu Dantzigt Mennoniten nennet."<sup>130</sup> The beliefs of the two major Mennonite bodies were so similar that, despite their known separateness, the Socinians addressed the Mennonites as a whole, and not as separate groups. Jan Gerrits, the Frisian elder, became the spokesman for the Mennonites in the Socinian struggle, while in 1678, it was the Flemish who gave the stronger leadership at the Interrogation, and by that helped the Frisians. When the Socinians were expelled from Poland in 1658, the threat of identification with the Socinians was considerably reduced, but not removed. At the 1678 Interrogation, though no formal charge of Socinianism was laid, the Christological focus of the questioning alerted the responding elders that the question of Mennonites holding to Socinian doctrine was near the surface.

The Socinian challenge was one culture confronting another, and seeking amalgamation. The Mennonites resisted by avoiding encounters with the challenger, looking unsuccess-

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<sup>130</sup>Inventaris, B-2928.

fully for help, and ultimately attempting to explain their faith. The challenge caused some of the Mennonites to join the Socinians but the independent identity of the two Mennonite bodies was maintained.

However, a question about the Interrogation persists. Was it primarily an investigation of the presence of Socinian theology among the Mennonites or was the investigation a wider one? The transcript of the interrogation gives no indication of the specific charge against the Mennonites.<sup>131</sup> This was the case of both sets of questions, the Frisian's as well as the Flemish, as well as Hansen's handwritten statement of faith. In the Fundamentbuch, Hansen added the note that the answers had been given to the Bishop so that he could evaluate the basis of the Flemish faith and their worship service.<sup>132</sup>

Johannes van der Smissen, a respected nineteenth century German Mennonite leader in Prussia and Germany, in a series of articles on the Mennonites in Prussia, described the Interrogation as an investigation of the Mennonite religion as a whole.<sup>133</sup> According to van der Smissen, trouble began for the Mennonites when, in 1661, William Ames sought to establish Quaker groups in Danzig. His converts came almost exclusively

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<sup>131</sup>Religions Puncta; Interrogt Triff; Glaubensbeken-  
ntniss.

<sup>132</sup>Fundamentbuch, 46.

<sup>133</sup>Johannes van der Smissen, "Ueber die Ersten Anfaenge der Mennoniten in Preussen," in MB (Jan. 1857): 7. His series of articles appeared in issues starting in July 1854, with the last one appearing in December, 1857.

from the Lutherans. This aroused antagonism and resulted in King John Sobieski III appointing a commission to investigate the Quaker activity. The Commission was also asked to investigate the Mennonites. That the Mennonites were included was probably due to the affinity of Mennonite and Quaker belief systems, since both opposed taking up arms. The investigation was in harmony with the various attempts of individuals and various Polish factions to remove the Mennonites as seen in 1676, when the Wavoid of Pomerania unsuccessfully levelled charges against the Mennonites at the annual Diet. Van der Smissen admitted that his proposal was only a suggestion. What was definite was that there was an investigation of the Mennonites in 1678.

Several historians, such as Anna Brons, H. G. Mannhardt, and Janusz Tazbir, described the charge against the Mennonites as being Socinianism.<sup>134</sup> However none of them gave any supporting data for such a claim. They probably based their conclusion on the fact that the questions focused to a large extent on Christology and the Trinity.

On the other hand, Johannes van der Smissen, as noted above, as well as Wilhelm Crichton and Christoff Hartknoch, do not identify the charges specifically.<sup>135</sup> Hartknoch said

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<sup>134</sup>Brons, Taufgesinnten, 257-259; H. G. Mannhardt, Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, 67-79; Tazbir, State Without Stakes, 203.

<sup>135</sup>Smissen, "Mennoniten in Preussen, 7; Crichton, Geschichte der Mennoniten, 27; Hartknoch, Kirchen-Histori, 857-859.

that the Mennonites were investigated for false teaching, but that they had carefully hidden their heresy so that it was difficult for the ordinary reader to discern it.

The Interrogation was in harmony with the growing restriction of religious freedom in Poland during the seventeenth century. In discussing this trend, Tazbir says,

Just as in the XVI-th century even the most fanatically Catholic king could not have halted the spread of the Reformation without risking civil war, so in the next century even the most tolerant king could hardly hold back anti-Protestant repression, but was unable to prevent it. He was faced not only by the clergy, but by a segment of the nobility; the courts often disregarded the decisions of royal commissioners, and the bishops simply ignored them.<sup>136</sup>

Attempts at restricting the Reformed faith, one of the so called tolerated faiths, occurred more than once.<sup>137</sup> The Swedish invasion raised the hopes of restored toleration but in vain. The Socinians were expelled from Poland in 1658, though they were given three years in which to sell their property, pay off debts, and make the necessary arrangements to leave Poland permanently by 1670. In 1669, the Diet sought to prohibit Socinians from converting to Calvinism. This was discussed again at the 1661 Diet, where the Calvinists raised violent opposition, charging the Catholics with trying to include the Reformed in the application of the statute of 1658, and so forcing the Calvinists into exile as well. Consequently, parliament confined itself to reaffirming the

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<sup>136</sup>Tazbir, State Without Stakes, 193.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 192-195.



anti-Arian laws. At a later date, charges were brought against the Calvinists under the 1658 statute.<sup>138</sup>

In light of the hostility to freedom of the time, the attempt of the Pomeranian delegate to oust the Mennonites through accusing them of being heretics, and the Christological and trinitarian focus of the questions of the Interrogation, it was obvious that the charge against the Mennonites was related to the atmosphere of intolerance. The charge of heterodoxy could be made on the basis that the Mennonites were not one of the accepted religious bodies. However, that the charge was Socinianism is not as clear. The dialogue with the Bishop and his entourage dealt with issues closely related to Socinianism, but also with questions of deviation from Catholic dogma such as original sin, baptism and the sacrifice of the mass. The heresy of Quakerism also had close affinity with the Mennonite teachings. The Interrogation can therefore be viewed, not only as seeking out heresy, but also as part of the wider re-Catholicising process of Poland.

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<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 196-197.

## CHAPTER 7

### GEORG HANSEN: DEFINITION OF FAITH AND CONTINUITY

Georg Hansen lived and worked some one hundred and fifty years after the Anabaptist/Mennonite movement began. An examination of the key motifs in his writings is necessary to determine the continuity between his theology and that of his predecessors, Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. Menno Simons was the most formative influence in shaping the thinking of the Dutch and North German Mennonites, both during his years of itinerant leadership, as well as through his writings.<sup>1</sup> Dirk Philips, ordained by his brother Obbe Philips and an early leader of the Dutch Mennonites, as well as an early bishop in Poland, left an impact on the thinking of the Polish Mennonites and therefore Hansen's thinking will be compared with his writings.<sup>2</sup> Not only did these two early leaders have a personal impact on the Polish Mennonites, but Hansen was familiar with their writings as well as the synthesis of later sixteenth century Anabaptist thinking. A comparison of the ideas of these three as well as other Anabaptist thinkers is

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<sup>1</sup>Cornelius Krahn, Menno Simons (1496-1561) (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1936), 103-176.

<sup>2</sup>N. van der Zjipp, "Dirk Philips," in ME, 1955 ed.

part of the attempt to determine and explain both continuity and shift in thinking within the Polish Mennonite community.

Similarly, a comparison with Roman Catholic dogma will be made because it is the Catholic Church that most vehemently opposed the Mennonites. Where relevant, comparisons will be made with Lutheran teaching as well. Hansen, being a member of the large Flemish Mennonite church, differed from the Frisian faction. Some attention will be given to that difference so as to portray a clear image of the Flemish church teaching.

In Glaubens-Bericht, Hansen discussed twenty-two dogmatic issues in as many chapters. Since the purpose of the book was to present, to youth, the Mennonite faith in the German language, this treatise must be considered a statement of what Hansen considered as most essential in matters of faith. Space given to a subject is usually indicative of what is important to the writer.<sup>3</sup> In Glaubens-Bericht, the longest two sections are chapter fourteen, discussing the issue of the ban in thirty-three pages, and chapter three, which speaks about the Incarnation in thirty-two pages.<sup>4</sup>

When topics are grouped, Church discipline received three chapters for a total of sixty-seven pages. The doctrine of God, Christ, Holy Spirit, and Trinity were discussed in four

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<sup>3</sup>Robert A. Traina, Methodical Bible Study (Wilmore: Self Publication, 1952), 61-62.

<sup>4</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 318-319.

chapters, for a total of fifty-nine pages. These topics comprise about one-third of the book, indicative of what Hansen considered the most significant teachings to communicate. The rest of the book deals with such subject matter as baptism, the freewill of man, coming judgement, vengeance, appointing preachers and other faith issues.

One of the recurring problems in theology is the doctrine of the Incarnation. Hansen felt it necessary to explain in considerable detail the relationship of the deity and humanity of Jesus.<sup>5</sup> After making a clear statement that Christ was born of the virgin Mary, and that He had been sent by God to save mankind, which no human was able to do, he asked, "How did the Incarnation happen?" Hansen said that Christ did not become human flesh and blood through natural generation, but rather, he became flesh through the Spirit. This subtle distinction was important to Hansen, for if Christ were of the same flesh and blood as mankind, He would be merely human. Through a series of analogies, he proceeded to explain how Christ became human without that humanity having its derivation from Mary.

First, he used the miracle of Jesus turning water into wine, to illustrate the Incarnation. Jesus changed the water into wine without going through the natural process of growing the grapes and then making wine from the grapes. Similarly, Christ came in the flesh without going through the natural

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<sup>5</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bekenntnis, 13-44.

process of obtaining the human body. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and not by a human father. Hansen went on to say that nowhere do we read that He took His human nature from mankind. Hansen claimed Christ became flesh; not that he was born flesh.<sup>6</sup>

Anticipating a rejoinder on the basis of Hebrews 2:16, where the writer speaks of Christ taking on the seed of Abraham,<sup>7</sup> Georg used another analogy. He said one must understand what the Biblical writer meant by the concept of assuming human form. As God took to Himself the seed of Abraham through the Exodus, in a like manner, Christ took to Himself the human form. That is, it was the act and decision of God without being subject to human generation. This concept was further elaborated upon by referring to the idea, found in the New Testament, that Jesus took to Himself Abraham's seed by saving the human race from the clutches of the devil.<sup>8</sup> Hansen, through this kind of spiritualizing, went on to develop the point that the seed of Abraham was Christ.

The aim of the statement on the Incarnation was to present Christ as a sinless human. Therefore, a third line of argument was developed. On the one hand Hansen referred to the seed of the serpent identified as Satan and his followers.

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<sup>6</sup>Hansen, Spiegel des Lebens, 49.

<sup>7</sup>The German translation of the verse on which Hansen statement was based, reads, "des Samens Abrahams nimmt er sich an."

<sup>8</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 18-19.

On the other side, he traced the seed of Eve, which he made out to be the church, which in turn, was described as Christ's wife. Thus, the seed was to be understood as spiritual descendants rather than physical descendants; on the one side there were followers of God and on the other there were the followers of Satan. Christ was the culmination of the spiritual descendants of God.

In his concluding statement, he emphatically stated that Christ was both man and God. The Incarnation was a temporary period in the existence of Christ, but he insisted that full deity dwelt in Christ. Thus, for Hansen, Christ took on humanity and identified with humanity, but did not take his human essence from humanity.

In examining Hansen's Christological statement in his 1678, Glaubensbekenntniss, we find that the same ideas were expressed, but in a more compact fashion. In his answer to the Christological questions asked at the Interrogation, Hansen made it clear that Christ did not have a human form before being born of Mary. He refused to call the pre-incarnate Word person.<sup>9</sup> His reason for such refusal was that nowhere could he find that kind of description in the Bible. He argued that Christ had a pre-incarnate form, but no one had ever seen it, for God cannot be seen.

Hansen was careful in maintaining the full deity of

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<sup>9</sup>Hansen, Fundamentbuch, 126-136.

Christ and the full humanity after the Incarnation.<sup>10</sup> He was quite honest about the difficulty in understanding or explaining the Incarnation. When asked how this could be, he responded by saying this was a mystery and beyond full rational explanation.<sup>11</sup>

Hansen's Christology stands in close continuity with that of Menno Simons, the ex-priest, convict, and a key leader of the Dutch-North German Mennonites. It was his name that became attached to the Anabaptists after he joined them and developed into their most prominent leader. Menno visited the Danzig church in the summer of 1549 and followed that up with a letter dated October 7, 1549.<sup>12</sup> In the two documents Menno wrote to the Polish Reformed leader, John a'Lasco, entitled, "Brief and Clear Foundation", and "Incarnation of our Lord,"<sup>13</sup> he expounded at length on the Incarnation. His view was that Christ did not partake of Mary's flesh, but that He was one being fully God and fully man. Menno said, ". . . He did not become flesh of Mary but in Mary."<sup>14</sup> Menno's discussion on Christ as the seed of Abraham and the seed of

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<sup>10</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bekenntnis, 38-43.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>12</sup>Menno Simons, "Exhortation to a Church in Prussia", Complete Writings, 1030-1035.

<sup>13</sup>Simons, "Brief and Clear Confession," 422-440; and "Incarnation of Our Lord," Complete Writings, 785-835.

<sup>14</sup>Simons, "Brief and Clear Confession," Complete Writings, 432.

David were similar to that found in Hansen.

Hansen's concept of the Trinity was different from both the Socinians, who denied the Trinity<sup>15</sup>, or the Roman Catholics and Lutherans, who held to three persons in one divine essence.<sup>16</sup> In elaborating on the answer to the question at the Interrogation, "Why do you not call the Divine Word a person?" Hansen responded that he had not found such an idea in the Scripture.<sup>17</sup> In his Glaubens-Bericht, Hansen emphatically said, "We do not believe that there are three gods, or three persons, or three essences. With the heart and mouth we believe and confess that there is only one God. (Deut. 6:5)."<sup>18</sup> Hansen indicated he understood that the Catholic understanding was different from his in that they spoke of three persons in one essence.<sup>19</sup> The Flemish church did not speak about trinity, for the word was not a Biblical word.<sup>20</sup> Rather, they spoke about three parts though in one God. The three parts, were Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In his explanation of God as three parts but one deity,

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<sup>15</sup>Racovian Catechism, 37-43; Wilbur, Socinianism, 1:412-414.

<sup>16</sup>"Canons of Trent," 79; "The Augsburg Confession," in Creeds, trans. Charles P. Krauth, ed. Philip Schaff, III: 8-9.

<sup>17</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 134.

<sup>18</sup> Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 58.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 136.

<sup>20</sup>"Interrogat Triff," Answer to question 1, MS 694 Biblioteka Gedansk.



Hansen used the analogy of the trinity of power in a human.<sup>21</sup> He said that a human has the power of the visible physical presence; the power of the voice, which can be heard and thus exert influence on others, even though the person could not be seen; and finally, the power of spirit. The power of the spirit he explained as being exerted through such things as correspondence or art. As examples, he referred to Paul's writings and to Bezaleel's gift of working with gold (Ex. 31:3-4). In both instances, the individual exerted a power and left an impact different from the spoken word or physical presence.

Hansen, in seeking to make his explanation of the trinity as clear as possible, also used the analogy of a river, which he said could be divided into the source, the expanse of water, and the flowing stream.<sup>22</sup> A further analogy he used was that of the sun. The sun was a large light in the heavens, had a bright shine and was hot.<sup>23</sup> Thus, just as he divided man into three parts with one being, so he spoke of God as being three parts but one God. Each part was different, but yet there was only one being.

This definition of trinity borders on Modalism, a teaching already condemned as heretical in 451 at the Council

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<sup>21</sup>Hansen, Fundamentbuch, 57-62.

<sup>22</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 63-65.

<sup>23</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 63-67; Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 56.

of Chalcedon.<sup>24</sup> This Modalistic tone is also evidenced in the short answer Hansen gave at the Interrogation in response to the question, "Does each part of the Trinity have its own power, independence and essence?" The answer given was that each had its own power, independence and essence but each was an expression (ausdruecken) of the essence of God.<sup>25</sup> This view was in contrast to the Catholic and Lutheran positions which held to three persons in one essence. Modalism held the view of one being manifested in three forms. There is no evidence that Hansen's interrogators caught that nuance; rather, it appears that they were satisfied with his answer, for they did not declare him wrong on this point.

Menno Simons, in his, "A Solemn Confession of the Triune, Eternal, and True God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," propounded in a similar way the concept of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as being one God.<sup>26</sup> Menno did not attempt to explain the Trinity in as much detail as did Hansen. Simons' concern was more that all three were considered as personal, divine beings, yet only one God. His concept seemed closer to the Roman Catholic view than Hansen's. However, it seems that

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<sup>24</sup>Karl Heussi, Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1956), 69-71, 136-139. Menno rejected Modalism also known as Patripassianism. See Simons, "The Incarnation of Our Lord," Complete Writings, 802-203.

<sup>25</sup>Hansen, Antwoort, 37.

<sup>26</sup>Menno Simons, "A Solemn Confession of the Triune, Eternal, and True God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," Complete Writings, 491-488.

Hansen possibly borrowed the sun analogy from Menno. Menno said, "And although they are three, yet in deity, will, power, and works they are one, and can no more be separated from each other than the sun, brightness, and warmth."<sup>27</sup> Hansen spoke of the incomprehensibility of this truth. Again, it appears as if that too was borrowed from Menno, for Simons said, "Yet all is incomprehensible from the incomprehensible Father, even as the brightness and the heat of the sun."<sup>28</sup>

Another issue which played a significant role in theology for the Mennonites and set them apart from the State churches was baptism. The Mennonites were called Anabaptists because they rebaptized those who had been baptized as infants. The Flemish rebaptized those who had been baptized as infants, as well as those who transferred from another group, even if that other group was a Mennonite body such as the Frisians.<sup>29</sup>

At the Interrogation, the interrogators carefully examined Hansen on the whole issue of water baptism.<sup>30</sup> Because Catholics baptized infants and the Mennonites did not, the issue of the salvation of infants was at stake for the Catholics, as is evidenced by the questions that were

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 496.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Neff & van der Zijpp, "Flemish Mennonites" in ME 1955 ed.

<sup>30</sup>Hansen, Interrogat Trif, MS 694, Biblioteka Gedanska.

asked.<sup>31</sup> The Interrogation's questions thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two, and thirty-five through thirty-seven were about water baptism. Sandwiched in between were questions thirty-three and thirty-four which asked about infant salvation and original sin in infants, two issues closely related to baptism.

For Hansen and his church, the issue was as critical as for the Catholics. The Anabaptists ultimately left the Reformed, Lutheran, and Catholic Churches over the issue of infant baptism. The Mennonite forebears had fled to Poland to escape persecution for refusing to baptize infants. And so the questions on baptism and infant salvation were, for Hansen, an issue of faithfulness to what they understood the Bible to teach. It was also a test of continuity with the faith of the forebears, though Hansen considered it more a question of faithfulness to the Bible, for his appeal was invariably to the teaching of the Bible.<sup>32</sup>

The continuity with the founding fathers of the Anabaptist movement and the contrast with the Catholic and other Reformation Churches is observed when the questions of the Interrogation are examined. Question Thirty asked, "With what do you baptize?"<sup>33</sup> The reason for this question was that the

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 211-212. This is also seen in his discussion on baptism in Glaubens-Bericht, 104-124.

<sup>33</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 207-210.

Catholics had heard that some baptized with milk or similar fluids.<sup>34</sup> The answer from the Flemish was that they baptized with water.<sup>35</sup>

That next question asked which mode of baptism the Flemish practiced.<sup>36</sup> In response to the question, Hansen gave a defence for pouring, rather than sprinkling or immersion, as the correct mode.<sup>37</sup> Three reasons were given why the Mennonites, both the Flemish as well as the Frisians, poured. First, pouring was the right mode because John the Baptist baptized "in" water and "with" water (John 3:23). This clearly, according to Hansen, indicated something else than immersion. Secondly, when Cornelius was baptized (Acts 10:47), Peter said, "Can anyone forbid water that these should be baptized?" Hansen's argument was that if one kept the people from coming to the water, then the baptism would happen in the water and the mode used would be immersion, but when the water was kept from the people, it indicated that the water was handled and thus pouring was clearly the mode used. Finally, Hansen argued that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles and that was considered as the baptism of the Spirit. Therefore, if the baptism of the Spirit was done or described as pouring, then water baptism should also be done

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 207.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 208-210.

by pouring.

In this regard, Hansen stood in sharp contrast to the Socinian Astorodt, a Lutheran converted to Socinianism and leader of the Polish Brethren, who permitted no other mode than immersion.<sup>38</sup> Ostorodt said, "If a person does not immerse there is no genuine outward baptism."<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, Menno Simons spoke of the one who had been baptized as being "the recipient of a handful of water."<sup>40</sup> This was rather obviously not immersion. Dirk Philips does not refer to the mode of baptism, but since he was bishop in Danzig, and the church there practised pouring as defended by Hansen, Philips must have practiced and supported pouring. On the mode of baptism, Hansen and the Flemish Church stood in close continuity with Menno Simons. The Frisian Church as well as the Waterlaenders and High German factions all practiced pouring; that is, all the Mennonites in Poland practiced the same mode of baptism.<sup>41</sup>

A discussion on baptism raised the question of proselytizing. The Mennonites had been forbidden to proselytize, but from time to time individuals were interested, either through conversion or because of marriage, in joining the Mennonite

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<sup>38</sup>Ostorodt, "Sendschreiben," 150-151.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid. Translation by the author.

<sup>40</sup>Simons, Complete Writings, 139.

<sup>41</sup>H. S. Bender, "Baptism", in ME 1955 ed.

Church.<sup>42</sup> The Interrogators thirty-fifth question, which asked whether the Flemish baptized twice, raised the issue. If a person had been baptized by another group and wanted to join the Mennonites, would they baptize him again? This question could be considered a trick question since the Catholics knew that Mennonites did not consider infant baptism as a valid baptism. Hansen was aware of the implications of the question. He said, "We recognize only one baptism and everyone who wishes to join us must enter by that door."<sup>43</sup> Being aware that Hansen had answered well, the Interrogators asked pointedly whether a person baptized by the Lutherans or Catholics would have to be rebaptized. Hansen responded just as directly: yes, even a Jesuit Father would have to be baptized if he wished to join the Flemish Church. This response caused a stir and a lengthy discussion.<sup>44</sup>

Hansen was charged with rejecting all baptisms but the Mennonite's own. He persistently denied rejecting anyone's baptism, giving as reason that the Bible forbids judging others.<sup>45</sup> Hansen was concerned that, should his bold statement about the Mennonite requirement of rebaptizing find its way into the proceedings record, it could cause difficulties for the Mennonites. Consequently, he successfully

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 238.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 231.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 233.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 235.

argued with the interrogators to omit his statement on rebaptising from the official record of the Interrogation.<sup>46</sup> Those seeking to have the Mennonites expelled from the country would have used such a statement, citing it as clear evidence of the heretical nature of the Mennonite faith, and, as a result, would argue they should not be tolerated.

Hansen added two more arguments against the charge that they were rejecting Catholic or Lutheran baptism.<sup>47</sup> He noted that the Mennonites left each church to their own practices without condemnation or commendation. In no way did they intend to demean the practices of other churches. Secondly, he said that their insistence on requiring baptism had Biblical precedence. Those who had been baptized by John the Baptist were baptized again in the Name of Jesus as recorded in Acts 19:1-4. These early Christians did not reject John's baptism, but as a result of a clearer understanding of baptism as Paul explained it to them, they obeyed the new insight and were baptized in Christ's Name. Hansen said this was what the Mennonites were doing. As individuals learned of the Mennonite position on baptism, some found this clearer and more acceptable and so requested baptism. With this interpretation, Hansen suggested it was inappropriate that they were called Anabaptists.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 233.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 236.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 236.



Rather than causing the Flemish group to capitulate to the demands of the Catholic Church and King, the Interrogation caused the Flemish to re-think their position. This, in turn, resulted in a further affirmation of their beliefs and practices. Instead of weakening the Mennonites, this pressure strengthened their resolve. History is replete with instances where opposition and persecution have been unable to crush the undesirable religious group. One need only cite the Mennonite Church experience under Communism in the Soviet Union and China.<sup>49</sup> In both instances the attack on the Church was part of a broad campaign against religion and, in each instance, the church including the Mennonites survived. In the Soviet Union, the Mennonites were re-settled to the eastern provinces after World War II and were severely repressed.<sup>50</sup> Many of the leaders were sent into Siberian exile. With the coming of pastroika and glasnost, it has become evident that the Mennonite Church in the Soviet Union is alive and well; opposition was unable to eradicate it.<sup>51</sup> In China, the Church went underground, but with the relaxing of suppression in 1987-1989, it has become apparent that the Church in China is a

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<sup>49</sup>Walter Sawatsky, Evangelicals in the Soviet Union (Herald Press, 1985), 447-493.

<sup>50</sup>Discussion with the delegates from the Mennonite Church in the Soviet Union to the XII Assembly of the Mennonite World Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba, July 24-29, 1990.

<sup>51</sup>It should be noted that with the new openness many Mennonites are emigrating to the West leaving a considerably reduced Mennonite population in the Soviet Union.

alive and well.<sup>52</sup> Adaptations to the circumstances had been made, but the faith remained.

Opposition to a religious group usually strengthens the group and makes it more determined to maintain what they consider important.<sup>53</sup> This was what happened in Poland with Hansen and the Flemish group. A decision had to be made: either capitulate or struggle for existence. Hansen decided for the latter. As a result, he and his church made the necessary adaptations, which included heavy money payments (schwere Kosten von Geld beigelegt ist), but sought to avoid compromising their faith.<sup>54</sup> The purchasing of freedom with money was justified by citing 3 Maccabees 68, where freedom from the king's command was purchased with a sum of money.

Hansen made a further adaptation when he agreed to refrain from rebaptizing those who had been baptized by other groups, especially those who had been baptized as infants.<sup>55</sup> He admitted that this was a very difficult accommodation to accept, but he appealed to Scripture to justify the action. First, he cited Ephesians 5:16, which in the German translation used by Hansen, advised Christians to adapt to the times and circumstances in which they live. The German translation

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<sup>52</sup>Robert and Ruth Ramseyer, Mennonites in China (Winnipeg: China Educational Exchange, rev. 1989), 97-100. See also report in the Mennonite Reporter, April 27, 1987.

<sup>53</sup>Shils, Tradition, 98.

<sup>54</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 236-237.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 237-238.

of the text he used reads, "Schicket euch in die Zeit, denn es ist boese Zeit." In English this reads as follows, "Adapt yourself to the times for the days are evil." Since Hansen did not know Greek and since Luther's translation was the popular German translation being used by the Mennonites, Georg could not possibly have caught the error in the translation. A proper translation of the Greek text would read, "Make the most of the time for the days are evil."<sup>56</sup> Modern translations render it with this meaning, including the revised edition of Luther's translation.<sup>57</sup>

As further support for the decision not to baptize, Hansen cited the experience of the apostles when they were forbidden to preach in Acts 4:19-20. The response of the apostles was that whether it was right to disobey the Sanhedran or not, they would have to decide for themselves, but the apostles could not but preach; they had to obey God rather than man. Hansen was aware that this contradicted their action of temporarily stopping to baptize those who came to them from the accepted faiths. However, he reminded the readers of the praiseworthy action (aufs hoechste zu preisen) of the disciples in Damascus when they helped Paul escape by lowering him over the wall in a basket. The reason for aiding

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<sup>56</sup>The writers translation of Eph. 5:17 of Novum Testamentum Graece ed. Eberhard Nestle, (Stuttgart: Wuerttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1953), 498. Cf. RSV translation.

<sup>57</sup>Die Heilige Schrift nach der deutschen Uebersetzung D. Martin Luthers (London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1950.), Eph. 5:16.

the escape was to save Paul's life, but much more, it was an attempt to avoid difficulties for the church in Damascus. Similarly, temporarily putting on hold baptizing those who had been baptized by another Church but wished to join them, avoided difficulties for the person seeking baptism as well as easing difficulties for the Flemish Church. Hansen admitted that this was not an easy decision, and it had given him considerable agony of soul, but he felt justified in light of the Biblical precedence. It would appear that Hansen made such a decision because there was an alternative to baptizing such converts in Poland. Several of those who had requested baptism had, on their own expense, travelled to Holland and there received water baptism, thereby alleviating the charge of proselytism against the Flemish Church in Danzig.<sup>58</sup> In addition, Hansen found some consolation in the fact that there were only a few who had requested baptism.

The Anabaptist position of baptism on the basis of an adult confession of faith was maintained as it was originally outlined by Menno, Philips, and other early Anabaptist leaders.<sup>59</sup> But this attitude of submitting to the demands of the state and not baptizing was a modification of the stand

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<sup>58</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 238. See also Baptism Records, 1683 DCR.

<sup>59</sup>Menno Simons, "Foundations of Christian Doctrine, 1539", Complete Writings, 120-142; Dirk Philips, "Of Christian Baptism," Enchiridion, 18-31; Herald S. Bender, "Baptism," in ME 1955 ed.; J. Warns & Herald S. Bender, "Infant Baptism," in ME 1955 ed.

taken by the first generation of Anabaptists.<sup>60</sup> They would have been careful not to get caught, but they would have continued with the baptizing of converts regardless.

This modified stance on baptism raises the issue of a Christian's relation to the state. In examining the written documents of sixteenth century Anabaptism, it is evident that Hansen shows a more positive attitude towards the state than some of his forebearers. The earliest Confession of the Anabaptists, "The Schleithem Confession," reads,

We are agreed as follows concerning the sword: The sword is ordained of God outside the perfection of Christ. It punishes and puts to death the wicked, and guards and protects the good. . . . whether a Christian may or should employ the sword against the wicked for the defence and protection of the good, or for the sake of love. . . . Our answer is [to treat such] according to the rule of the ban. . . . it is not appropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate.<sup>61</sup>

This Confession categorically prohibited participation in politics, considering it part of the order of the world. Menno agreed with that position and said that the "civil sword we leave to those to whom it is committed," which to him meant those he would describe as worldly.<sup>62</sup> Obedience to the emperor, king, lords, magistrates and those in authority in all temporal affairs and civil regulations was advocated even unto death by Menno, as long as they were not contrary to the

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<sup>60</sup>Cornelius Krahn, "Menno Simons". in ME 1955 ed.

<sup>61</sup>"Brotherly Union," 208-209.

<sup>62</sup>Menno Simons "Foundations of Christian Doctrine," Complete Writings, 200.

Word of God.<sup>63</sup>

Hansen concurred with this stance. He softened the application of the teaching, "We must obey God rather than men," when he advised desisting from baptizing converts from the accepted Faiths in Poland. His rationale, as noted above, was that we must adapt to the times. Even though it was painful not to baptize, it would not be done until circumstances permitted. Hence, converts travelled to Holland to be baptized to avoid being arrested or otherwise persecuted.<sup>64</sup>

This modification, or compromise as it might be called, though as noted, Hansen would have denied the charge of compromise, indicates a modification in the interest of survival. Reminick suggests that as the third and fourth generation of an immigrant group takes on leadership, modifications take place.<sup>65</sup> He also stresses the social context as playing a significant role in causing such modifications.<sup>66</sup> In the Netherlands, the larger society had not tolerated the Anabaptists. In Poland, the Mennonites experienced opposition and harassment, but never physical extermination. As a result, the decisions about the faith became less decisive in terms of life and death and so there was a slow change in the mentality and readiness to find ways to co-exist with the

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid. 118.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 237.

<sup>65</sup>Reminick Theory of Ethnicity, 24-40.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

wider society. In comparing Menno Simons and Hansen, we find that Simons lived as an exile and in flight for his life, while Hansen lived in a relatively stable situation. It is this different social context that influenced both of them to take the stance they did.

Hansen accepted the non-sacramental significance of baptism. For Hansen, baptism symbolized the washing away only of personal acts of sin in that it was an act subsequent to repentance.<sup>67</sup> The Lutheran and Catholic interpretation of baptism was that baptism was the new birth; it washed away the guilt of original sin. For Hansen, as it was for Menno and Philips, original sin had been dealt with by the death of Christ on the cross.<sup>68</sup> Consequently, the guilt of original sin had been dealt with and left man free from the need of forgiveness for original sin. Hansen's answer on the guilt of original sin was, "Concerning original sin we believe from the heart that it surely has been removed through Christ."<sup>69</sup> Thus, on original sin and baptism, Hansen stood within the theology of Menno and Philips.

The Interrogation questions on baptism highlighted the issue of infant salvation. The Catholics and Lutherans believed in baptismal regeneration, which made infant baptism

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<sup>67</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 120.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid. Menno Simons, "Foundation of Christian Doctrine, 1539," Complete Writings, 130. Philips, "Christian Baptism" Enchiridion, 25-26.

<sup>69</sup>Hansen, Erklaerung, 239.

of crucial importance.<sup>70</sup> By baptism, the guilt of original sin was removed and, should the baby die it would go to heaven. In contrast, the Anabaptists believed that infants were saved apart from baptism.<sup>71</sup> Their belief rested on the conviction that only individuals who were old enough to understand their faith could be baptized.<sup>72</sup> Hansen responded by pointing out that the words "original sin" (Erbsuende) were not found in the Bible.<sup>73</sup> He, however, quickly went on to add that it was true that everyone had a bent toward sin and evil from their youth.

From the perspective of the Catholic Interrogators, this theology put Hansen into a problematic position. Hansen had denied faith to infants and so they could not be baptized according to the Mennonite belief. He had also acknowledged that without faith it was impossible for such an infant to be saved, that is, to go to heaven when he died. For the Catholics, that was contradictory reasoning, leading to the obvious conclusion that unbaptized children were lost. By admitting the bent to sin, even though he resisted calling it original sin, Hansen aggravated the problem. Hansen then

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<sup>70</sup>"Canons of Trent," in Creeds, ed. Schaff, 2:122-125. Martin Luther, "Enchiridion: Der Kleine Catechismus," in Creeds, ed. Schaff, 3:85-87; see also "Confessio Augustana," trans. Charles P. Krauth, in Creeds, ed. Schaff, 3:13.

<sup>71</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 214-221.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 211-214.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 225.



resumed the argument and astutely turned it against the Interrogators. He accepted their argument that, through Adam, sin had come upon all, as Paul said in Romans 5:12. But he then cited references such as 1 John 2:2 and 1 Corinthians 15:22, and pointed out, that according to these verses, Jesus had reconciled the whole world to Himself, and had therefore removed the guilt of original sin. It was this that made it possible for children who were in their innocence (unmuendig) to be saved without faith. For Hansen, the separation from God caused by Adam's sin had been removed by Christ and so infants had been reconciled. Hansen believed that as children developed and became responsible, they would then have to voluntarily decide whether they wanted to be identified with Christ and the church or not. This meant the sin of Adam did not affect the salvation of children.<sup>74</sup>

A practice advocated by the Mennonites was footwashing. The ritual had its origin in the days of Jesus. It was part of the culture to have a guest's feet washed by a servant (Luke 7:44-46). In John 13, Jesus washed His apostles' feet and then said, "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done." The ordinance persisted through the Middle Ages with various interpretations and applications. It was practiced in most monasteries, both in the East as well as the West. In the Roman Church, though not recognized as a sacrament, it had become a part of the festivities of Holy

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 229-230.

Week, where the pope washed the feet of twelve laymen from various countries on Maundy Thursday.<sup>75</sup> In the Orthodox Church, it was considered a sacrament but was and is seldom practiced.

The Albigensians practiced it, as did the Waldensians.<sup>76</sup> In the latter group it was customary to wash the feet of a visiting minister. The Bohemian Brethren, or Hussites, practiced it in the sixteenth century. It was never adopted by the Reformation state Churches, but the Anabaptists accepted it.

The early South German Confessions, such as the Schleithem Confession (1527), and the Peter Riedeman Hutterite Confession (1545) do not mention the practice. Pilgram Marpeck, a leading Mennonite in South Germany, argued in his writings that Footwashing was an Ordinance on a par with any of the other Ordinances such as Baptism or Communion.<sup>77</sup> The Swiss Mennonites adopted the practice as well.<sup>78</sup>

The Dutch-North-German Mennonites practiced it. Menno

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<sup>75</sup>Pilgram Marpeck, "The Admonition of 1542", William Klassen & Walter Klassen, ed. & trans. The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck, Classics of the Radical Reformation, vol. 3 (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1978), 265.

<sup>76</sup>Herald S. Bender, "Footwashing," in ME 1955 ed.

<sup>77</sup>Marpeck, "A Clear Refutation," "Judgment and Decision," "Concerning the Lowliness of Christ," The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck, 51, 319, 341, 453.

<sup>78</sup>Bender, "Footwashing," in ME 1955 ed.

Simons encouraged washing the feet of visiting ministers.<sup>79</sup> Philips, on the other hand, developed a lengthy statement on Footwashing as an Ordinance.<sup>80</sup>

Hansen defended Footwashing quite strongly. In answer to the questions during the Interrogation, he said that Footwashing was necessary for salvation. He further added that it was being practiced by the teachers and leaders.<sup>81</sup> In Glaubensbekenntniss, he reiterated the same point.<sup>82</sup> In his Erklaerungen, Hansen was less explicit concerning who was to observe the practice. He simply said that since Paul called it a good work (I Tim. 5:9-10), and Jesus called those who did it blessed (John 13:17), footwashing should be observed.<sup>83</sup> Hansen said in his Glaubens-Bericht that Footwashing was to be practiced with those ministers who came from another congregation to minister to them.<sup>84</sup> In addition, it was to be practiced in the home where the visiting minister was to lodge.<sup>85</sup> On Footwashing, Hansen

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<sup>79</sup>Menno Simons, "Admonition on Church Discipline," Complete Writings, 417.

<sup>80</sup>Dirk Philips, "On the Church of God," Enchiridion, 388-390.

<sup>81</sup>"Interrogt Trif," Question, 38, MS 694 Biblioteka Gedanska.

<sup>82</sup>Hansen, Bekenntniss, 29-30.

<sup>83</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 256-257.

<sup>84</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 145.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

was more explicit than Menno and less inclusive than Philips. Philips argued that it was to be practiced by all the members.<sup>86</sup> The Dutch 1632 Dortrecht Mennonite Confession of Faith, signed by Flemish and Frisian ministers,<sup>87</sup> in a similar way argues for the participation of the whole membership.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, two other Dutch Confessions argued for the observance of Footwashing.<sup>89</sup> A 1660 Confession also contains an article on Footwashing, advocating the practice for the whole congregation.<sup>90</sup> Hansen thus took a position in defence of Footwashing, but limited its observance to visiting ministers. In this he did not follow his predecessor Dirk Philips, who advocated the participation of the membership. It is apparent that both ideas, limiting it to visiting ministers and participation of the whole congregation, appeared early in the thinking of the Anabaptists, for Menno advocated the one and Philips the other.

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<sup>86</sup>Philips, "The Church of God," in Enchiridion, 388.

<sup>87</sup>John C. Wenger, Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1949), 214.

<sup>88</sup>"Dortrecht Confession of Faith," Martyrs Mirror, 42.

<sup>89</sup>In 1627 a Confession called "Spiritual Instruction," was written in Amsterdam. In 1630 another Confession was written in Amsterdam signed by the Frisian and High German Mennonite Churches. This Confession also argued for the membership to observe Footwashing. Both of these Confessions are found in Martyrs Mirror, 27-38.

<sup>90</sup>Confession oder Kurtze und Einfaeltige Glaubens-Bekentnis derer die vereingte Flaemische /Friesische und Hochdeutsche Tauffs-gesinnte/oder Mennonisten in Preussen (Aussgegeben von denen obigen Gemeinden daselbsten, 1660), 18.

The practice died out in most of the churches, except the Old Flemish congregations in Alexanderwohl and Gnadenfeld. In 1826 it was revived in Russia by Klaas Reimer, Bishop of the Kleinegemeinde, a small break-away group.<sup>91</sup> The practice was also revived in 1860 by another splinter group in Russia, the newly formed Mennonite Brethren Church.<sup>92</sup> The former group still practices Footwashing when they have Communion, while in the latter group, it is practiced infrequently by a small minority.

An issue which concerned the Catholic Church was the matter of forgiveness of sin following baptism. In the Roman Catholic Church, the penitential system took care of this. This meant that a person would have to make a private, confidential auricular confession to the parish priest, who would give him the required satisfaction and pronounce the forgiveness of those sins. This was the only way forgiveness for post-baptismal sins was possible for Catholics.<sup>93</sup>

At the Interrogation, the question relating to post-baptismal sins was worded in such a way that the reader could easily receive the impression that the question related to all

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<sup>91</sup>Letter by Klaas Reimer explaining the origin of the Kleine Gemeinde in the Evangelical Mennonite Conference Archives.

<sup>92</sup>"Founding Document," P. M. Friesen Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland (1789-1910) im Rahmen der mennonitischen Gesamtgeschichte (Halbstadt, Raduga: n.p. 1911), 232.

<sup>93</sup>"Canons of Trent," in Creeds, ed. Shaff, 2:139-170.

forgiveness.<sup>94</sup> Hansen's answer indicated that he understood the question as seeking to determine the Mennonite response and attitude towards the Penitential System. Hansen replied that if an individual committed a vexatious or deadly sin after baptism, the guilty party would be required to make a public confession of that sin upon which the minister (Vermha-ner) would prescribe a required act of repentance. When the penalty had been completed, the minister, in the name of the congregation, extended forgiveness to the repentant person.<sup>95</sup>,

The response of the Interrogators was surprise, for they considered the Mennonite practice considerably more difficult than their private Confessional<sup>96</sup>. Hansen then defended his answer by citing both Old and New Testament references (Ps. 39:12, 32:3; Joh. 3:19), which encouraged public confession of sin. Hansen argued that the Mennonite pattern brought peace to the sinner and served as a warning to the membership that it was a serious matter to commit serious sins. It was thus hoped this would be a deterrent to sin and an encouragement to right living.<sup>97</sup>

In comparison, the Catholics required confession of all sins. The priest would help the confessee probe his/her con-

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<sup>94</sup>"Interrogt Trif," Question, 42, Ms 694.

<sup>95</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 276-284.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 276.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 267-277.

science if necessary. Hansen said the Mennonites required public confession only of major sins such as adultery. The so-called lesser sins, such as swearing, could be dealt with through personal confession directly to God, without any mediation of church or priest.

A major conflict with the Roman Catholic Church was the view of the Church. With the Mennonite teaching of adult believer's baptism, membership in the church was voluntary, but restricted to those who had been baptized as adult believers. The question which led to the discussion of the doctrine of the Church was the question whether the Mennonite Church considered itself as the universal catholic church.<sup>98</sup> Hansen answered the question with a no. In his explanation he added that if the question had referred to the church building he would have answered yes, for the building was for every one. Since, however, he understood church to refer to people, he had had to say no. Again, concerned not to be misunderstood, he added that the Mennonite Church was open to anyone who wanted to join it on the basis of repentance, faith and baptism.

The discussion at the Interrogation pursued the concept of the Church with two related questions. First, Hansen was asked to produce visible evidence of the apostolicity of the Mennonite Church and secondly, he was asked about the Men-

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<sup>98</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 307-308.

nonite attitude towards the pope.<sup>99</sup> To the first question he answered that he could not trace a visible body back to the apostles, but that God had had His own people throughout history. In addition, he added that the sign of apostolicity was given in John 15:14, which says "You are my friends if you do what I command You." The interrogators were surprised that the Mennonites considered themselves a remnant of the Apostolic Church. The Jesuit representative suggested that the Mennonites had been in existence only since the time of Menno Simons who had died in 1561. Hansen pointed out the historical inaccuracy of that claim. He cited Menno's writings where Menno spoke of his own conversion as being the result of the persecution of Anabaptists.<sup>100</sup> Hansen then argued that the Mennonites had been in Poland for over a hundred years, as the interrogators well knew. However, Hansen went on to say that if they would look in the books listing various churches, they would not find the Mennonites listed. He asked, "Would the lack of being listed mean that the Mennonites had not existed prior to the Interrogation?" Reluctantly it was conceded that the Mennonites traced their Apostolic Succession differently than did the Catholics. Sensing they were bested, the Catholic Interrogators simply maintained that they were the true Catholic Church and exhorted Hansen and his companions to

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<sup>99</sup>Hansen, Erklaerungen, 308-321.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 310-312. Menno Simons, "Reply to Gellius Faber," Complete Writings, 668-669.



return to the mother church.<sup>101</sup>

In response to the question whether the Flemish church was the only true catholic church, Hansen said that the Scripture teaches that there is only one body, one church.<sup>102</sup> Hansen nowhere explicitly stated that the Flemish church was the one true catholic church. What he did was show that the Flemish were part of the body of Christ and thus, by implication, the true church.<sup>103</sup> However, in response to the question of whether all other groups claim this, Hansen responded by saying that it was not within his jurisdiction to condemn other groups. The other groups would be held accountable to God, who is the Lord, and to Him they would have to answer.<sup>104</sup> Hansen consistently refused to condemn other groups as being in error or condemned by God.<sup>105</sup>

Another issue raised concerned the various factions within the Mennonite church. They asked, "Which of the several groups known as Mennonites is the real group (rechten Mennoniten)?" Hansen argued that that group which had with Menno maintained the understanding and teaching of the Apostles should be considered as the apostolic Christians. This was rebutted with the charge that the Mennonites judged

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 315.

<sup>102</sup>Der Erforscher, 55-56.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 54-60.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 60-67.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 40-42; 77-79; 84-85, passim.

other groups. In turn, it was counter argued that the Mennonites left judgement in the hands of God.<sup>106</sup>

A further critical issue was the attitude of the Mennonites toward the pope. Hansen was pressured to give a clear answer. Rather wisely and cleverly he said, "He left the pope the full worth or honor he had before God," (dass ich den Papst zu Rom vollkommen in dem Werth liess, wofuer er vor Gott stehe).<sup>107</sup>

Hansen's exposition on the church and the papacy was in full harmony with the teachings of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips.<sup>108</sup> Hansen claimed the Mennonites had been in Poland for some hundred years, but they had not changed their doctrine. On the teaching of the Church and papacy, he was correct. It is obvious that Hansen did not agree with Catholic teaching. Particularly striking was his interpretation of apostolicity. The Catholic interrogators did not agree with him, but could not or did not adequately counter his argument. The debate about the church and papacy served as an opportunity for the Flemish Church leader to re-think

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 317. Hansen sought to make his point by using the illustration of the annual bird shoot at Danzig. He said only one can win the prize. Then he asked, "Does the winner judge the others?" The implied answer was no. Similarly, he argued, the Mennonites do not condemn those who do not agree with them.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 318.

<sup>108</sup>Menno Simons, "Reply to Gellius Faber," Complete Writings, 734-744; Dirk Philips, "A Vindication," Enchiridion, 146-172; and "The Church of God," Enchiridion, 365-374.

and reaffirm the teaching that had found its origin in their Dutch forebearers.

Georg Hansen's theology was not significantly different from that of Simons and Philips. One of the reasons the Flemish had maintained their ethnic identity was because they believed and practiced the teachings they had learned in the Netherlands, and those teachings had been upheld by their leaders in Poland. Their key leader and spokesman worked through the faith in the crucible of the Interrogation and then, by expanding his answers, taught the Flemish that theology. The result was the reaffirmation of the church and the strengthening of both its beliefs and commitment to the faith. A key reason that the Flemish Church at the beginning of the eighteenth century had modified their doctrine so little was due to the leadership of Hansen, but also due to the ambivalent toleration the Mennonites experienced in Poland.

Leadership in the Mennonite church was appointed through election by the congregation or through a casting of lots. Menno taught this as well as Philips.<sup>109</sup> This process of choosing a leader from their own midst, and not through the process of training for the ministry in a theological school,

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<sup>109</sup>Menno Simons, "Sincere Appeal to Leonard Bouwen's Wife," and "Personal Note to Rein Edes and the Brethren in Waterhorne," Complete Writings, 1038-1040, 1055-1056. Dirk Philips, "Sending of Teachers and Preachers," Enchiridion, 177-183.

was also advocated by Hansen.<sup>110</sup> The election of leaders was a democratic process in the Mennonite church, for all male members were eligible voters, and leaders were laymen elected from their own midst. Females did not receive the franchise until well into the twentieth century. Criteria which were to be considered in electing a deacon (Armenpflaeger), preacher (Vermahner), and elder (Aelteste) included having some experience in Christian living, and being consistent in life. To be eligible to be elected as an elder, one had to first be elected as a preacher; only preachers were candidates for that position.<sup>111</sup> This was in contrast to the Catholic practice of formal training, ordination, and then appointment to a parish by the hierarchy. More than once, authorities were amazed at the knowledge of Scripture these unlearned leaders possessed.

Another significant theological position of the Mennonites dealt with their relation to the state. Mennonites, being pacifists, traditionally held the position of non-involvement in affairs of state because it was the function of the state to use force and violence. Menno Simons, as well as Dirk Philips, held this position.<sup>112</sup> Pilgram Marpeck, an early South German Anabaptist and one of the most prolific and

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<sup>110</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 86-104.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 98-100.

<sup>112</sup>Simons, Complete Writings, 192-194.

tone setting leaders, advocated a similar position.<sup>113</sup> This non-participatory position was not easy to maintain.

The Confession of Faith which Hansen submitted to the Bishop at the time of the Interrogation, included a statement on the State.<sup>114</sup> Using the Apocryphal books of Wisdom and Sirach, as well as the New Testament book of Romans, Hansen said that government was instituted by God. The function of the state was to support those who did right and punish those who did wrong. Because the state existed for the benefit of the people, they would pay their taxes, duties, and submit because it was their duty and also do it for the sake of conscience. Hansen's statement on submission was conditional; obedience to the State was rendered only if its demands did not contradict the commands of God. Hansen also considered praying for the government an obligation of the Christian and such prayers were to ask for a good administration so that Christians could live their life in quietness and peace.

The article of faith outlined the parameters for involvement in government with the phrase, "as long as it does not contradict the word of God." The involvement was further elaborated in the article on Swearing of Oaths and Ven-

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<sup>113</sup>Pilgram Marpeck, The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck, trans. and ed. William Klassen & Walter Klassen (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1978), 448, 539-540; Harold S. Bender, "Pilgram Marpeck," in ME 1957 ed.

<sup>114</sup>Hansen, Confession, 25-26.

geance.<sup>115</sup> Hansen said that the Old Testament commanded the swearing of oaths. In the New Testament, Jesus taught that His followers were not to swear; they were to be honest so that an oral commitment was as binding on them as a written contract or speaking under oath.

This non-swearing of oaths created problems for the Mennonites. It was required to swear an oath of allegiance to the king and city in order to be a citizen. The Mennonites refused to do so and, as a result, did not become citizens for many years. For many, this made their loyalty suspect, despite the fact that the Mennonite theology did not permit rebellion in the sense of overthrowing a government.<sup>116</sup> As a result, they were suspect for service in government. Civil disobedience was practiced by the Mennonites, but only when it contradicted their understanding of the Bible. It was this non-swearing of oaths that was used by the guilds in Danzig in their attempts to restrict, and if possible prohibit, trade and manufacture by the Mennonites. Hansen's article on Vengeance was a further statement of non-involvement.<sup>117</sup> Hansen juxtaposed the teaching of the Old Testament and the New Testament on this issue, as he did on the State. The Old Testament, according to Hansen taught the lex talionis, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The New Testament,

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>116</sup>Hansen, Glaubens-Bericht, 246-248.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid,, 262-271.

on the other hand, taught we were to return good for evil, to turn the other cheek, to love our enemies and to do good to them. This aggravated the problem in relation to participation in government. The state exercised the sword as an instrument of the wrath of God, and Hansen said that that contradicted the teachings of Jesus. In his Glaubens-Bericht, Hansen said that the Christian was to endure being robbed with joy.<sup>118</sup> It was the attempt to follow this teaching of not taking vengeance, of non-swearing of the oath, as well as the belief that the state was God's instrument of wrath, that guided the Mennonite relation to the State.

This position made Mennonites poor soldiers, but not disloyal citizens. Their teaching of honouring the government and submitting to it made them loyal in that they would not overthrow any government. The Mennonites were also conscientious tax payers seeking to dispense their God given responsibilities in this area. It was for the above faith that they were willing to buy their exemptions or pay substitutes.

Pacifism and non-swearing of oaths conditioned the Mennonite relation to their neighbors as well as to the state. Non-Mennonite neighbors were unhappy with the special privileges granted to the Mennonites. However, Mennonite industriousness resulted in support by the landed gentry and bishops. The Mennonite non-participation in guilds was looked on with askance by the tradesmen. Again, this was off-set by

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<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 265.

the productivity of the Mennonites, which, in turn, resulted in the support of the Town Council (Rat), especially in Danzig.

Hansen wrote a response to the Erforscher.<sup>119</sup> The specific identity of der Erforscher was unknown. It was, however, clear that he was a Roman Catholic, for he addressed his twelve questions to Lutherans, Reformed, Socinian-Arians, Mennonites (both the Bekuemerten and the Klerichen), Quakers, or other name any religious sect may have.<sup>120</sup> He identified the groups he was addressing by saying that those in which he was interested were living in the North and separated from the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>121</sup> The twelve questions raised by der Erforscher focused on faith and eternal salvation. It was an attempt to have non-Roman Catholics articulate their faith.

The twelve questions raised the following issues.

1. Do you accept the written Word of God as the only guide and rule for your Faith? Do you use only the written Word as a judge on issues of Faith?
2. Do you have an authentic Canon?
3. Do you have an authoritative interpretation of the Word of God which you can substantiate with Scripture.
4. Do you consider your group as the only catholic apostolic church in contrast to other groups? Does your statement of faith clearly support

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<sup>119</sup>Erforscher der Waerheyt, 1678; Georg Hansen, Antwoort auf den Erforscher der Waerheyt,

<sup>120</sup>Erforscher, 1.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.



this? Is it such that other groups cannot own it?

5. Is your church infallible and will it persevere? Can you establish this without gainsay. Is it impossible for other church groups to make a similar claim?
6. Do you have the pure teaching?
7. Do you practice or observe the Sacraments and can you establish this observance on the basis of the Word of God?
8. Do you have the right and correct ordination for your ministers or teachers?
9. Do you consider yourself to be the de facto body that alone is reforming and did reform the Roman Catholic Church?
10. Do you have a catholic, evangelical and apostolic confession of faith?
11. Do you have a catechism or teaching books that contain the true teaching of God in contrast to the books of other groups?
12. Is your faith the only evangelical, apostolic and catholic faith?<sup>122</sup>

In one hundred and twenty-two pages, Hansen answered the fourteen pages of twelve queries. Hansen was not convinced that the Erforscher was a genuine seeker, since he was seeking for truth from those the Erforscher considered false teachers.<sup>123</sup> Hansen suggested that the Erforscher really intended to criticize the various deviations from the Catholic faith and come on as a Goliath inviting the various religious

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 2-9.

<sup>123</sup>Hansen, Kurtze Antwoort, 18.

groups to do battle with him.<sup>124</sup> Despite these feelings, Hansen noted that many of the questions were good questions and needed an answer. Hansen felt responsible to answer because the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 3:15 encouraged a Christian to be ready to give reasons for one's faith. Failing to answer would be interpreted by the Erforscher as indicating that the faith held by that group was unclear, could not be established as truth, and anyone joining the group would not be sure of eternal life.<sup>125</sup>

Hansen said that he felt there were only three major questions that needed an answer.<sup>126</sup> First, there was the question about whether the Flemish had a true, unabbreviated Canon. The second question he considered of significance was the question of whether the Flemish was the true apostolic church. The third question that Hansen considered significant was whether the faith and teaching of his church was true, Biblical, and evangelical. However, Hansen decided to respond to all twelve queries, lest he be misunderstood by the Er-forscher.<sup>127</sup>

In response to the question of whether the Flemish had the true faith, Hansen answered that he was convinced that as long as they kept themselves to the Bible that they had the

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>126</sup>Der Erforscher, 24-26.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 26.

true teaching.<sup>128</sup> Hansen answered the Erforscher with a clear, yes: the Flemish had the true evangelical faith, were the true church, and had the true canon. As to the observance of the sacraments, Hansen objected to the definition that a sacrament mediated the grace of God. Rather to him, a sacrament was simply an outward sign of a spiritual reality. Hansen listed the following "outward signs" practiced by the Flemish: Baptism, Communion Service, Footwashing, Election of Leaders, Marriage, Church Discipline, the Ban or Shunning, and Reconciliation of repentant members under discipline.<sup>129</sup> After he outlined these practices of the Flemish church, he left the decision of whether this was the correct form to the Erforscher.

Hansen's outline of the various ceremonies, ordinances, and rituals practiced by the Flemish was in harmony with the teachings of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. It was, however, out of step with the Roman Catholic sacramental teaching. The one area where the two, The Flemish and the Catholics, appeared to be closest was in the area of the canon. The Council of Trent decided to include the Apocrypha in the Canon<sup>130</sup>. Hansen, in stating that the Flemish did not know of a particular number of books in the canon and through his usage of Apocrypha, indicated that his position was close to

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<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 82.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 85-102.

<sup>130</sup>"Canons of Trent", in Creeds ed. Schaff, 2:79-82.

the Catholic position.

Another area where Hansen parted company with the Roman Catholic Church was in terms of authority given to teaching books. The Roman Catholic Church accepted tradition as authoritative<sup>131</sup>. In response to the question whether the teaching books of the Flemish were true and apostolic, Hansen said that the only infallible authority they accepted was the Bible. Hansen went on to point out that the teaching books were written by men, and humans have erred many times.<sup>132</sup> This must not be taken to mean that Hansen felt that those books were full of error. Rather, Hansen did not consider the writings of men to have the same authority as the Bible. The writings of the Anabaptists were accepted as far as they corresponded to the teaching of Scripture.<sup>133</sup>

Some of the books Hansen listed as used for teaching were: the writings of Menno Simons; Dirk Philips, Enchridion; tracts written by Hans von Dantzick, Herman Zimmerman, Johannis Tricht and Pieter Cornilius Haring. In addition, the Flemish used several hymnals. Hansen mentioned the following six hymnals: the Old Hymnal, the Second Hymn-book, Jacob Jacobs Prussian Songbook, Cardel Vermander Harp, Lucas Philipfens songbook, and Pieter Cornelissen von Soett's

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 242.

<sup>132</sup>Hansen, Antwoort, 123.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

songbook.<sup>134</sup> Many of the songs being sung in the churches were composed by fellow Mennonites.<sup>135</sup>

In addition to the above books and tracts, Hansen listed several other writers with whom they, as a Flemish group, were familiar. He described them as books whose teachings were similar to Flemish teaching.<sup>136</sup> This list of writers and writings included a tract by Francois Kynut, a tract on the Church by Klas Gangeloffs, and the books by Pieter Jansz Twisk.<sup>137</sup> Two books that have been important sources for inspiration and encouragement among the various Mennonite groups are Die Wandelnde Seele and The Martyrs Mirror, which were also listed by Hansen.<sup>138</sup>

Hansen's response to the question about teaching materials within the Flemish community indicates that there were many books, tracts and hymnals with which they were familiar. A total of thirty-eight titles or writers were mentioned by Hansen, though he stated there were many other writings to be found within the larger Mennonite Community<sup>139</sup>. Of these, he cited seventeen, including his own writings, as being used by the Flemish. His sample listing included writers or tracts

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<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid 126-127.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 126.

that contained teachings similar to the Mennonites, books on controversy among the Mennonites, and books that he said created confusion among the Mennonites.<sup>140</sup>

Teaching materials used by the Flemish did not include the more controversial materials. Hansen said that many of those books found in the larger Mennonite Community did not affect them nor were used by them.<sup>141</sup> Here is a clue to why the Flemish remained more conservative than, for example, the Frisians. With limited exposure to writings and ideas beyond those that supported them, the result was maintenance of the status quo. Change only comes as old ideas meet new ideas and, in this exchange, modifications take place. Hansen sought to keep the controversial books out of the hands of the members of the Flemish Church.<sup>142</sup> He was consciously building parameters of "boundedness", thus ensuring continuity of identity.

Hansen's answers to the twelve queries of the Erforscher affirmed that the basic theology of the current Anabaptists followed the teachings of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. The answers indicated Hansen's knowledge of the Bible, including the Apocrypha and his implicit confidence in its authority. The answers also indicated a critical mind that was not easily swayed. Hansen was convinced about the correctness and

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<sup>140</sup>Ibid., 125-127.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

biblicalness of his position and invited the Erforscher to judge for himself whether the position outlined was in harmony with Scripture and the rule of faith. His refusal to pass judgement on other groups, even though he did not agree with them, must have frustrated the Erforscher.<sup>143</sup>

The final work of Hansen was his Spiegel des Levens.<sup>144</sup> This work, written in 1699, was published posthumously in 1705<sup>145</sup>. This major writing of Hansen's has not been translated into German. His objective in writing this book was to present a mirror by which people would be able to see themselves in relation to the teaching of the Word of God.<sup>146</sup> The teachings of Spiegel des Levens are in harmony with what Hansen taught in his other writings. It was a deeper and fuller analysis of what it meant to be Christian. The theology of the book stands in close continuity with the theology of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips.

Attached to Spiegel des Levens is an Appendix entitled "Vermaninge van de Niuewe Creatur." This ninety-seven page appendix was written in 1702 and added to the Spiegel des Levens by Hansen himself.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, there are two

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<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>144</sup>George Hansen, Spiegel des Levens (Amsterdam: Barent Visser, 1705) "Vooreden", 1-474.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., "Vooreden"

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>Spiegel, 387.

writings in this volume. Since the content is similar to his other teachings and deals with the same subject, the Christian life, or as Hansen puts it "the new creation," a brief summary will suggest its content.

Spiegel des Levens begins with Adam before the Fall. Hansen followed closely the Biblical account of the creation of Adam and Eve. After creation came the Fall and the introduction of sin into the world. This provided the setting for Hansen's discussion on the New Birth, which was discussed in some fifty-nine pages. After a lengthy explanation of the New Birth, Hansen gives an extended discussion of the tongue and the evil it creates. He argued strenuously for control of the tongue and its use for God's glory. Hansen then proceeded to discuss the nature of the Christian life. By faith, the Christian is exhorted to overcome the lust of the flesh, idolatry, fighting, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Following these negative exhortations, Hansen directed his attention to some of the more positive characteristics of the Christian life.

The most obvious sign of the New Birth was love. The discussion on love followed the outline of I Corinthians 13, and included many other references to love found in both the Old and New Testament. The importance of love, as outlined by Hansen, is quantitatively indicated in that he used one hundred and twenty-one pages, of a total of three hundred and ninety-three, to elaborate this part of the "mirror".



Hansen also discussed the idea of the sinlessness of the Christian. His conclusion was that the follower of Jesus is not without sin, but that he does not let sin rule his life. The disciple of Jesus is aware of sin but seeks to overcome it. Sinless perfection was not supported by Hansen.

Hansen concluded his Spiegel des Levens with an exhortation to the young people and the fathers to be faithful. His exhortation to the fathers was that they set a good example for their children.

Spiegel des Levens elaborated five characteristics of the new born person. The five characteristics are faith, faith that overcomes the world, righteousness, love, and overcoming sin<sup>148</sup>. Though the sections dealing with each are uneven in length, this is the outline that Hansen gave to his book. The length of the sections are indicative of the importance of the subject being discussed.

In "Vermaninge van de Nieuwe Creatuur," Hansen developed his thesis in four parts. In part one he discussed the nature of the new creature in Christ. Part two outlined how one becomes a new creature in Christ. Part three developed the answer to the question, What are the marks of the new creature? Part four discussed Paul's wishes for those who live the life of the new creature in Christ.

The theology developed in this tract is a restatement, with elaboration, of Hansen's thinking as found in his other

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<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 44, 53, 221, 233, 354.

writings. The theology stands in the tradition of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. With some minor differences, the Flemish church reflected faithfulness to the faith passed on to them. This meant it was still in conflict with both Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism at the points it had been from the very beginning. In relation to the Socinians, it had distanced itself by refusing to join with them. The expulsion of the Socinians from Poland in 1658 made further connections with them more difficult. In relation to the Frisian Mennonites, the difference was more cultural than theological. The Frisians were more open to receiving members from other Mennonite groups. Hartknoch suggested that the Frisians were called Dreckwagen (manure wagon) because they accepted everyone that wanted to join. In contrast, the Flemish were known as the Clericken (clear ones) because they considered themselves the pure or clear ones in terms of their cultural practice and teaching.

In 1703 when Hansen died the content of the Flemish faith had not changed from what had been taught by the first bishop of Danzig, Dirk Philips, and Menno Simons. Hansen reflected a biblio-centered theology. In his mind the argument was settled if a Biblical text supported an idea.

Hansen understood well the implications of his theology in relation to Catholicism and Lutheranism. He was willing to expound it inspite of possible danger to himself. Though it seems likely that Hansen felt quite confident that he would

not be persecuted for his faith. His willingness to argue with his interrogators about what to put into the written results of the investigation suggests that he did not interpret the Interrogation as a witch hunt. It appears that he used the Interrogation as an opportunity to make a clear and hopefully an acceptable presentation of the Flemish doctrine.

On baptism Hansen maintained believer's baptism but seemed to compromise by acquiescing to the demand not to baptize those who had been baptized as infants. On the issue of infant baptism Hansen maintained a strong position against such practice. Hansen believed that children were saved though he did not spell out at what age they became responsible for their own decisions. On this issue in particular he faced considerable opposition from the Roman Catholics and Lutherans.

Examination of Hansen's theological position leaves no doubt but that it stands in continuity with the early Dutch Anabaptists. His theology thus served in turn to help the Flemish maintain the continuity of faith. The Flemish stood within the original theological stream thanks to the effective teaching and writing skill of Georg Hansen. Both faith continuity and group identity were served well by Hansen's theology.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

During the sixteenth century, Mennonites migrated from the Netherlands, Moravia, Germany, and Switzerland to the Vistula Delta in search of freedom of religion. No country in Europe was as tolerant of various religious groupings as Poland during the sixteenth century. Though nominally Roman Catholic, Poland did not burn heretics, and was slow to arrest or imprison people because of differences of faith. The strong independent spirit of the magnates and nobles made it difficult for the Catholic Church, during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, to enforce any kind of religious uniformity. In the Catholic Church itself, there was a sentiment that favored tolerance for dissenters. As early as the Council of Constance in 1415, Paulus Vladimiri, the Polish representative at that Council, advocated quite openly that no one was to be converted by the sword or by persecution, that pagans also had the right to possess states, and that even Popes or Emperors, had no right, arbitrarily to dispose of pagan territories.<sup>1</sup> It was this tolerant spirit that made it possible for so called religious dissidents to find asylum in

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<sup>1</sup>J. Uminski, "The Counter-Reformation in Poland," in Cambridge History to 1696, 394.

Poland.

Not only was the tolerant spirit of the Church conducive to immigration but the independence of the magnates helped create a spirit of toleration. The Confederation of 1573, in which the nobles bound themselves to permit each to have his own religion without danger of attack, made for a toleration of a plurality of faiths. The earlier 1505 Nihil Novi, which restricted the king from making any decision of State without first consulting the Diet and Senate, restricted the king's power while enhancing the nobles. This supported a spirit of toleration, because even if the king wished to cooperate with the Church, to rid the country of undesirable religions, he could not do so without the consent of the Diet or Senate. Frequently this delayed action, especially if the contemplated action would be detrimental to the economic welfare of a noble or magnate. On more than one occasion the Mennonites benefited from this, either by a law not being passed or a lack of enforcing a law.

The 1573 Pacta conventa reflected the strong drive for autonomy of the magnates but it also reflected toleration. The elected king had to accept these "Henrician Articles" if he would be elected, but in so doing he restricted himself to consultation with the nobles and magnates before levying taxes, going to war, and other major action that might involve them. The condition of the pacta that stipulated that the Diet must meet annually, made it impossible for the king to

develop a strong centralized government. No one magnate or king could force his will on the nation. This in turn worked to the benefit of religious dissidents.

Finally there was the liberum veto which was politically devastating in limiting the power of the king and the functioning of parliament. However, it again served the principle of toleration to the benefit of all those who were not members of the accepted faiths. By this, one magnate in the Diet could forestall any law from becoming law by registering his veto. This helped the toleration cause, in that if the Diet wished to enforce harsh laws against the dissidents, only one lord who was satisfied to have Mennonites farming his land could veto such a law.

The weakened central government, may have been helpful for toleration, but it was the ultimate downfall of Poland. With no central government strong enough to be able to govern for the benefit of the whole, this toleration had a bitter taste to it. The fact that during most of the seventeenth century Poland was at war was in part due to the weak monarchy. The kings who offered themselves as candidates, did it not for the welfare of Poland, but, rather for personal or political reasons. A weak central government did not promote the welfare of the country.

The "Golden Era" of the sixteenth century would not return. Due to the economic decline a process of refeudalization was taking place. By the end of the seventeenth century

the peasants were in worse condition than they were when the century began.

The Dutch Mennonites migrated to Poland because they faced severe religious persecution in the Netherlands. Poland was one of the few countries that offered religious toleration and economic opportunity during the sixteenth century. Consequently, many migrated to Poland where they found a new lease on life. They were not always appreciated or even desired, and many times they were threatened, harassed, and restricted in their economic pursuits, but they were never expelled from Poland.

The migration of the Mennonites to Poland is better understood if the significance of their religious commitment is taken into consideration. Claus-Peter Clasen has argued the same point when he says,

Anabaptism was primarily a religious movement rather than a political one. Thousands of documents reveal that throughout the century the overwhelming mass of brethren were deeply concerned with their salvation. If we do not recognize the spiritual force of Anabaptism, we fail to understand the movement altogether.<sup>2</sup>

The Mennonites immigrated to Poland to find a place where they could live according to their conscience. The examination of the Danzig Flemish Mennonites and their leader Georg Hansen supports this idea. The Mennonites retained their non-swearing of oaths and non-participation in civil government because of their religious beliefs. This in turn

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<sup>2</sup>Claus-Peter Clasen, Anabaptism: A Social History, 1525-1618 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 424-425.

resulted in a separateness for the Mennonites from the rest of society. When they were oppressed for religious reasons they argued that they had been permitted to migrate to Poland with the government fully aware of their faith. Despite various pressures the Flemish persisted in their faith.

The faith of the Flemish Mennonites stands in strong continuity with the faith of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips, two key leaders of Dutch Anabaptism. The examination of Hansen's writings indicated that he followed in the path of his forefathers in such areas as concept of God, authority of the Bible, the Incarnation, church discipline, pacifism, believers baptism, marriage, and the doctrine of the last things. Hansen knew the writings of Menno Simons, Dirk Philips, as well as many other Anabaptists. Through his contact with those ideas coupled with his own creative thinking Hansen taught a theology that stood in basic continuity with the faith of the Dutch Mennonites. It is of interest that despite the close contact with the Netherlands there is no evidence that Hansen ever wrote to the Flemish in Amsterdam or in other Dutch cities. One must be careful not to say it did not happen because some of his writings have been lost.

With the coming of the Jesuits and the Counter-Reformation in the latter half of the sixteenth century the stage was set for a slow change in this spirit of toleration. In addition to the Jesuit activity, the strong leadership of Catholic Bishops, such as Stanislas, as well as the internal



conflict and disunity among the Protestants aided in the erosion of religious toleration in Poland. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the atmosphere had changed from toleration to antagonism and at times hostility, especially to groups not belonging to the accepted faiths. As a result the Mennonites, who always maintained themselves as a separate religious group, had to deal with charges of heresy, as was done so ably by Hansen in 1678. In contrast, the Socinians lost their struggle to remain in Poland, and in 1658, they were expelled from Poland for believing and teaching heresy. In this context the religious commitment of the Mennonites was an important factor in maintaining their group identity.

In this thesis it was argued that the Mennonites migrated to Poland for economic reasons as well. The sixteenth century colonization program in Poland, which had as its goal, reclaiming the delta, invited farmers familiar with land reclamation to come to Poland. Locators, some of them Mennonite, contracted large tracts of land in the delta and then went to the Netherlands to recruit settlers. The generous inducements of tax exemption during the first three to five years of farming, as well as being permitted to settle with the Hollaenderrecht drew many settlers including many Mennonites. In addition the Mennonites found the delta geographically similar to the Netherlands.

Land reclamation was their expertise and so the land-owners were anxious to have the Mennonites settle on their

estates. Those Bishops, who were also secular lords, did not hesitate to invite the Mennonites to their estates, despite the fact that the Bishops considered Mennonite doctrine as heresy. Many times economics took precedence over faith as the landlords were anxious to raise their income.

The rural Mennonites fared considerably better in the pursuit of their agricultural activities than did the urban Mennonites. Their land reclamation expertise and industriousness made them valuable to those wishing to increase their agricultural production as well as opening up new land for cultivation. At considerable cost, both, in terms of money and life, the Mennonites as well as other settlers, successfully developed the delta into a rich grain producing area.

In the delta they moved into vacated villages or established new ones. In many villages they lived with Lutherans or other faiths. Their strong sense of religious community helped them to work together. In many villages they were a majority and thereby were able to set tone and direction for life in the village. When disaster struck in the form of war or floods the Mennonites received aid from their brethren in Danzig, Hamburg, and the Netherlands thus helping them remain in Poland.

The urban Mennonites, especially those living in the environs of Danzig, faced a considerably different situation. As the rural Mennonites had come to escape persecution so did those seeking settlement in the larger towns and cities. They

also brought with them expertise in a variety of skills and trades. Whereas the farmers were welcomed by the landowners, the guilds resisted the Mennonite competition. During the last half of the seventeenth century as the economy declined, there was a persistent harassment of the various Mennonite tradesmen and merchants. The variety of restrictions relating to manufacturing, buying, and selling, made it difficult for many Mennonites to eke out an existence. Economically they struggled but with mutual aid they weathered the many difficult times of war and guild opposition. Refusing to give up, appealing to the City Council and the king, and at times simply disobeying the restrictions, the Mennonites slowly established themselves in Danzig.

The Mennonites successfully retained their faith and ethnic identity despite the fact that they had lived in a new country for almost two hundred years by the end of the seventeenth century. This thesis has argued that among other reasons this was possible because of the endogamous principle that characterised the Mennonites. Exogamous marriages were frowned on, they were not tolerated unless the "outsider" converted to Mennonitism. As anthropologist Reminick has pointed out, the endogamous principle helps to maintain "boundedness" and thereby the maintenance of group or ethnic identity.<sup>3</sup> Both the Flemish and the Frisians advocated endogamy.

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<sup>3</sup>Reminick, Theories of Ethnicity, 50-51, 60.

The Flemish and the Frisians used endogamy in relation to one another by requiring baptism if a member from one group wanted to join the other group whatever the reason might be. Thus endogamy not only helped retain ethnic identity with respect to the outside world, but separateness between the two groups was also maintained. The Catholic Church and king recognized the distinctiveness between the two groups for they asked both the Frisian and the Flemish elders to appear at the Interrogation on different days and with different sets of questions.

Berry's principle of ethnic density of the neighborhood played a role as well in maintaining identity for the Mennonites.<sup>4</sup> In many of the villages Mennonites were the majority of the inhabitants and consequently, their values and faith dominated the life of the village. In a village where the population was predominantly Mennonite, often a Mennonite would be elected schulz or village mayor. The schulz had to administer village affairs according to the Hollaenderrecht, but that gave him considerable freedom to act when it came to renewing rent contracts or giving out contracts to newcomers. By screening these he affected the population mix and ultimately group identity.

The Mennonites came with a foreign language and customs. These were maintained for over two hundred years. They functioned as a barrier to interaction with groups of a different

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<sup>4</sup>Berry, "Cultural Awareness," 77-78.

culture and in this way isolated the Mennonites thereby contributing to separateness and group boundary. A conscious effort was made at preserving the Dutch language. Even if the young people knew German better than Dutch, the church leaders insisted on using the Dutch. Some of the leaders had used Dutch all their lives and to change at a late stage in life was difficult. The continued close contact with the Mennonites in the Netherlands perpetuated the use of the Dutch language as well as their religious belief and practice. Polish neighbors would not learn the Dutch and unless the Mennonites learned the local language communication was limited with non-Mennonites. It is, however, incorrect to see language primarily as a tool for ethnic separateness. Language helps in maintaining continuity and ethnic identity but language shift, as John Edwards on the basis of his study of Irish, Scots Gaelic, Breton, Welsh, Cornish, and Manx argues, does not of itself destroy group identity.<sup>5</sup>

During the latter half of the seventeenth century Mennonites faced the language problem. In their environment German and Platt were spoken. Trade and livelihood forced some of them to learn these languages and ultimately they penetrated the whole Mennonite community. By 1670, the young people knew German better than Dutch and so language shift was well under way. This shift did not destroy the Mennonite identity but it did open the door for outside influences and

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<sup>5</sup>Edwards, Language and Identity, 163, 168-170.

thus became a factor for change in the Mennonite community.

In Danzig the Mennonites faced opposition which created an insecure environment. Barth says that insecurity acts as a constraint on inter-ethnic contacts and thereby affects maintenance of ethnic identity.<sup>6</sup> Such limited contact slows the pressure for change, and as Berry and Padillo argue, causes groups to protect themselves and maintain their identity.<sup>7</sup> The relatively hostile environment in Danzig served group maintenance and continuity as has been pointed out in the thesis.

The case for continuity has been adequately demonstrated but there is also evidence of change in the Flemish community. Adaptation to the dominant culture is unavoidable for an ethnic/religious group as pointed out by anthropologist Edwards when he says, "History is dynamic and so are group processes; change, rather than stasis, is the order of the day."<sup>8</sup> The change that occurs must be examined in terms of its effect on group identity for change or adaptation does not necessarily mean loss of group identity. For the Dutch Mennonites in Poland change was indicated by the gradual adoption of the German language. Not only was there some change in the Flemish group but Hansen, when compared with his

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<sup>6</sup>Barth, Ethnic Groups, 36-37.

<sup>7</sup>Berry, "Acculturation," 11; Padillo, "Cultural Awareness," 50.

<sup>8</sup>Edwards, Language and Identity, 168.

predecessors, modified two issues of faith. First this writer has suggested that Hansen accepted the Apocrypha as canonical. In this he parted company with Menno. It was duly noted that Hansen nowhere categorically affirms this acceptance but it is rather obvious from the way he used the Apocrypha. In this he stood close to the Catholics. Hansen's citing the Apocrypha was not unique, both Menno and Dirk referred to them as well. It is his apparent acceptance of its authority that is unique.

A second issue in which he modified the Anabaptist practice was in ceasing to baptize converts from non-Mennonite churches. In doing this Hansen complied with the requirement of the Polish state and Catholic and Lutheran Churches that Mennonites were not to proselytize. The Mennonites fled the Netherlands so that they could baptize converts as well as stop baptizing infants. Menno and Leenaert Bouwens baptized converts regardless of their background and threatened opposition. Hansen's action stands in sharp contrast to Menno's and Leenaert's activity. It was suggested that Hansen made this accommodation because in Poland the Mennonites had lived in relative peace and as a result the radical drive to follow through on one's faith regardless of consequences had probably lessened. In addition, it was a common practice for individuals from among the Mennonites to travel to the Netherlands and while there receive baptism. Hansen saw this as an option for converts from non-Mennonite groups especially

since there were relatively few converts. Hansen's accommodation therefore was in part a result of the different social and political context he lived in as compared to Menno. Hansen, true to Mennonite form, justified his action by appealing to Paul's escape from Damascus.

Ethnic identity and continuity of faith were maintained through the educational process of the Mennonites. For Mennonites to be baptized they had to be able to read because they had to request baptism as well as give a confession of their faith. In the Mennonite Churches including the Flemish, the adult decision to be baptized was done on the basis of understanding what they were doing and this involved a minimal level of literacy. That every member learned to read was unique to the Anabaptists community in early Modern Europe. Being able to read implied that each person could examine the teaching of the Mennonite Church and upon accepting it strengthened his informed personal commitment to the church. The leadership system in the Flemish church, which meant any male member could be elected to be a deacon, minister or elder, assumed and required a minimum level of reading ability.

Finally, ethnic identity and continuity was maintained through mutual aid. When the Socinians threatened the Mennonites, the Frisian, Jan Gerrits requested urgent help from the Netherlands, though with limited success. When war and flood devastated the Werder, the Dutch as well as the

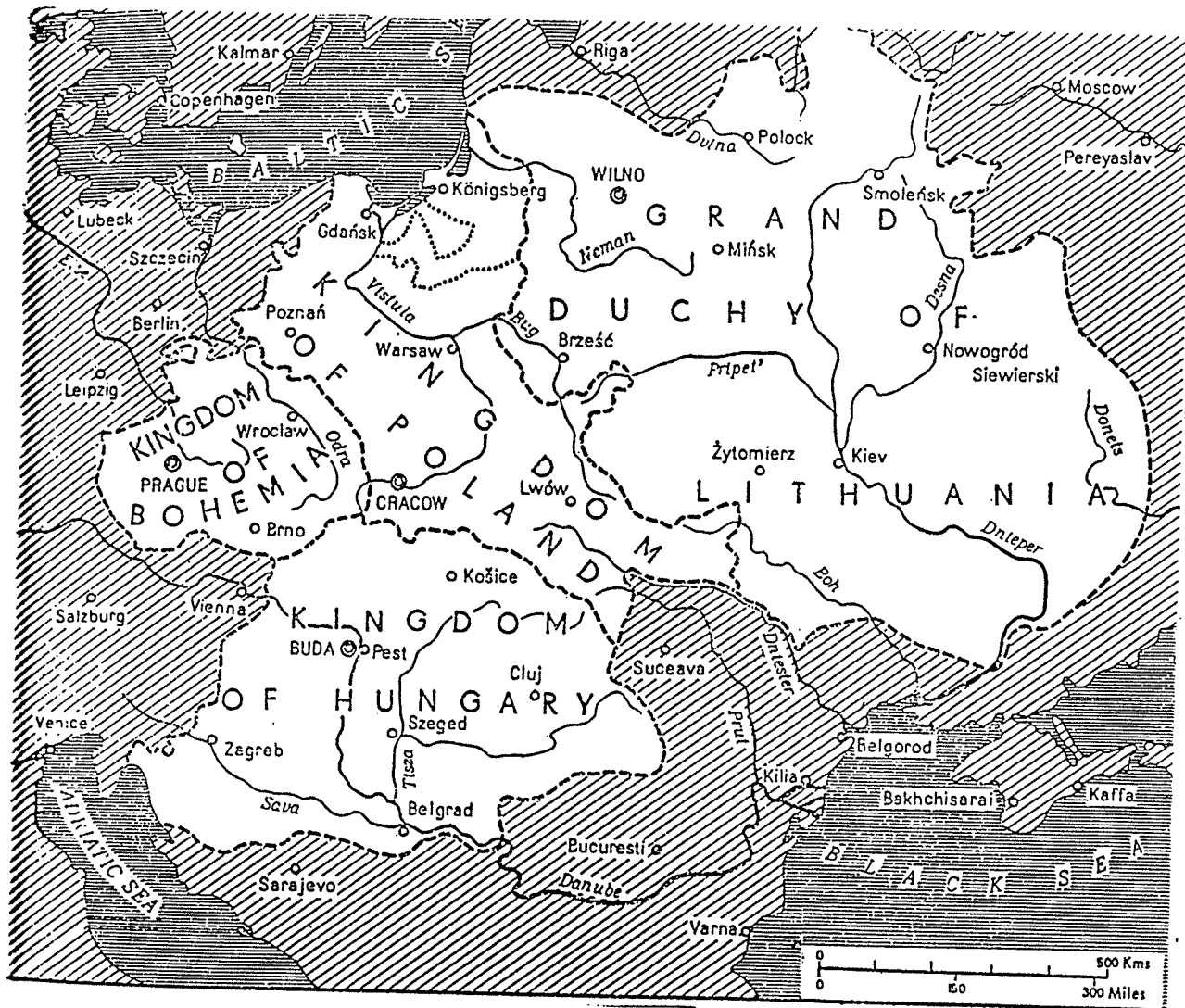


German Mennonites sent significant amounts of aid. This mutual aid served in the interest of continuity. The correspondence between the Dutch and Polish Mennonites maintained a close contact between the two groups. Visitors travelling back and forth maintained contact as well as Elders and preachers were exchanged as needed. Gerrits moved to Poland from Emden while Dirk Philips had been asked to come to Amsterdam to help solve a problem. The fact that some churches in Amsterdam called themselves the Danzig Mennonite Church is further evidence of the effectiveness of the contact between the Mennonites of the two countries. The forming of a fire insurance company in 1623, as well as building homes for the sick and aged were part of the local mutual program that helped maintain group cohesiveness.

When Georg Hansen died in 1703, the Flemish Church lost a significant leader, but it did not cause the church to stumble. Engman who had been co-elder with Hansen for nine years took over. Under the leadership of Hansen the Flemish Mennonite Church in Danzig and environs had changed only slightly. It would take another seventy-five years before acculturation would be more noticeable though total integration never occurred. Hansen, a strong leader, had effectively helped the Flemish to maintain continuity of their faith and to retain their group identity.

APPENDIX I

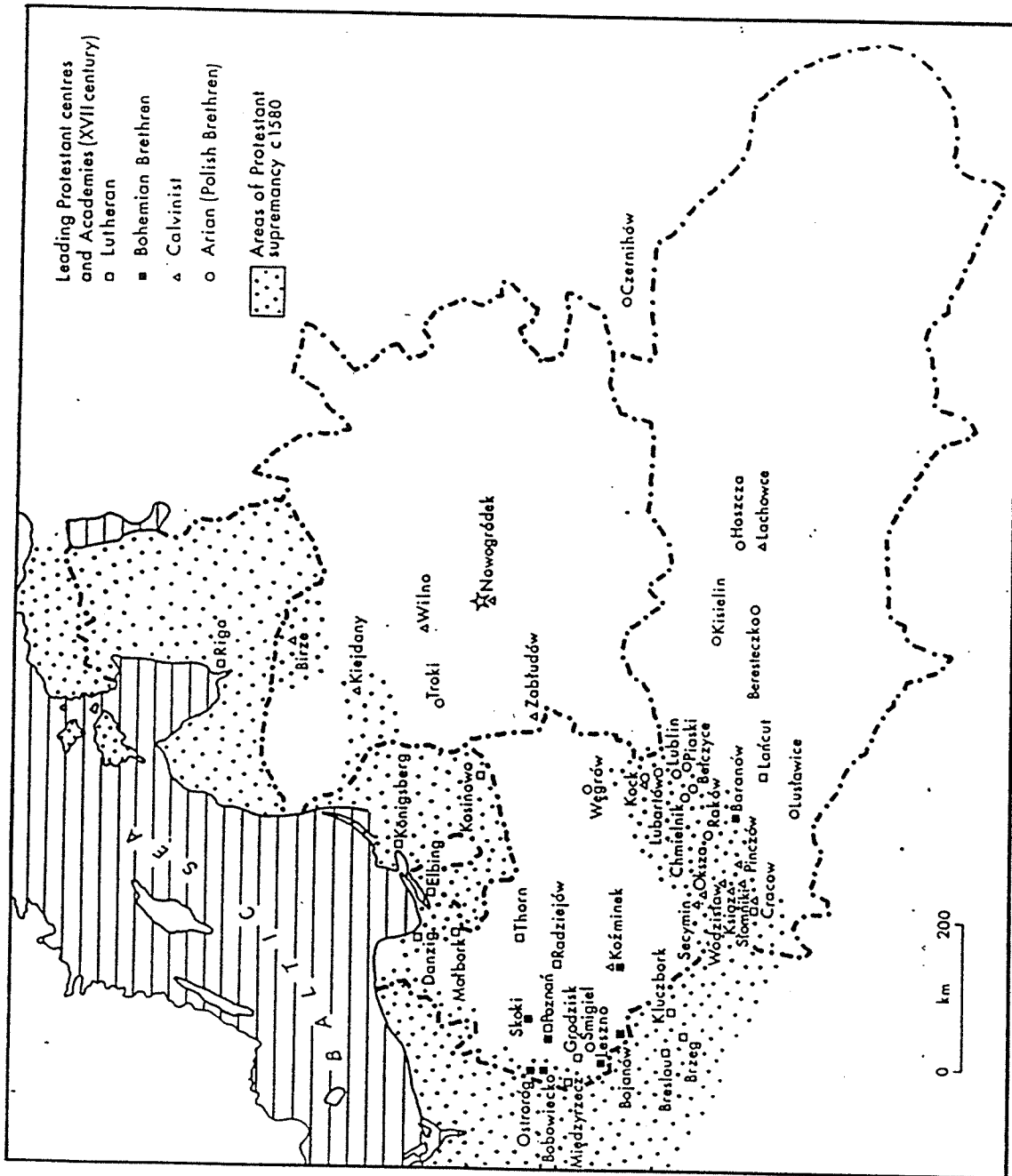
The Dominions of the Jagiellonian Dynasty, 15th/16th Century<sup>1</sup>



The dominions of the Jagiellonian dynasty, 15th/16th cent.

APPENDIX II

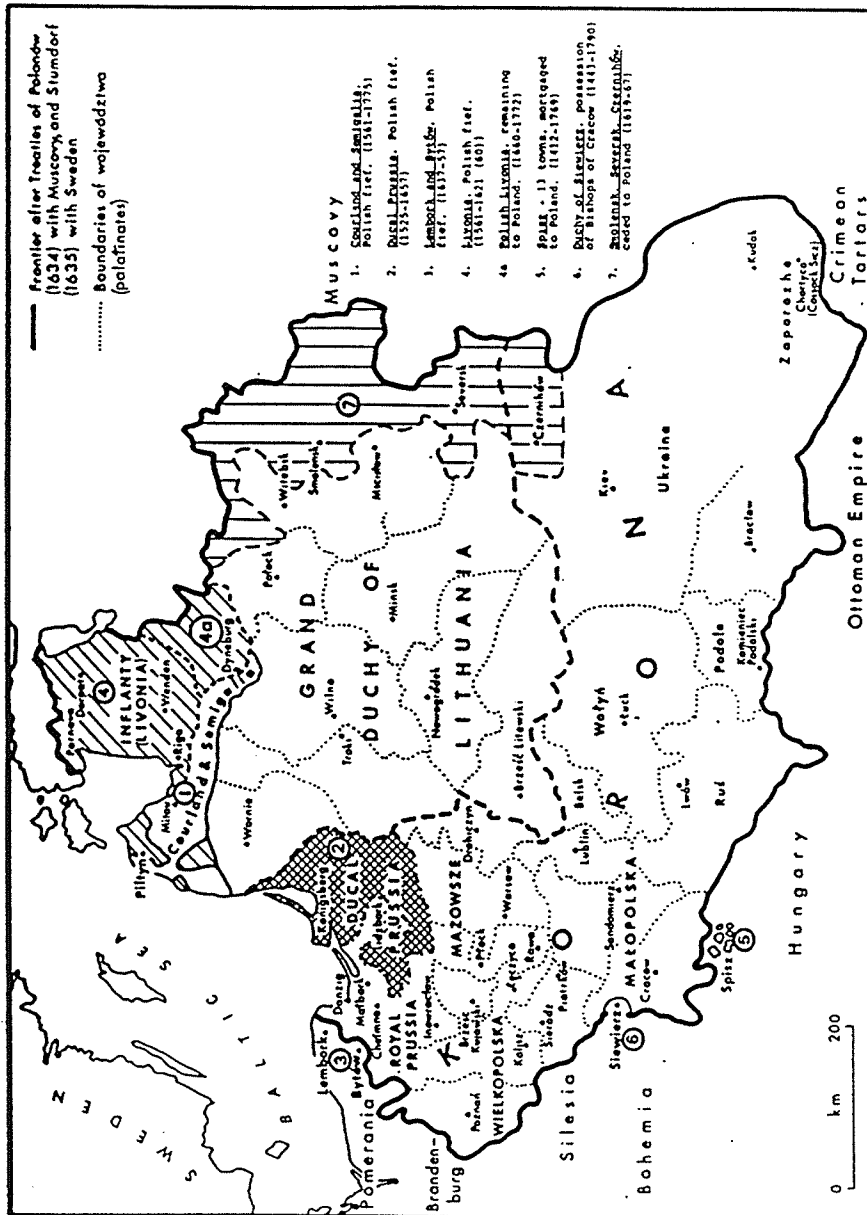
Reformation Centres in Poland-Lithuania<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup>Davies, *God's Playgroud*, 178.

APPENDIX III

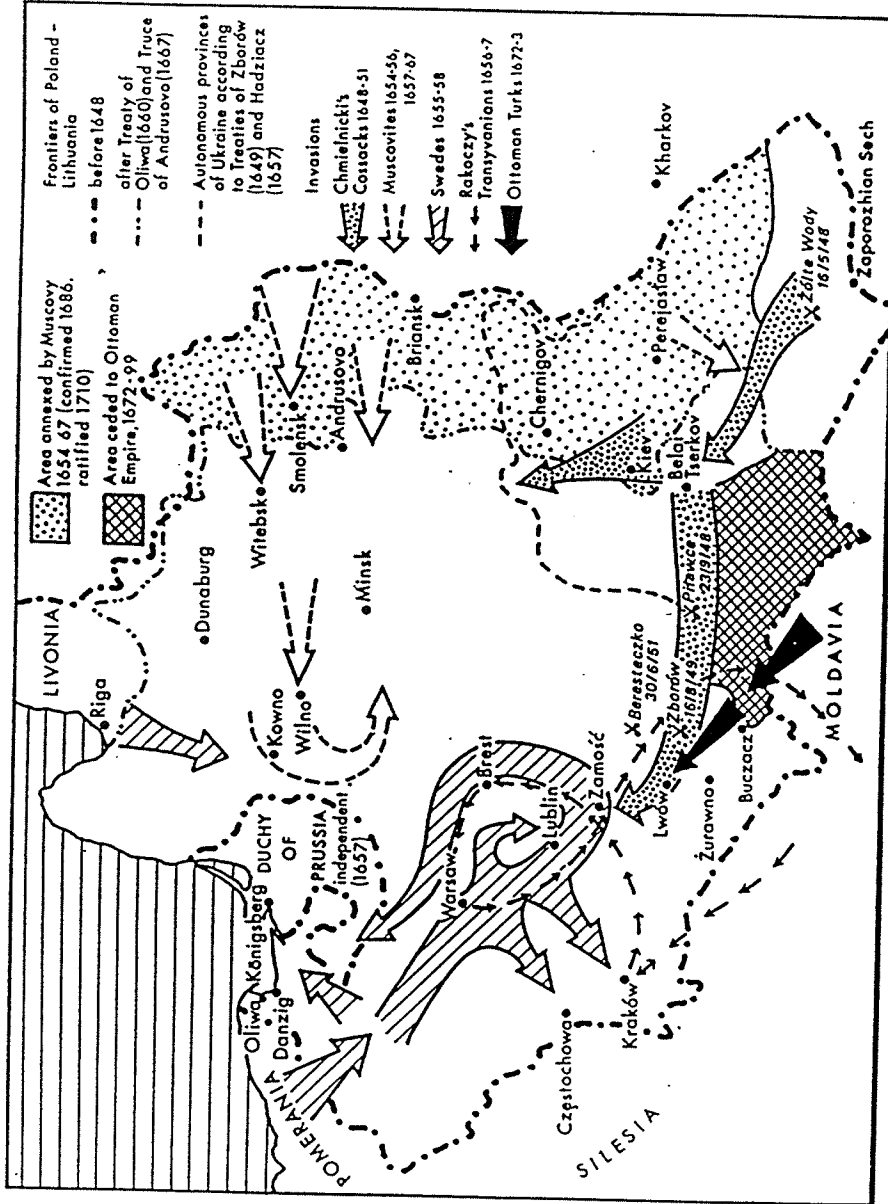
Poland-Lithuania at its Greatest Extent, 1634-1635<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 449.

APPENDIX IV

The Deluge - Invasion of Poland-Lithuania, 1648-1667<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 464.

APPENDIX V

Social Groups in the Sixteenth Century<sup>5</sup>

A. According to the assessment of the poll-tax of 1520 (simplified)

300 fl. 150-50 fl. 25 10-1	Primate Bishops and dependents Abbots Secular clergy Monastic clergy Church officials University scholars	CLERGY and dependents
¼ gr.	Students	
60-50 fl. 10 fl. 30 fl.	Senators Non-senatorial ministers Territorial officers Crown monopolists	CROWN OFFICIALS
½ fl. + 1 florin for every village	Possessionati	
½ fl.	Sołtys (Village headman) Non-possessionati (Petty nobility).	NOBILITY and their dependents
10 gr. 3 gr. 2 gr. 1 gr.	Hereditary taverners & millers Estate officials Skilled workmen Free peasant households	
5 fl. 4 fl. 30-10 gr. 6 gr. 2 gr. 1 gr.	Patricians Magistrates Merchants Guildsmen Apprentices Domestics & servants	CITY POPULATION
Jews 3,000 fl. joint assessment		
		JEWS

B. According to tax brackets constructed from the poll-tax assessment of 1590 (after A. Wyczański)

①	Primate Bishops	600-200 zł.
②	Senators (Magnates) Abbots Ministers Crown monopolists	100-50 zł. Żupnik Customs
③	Territorial officers Deans, canons. Merchants of means	30-10 zł.
④	Middle clergy Middle noblemen Lower titular officials Mastercraftsmen Middling merchants	8-3 zł.
⑤	Petty nobles, (zagrodowa) University personnel Orthodox clergy Tradesmen & artisans	2 zł-16 gr.
⑥	Monastic clergy Poorest clergy. Hired workers. Free peasants.	15-5 gr.
⑦	Domestics, Peasants	4-2 gr.
⑧	Poor labourers Apprentices Students.	½ gr.
	Jews (self-assessed)	

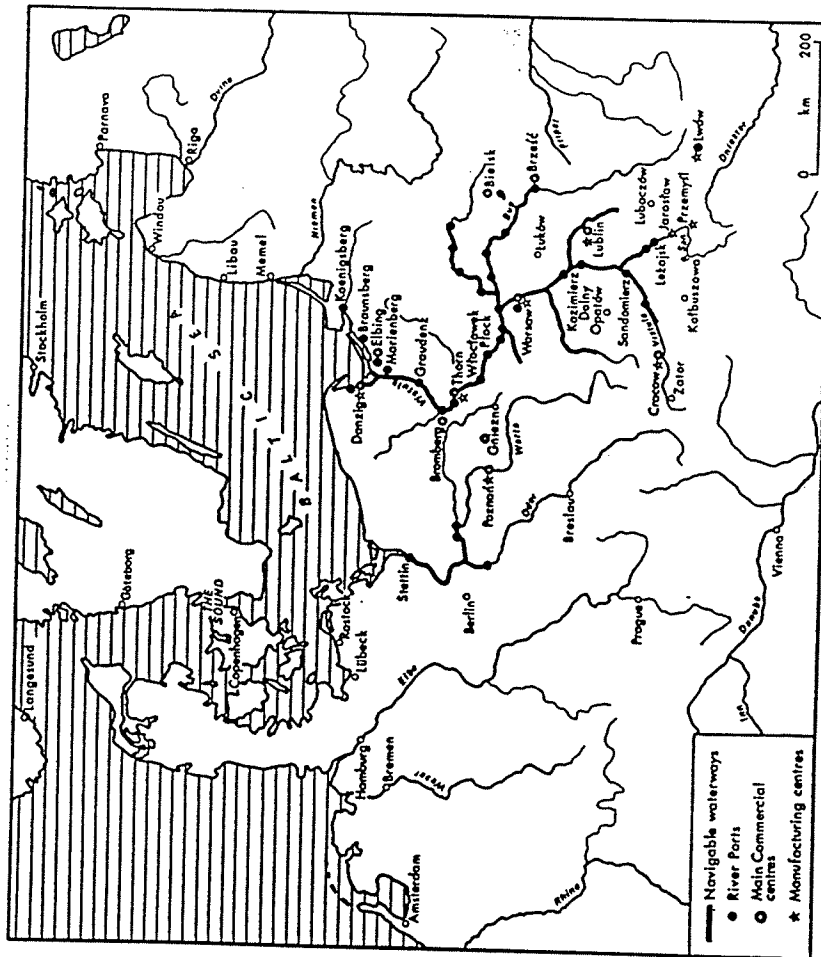
Social Groups in the Sixteenth Century

a) According to the Poll-tax of 1520

b) Tax Brackets, (after A. Wyczański)

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 220.

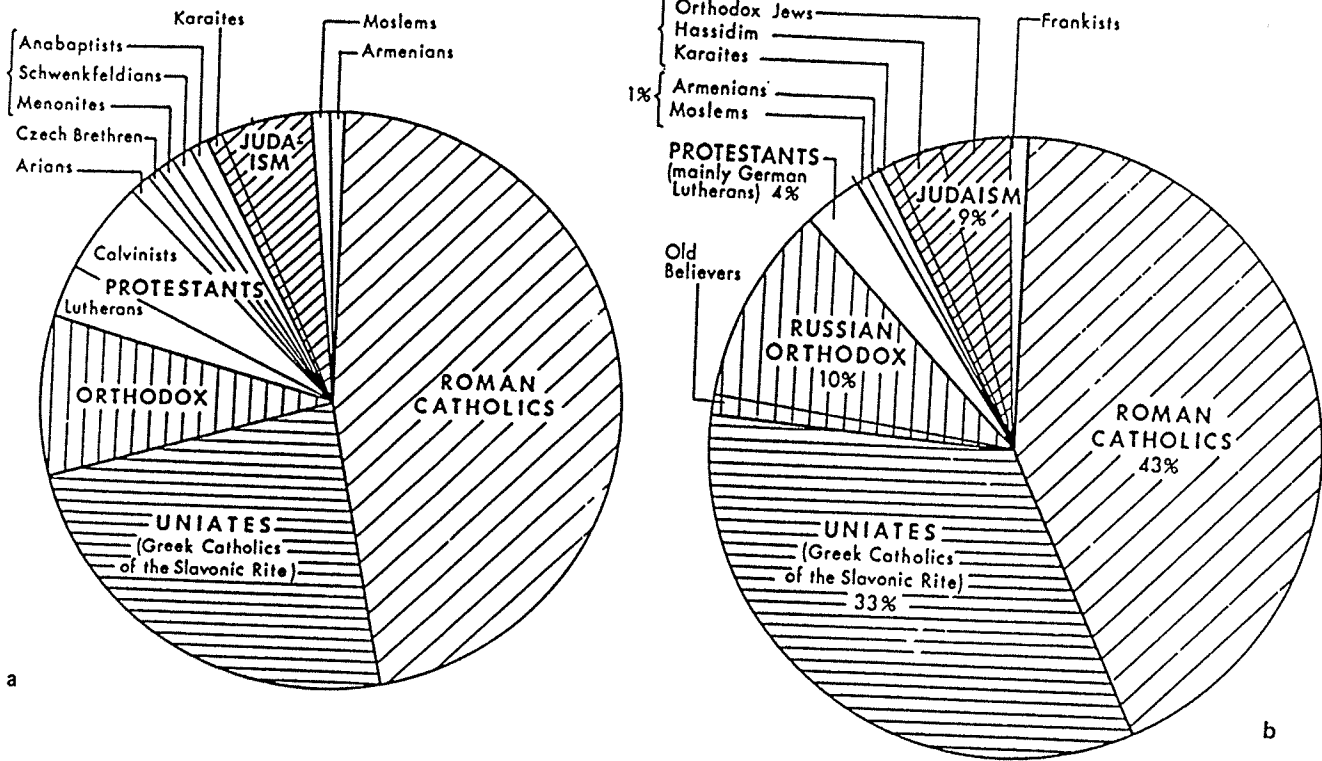
APPENDIX VI  
The Vistula Trade<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 259.

APPENDIX VII

Religious Groups in Poland-Lithuania - 1660 and 1672<sup>7</sup>

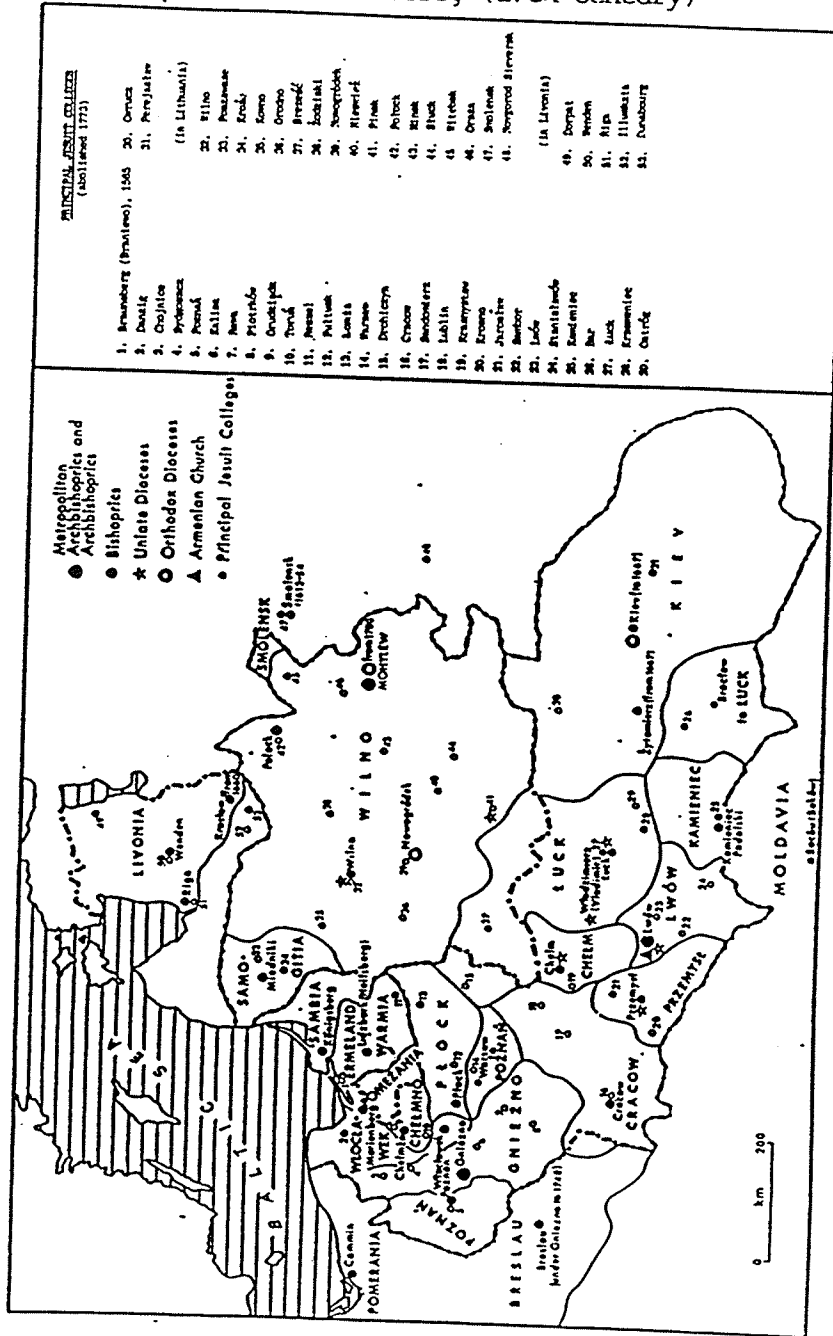


The Religious Communities of Poland-Lithuania  
 a) in 1660      b) in 1772



APPENDIX VIII

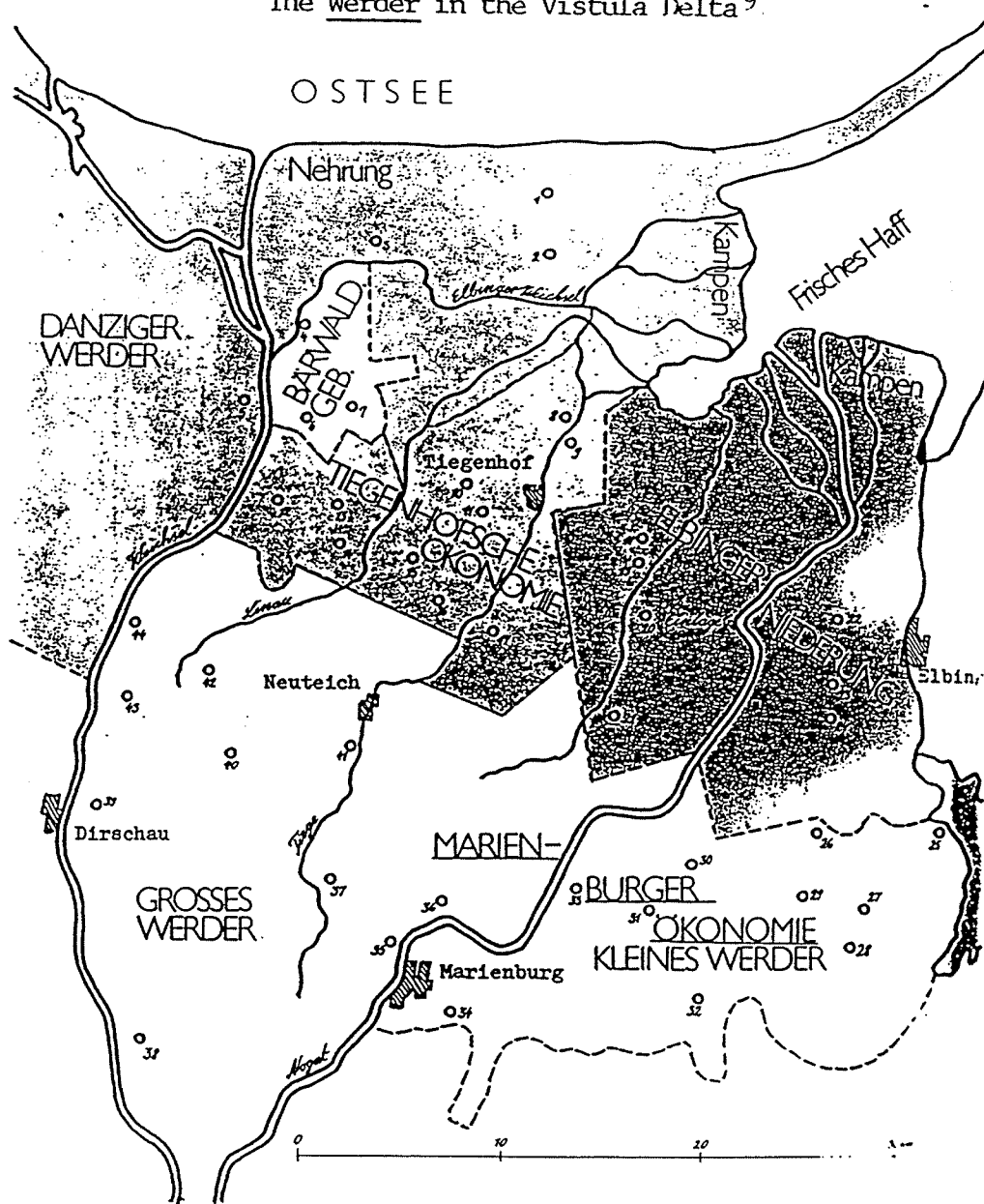
Ecclesiastical Diocese, (17th Century)<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 169.

APPENDIX IX

The Werder in the Vistula Delta<sup>9</sup>

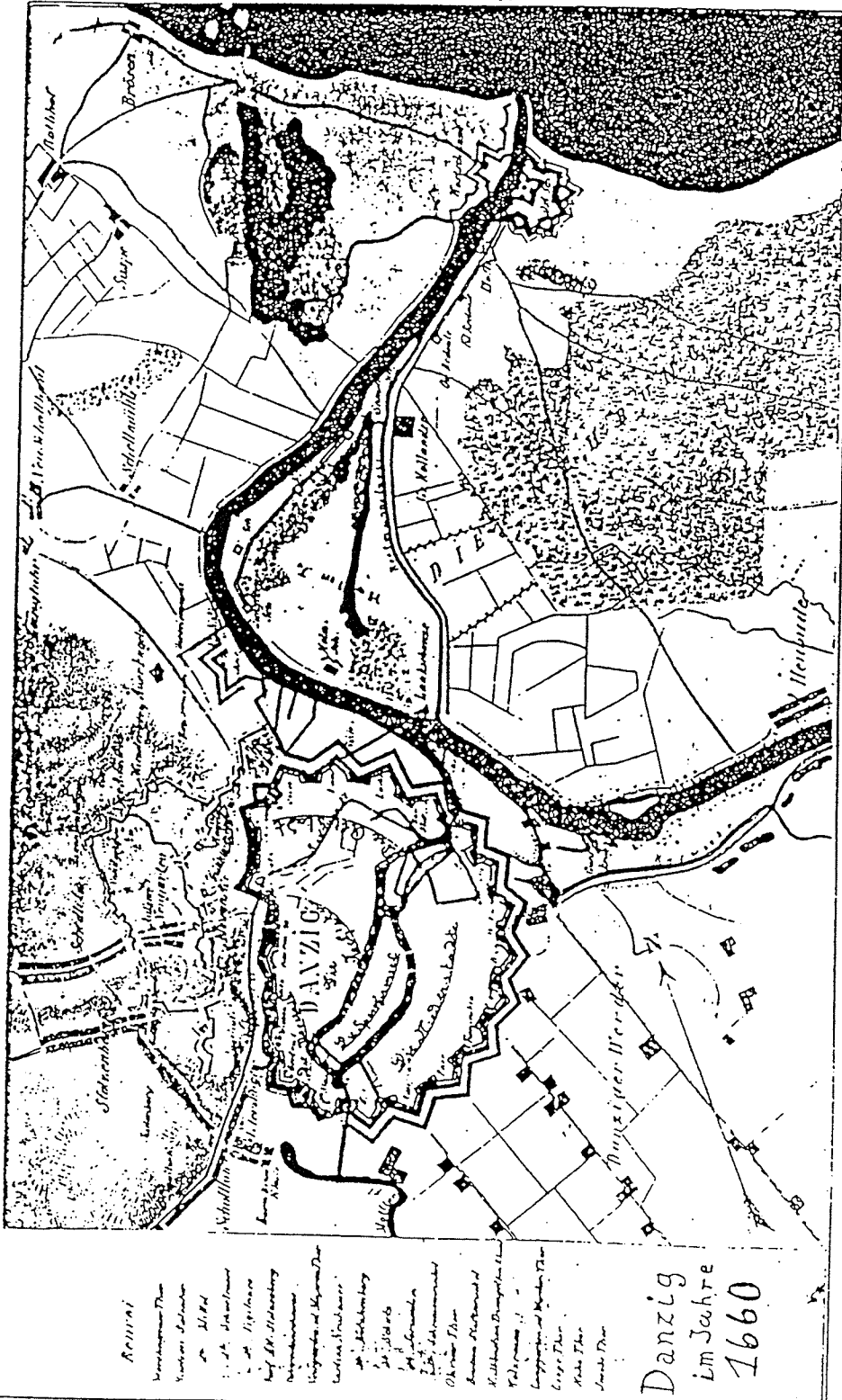


Die Verwaltungsbezirke im Weichseldelta 16. bis 18. Jh. Vgl. S. 120.

<sup>9</sup>Permer, Ost- und Westpreussischen Mennoniten, Picture Section.

APPENDIX X

The City of Danzig, 1660<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup>MGR 20 (1958), 40.

APPENDIX XI

Decree of Augustus II, 1732<sup>11</sup>

AUGUSTUS SECUNDUS, DEI GRATIA REX POLONIAE, Magnus Dux Lithuaniae, Russiae, Prussiae, Masoviae, Samogitiae, Kyoviae, Volhyniae, Podoliae, Podlachiae, Livoniae, Smolensciae, Severiae, Czernichoviaeque: Nec non Haereditarius Dux Saxoniae et Princeps Elector, etc.

Significamus praesentibus Literis Nostris quorum interest Universis et Singulis. Quia prout in felici Coronatione Nostra Cracoviae die vigesima Mensis Septembris Anno Domini MDCXCVII Mennonistis (quos Serenissimi Praedecessores Nostri ex Hollandia vocarunt, et eorum Opera, ac industria in Insulis Mariaeburgensibus, ad Exstirpandos fundos, agros, prata, aggeres, molendinorum aedificationem pro expellendis aquis usi sunt, hosque ipsi labores et impensas, ad utilitatem publicam Oeconomiarum Nostrarum facere non cessant) pro ipsorum circa hanc rem Oeconomicam Conservatione et Manutentione Omnia eorum Jura, Privilegia, et Immunitates a Serenissimis Antecessoribus Nostris largitas approbaveramus et confirmaveramus, ita et ad praesens non solum eadem Privilegia Serenissimorum Antecessorum Nostrorum sed etiam quasvis Spirituales ipsis Concessionones, Commissionones, Ordinationes a Loci Ordinaris praecipue a Reverendis in Christo Patribus, Casimiro Joanne Oppalinski, Michaelę Cardinali Radziejowski, Theodoro Potocki, Felici Ignatio Kretkowski et moderno Reverendo in Christo Patre Francisco Czapski Episcopo Culmensi, permissas, quo ad liberum eorum Religionis exercitium et in Privatis domibus seu Scholis antiquisque in locis solitam Devotionem peragenda, Administrationes baptizandi, Communicandique, Matrimonia contrahendi, et in coemeteriis Cadaverum etiam Minorennium sepeliendi, ac Juventutem per suos Scholiarchas in loco Communi et Domo eorum solita instruendi aliasque facultates Spirituales ipsis concessas ratihabendas esse censuimus, prout ratihabemus, circaque easdem omnes tam Saeculares quam Spirituales Concessionones et Immunitates eosdem Mennonistas in Prussia manentes manutenemus et ne in iisdem juribus, Immunitatibus, exercitioque Religionis suae, Liberis in Coemeterio Cadaverum etiam Minorennium Sepulturis, Juventutis suae per suos Scholiarchas, in loco ipsis solito et beneviso Instructione, per temerariam privatorum vexam ac indebitam et illicitam emunctionem inturbentor, severe sub poenis in

<sup>11</sup>Hildebrand, Hildebrand's Zeittaffel, 19.

violatores Privilegiorum Nostrorum inhibemus et interdici-  
mus. Quod ad Notitiam omnium, quorum interest, praesertim  
vero Magnificorum Palatinorum, Capitaneorum, Terrarum  
Prussiae atque Generosorum Oeconomi, Vice Oeconomi et  
Administratorum, aliorumque Officialium Oeconomiae nostrae  
Mariaeburgensis, nunc et protempore existentium, deducendo,  
ipsis mandamus quatenus circa praemissa Jura, Privilegia,  
Immunitates tam in Saecularibus, quam in Spiritualibus ipsis  
concessas in quantum Juris est, et usus eorum habetur eos  
manuteneant et Conservent, manutenerique et conservari ab  
Omnibus curent, pro Gratia Nostra et Officiorum suorum  
debito Juribus Nostris Regalibus, Reipublicae Ecclesiaeque  
Sanctae Romano-Catholicae salvis.

In cujus rei fidem praesentes manu Nostra Subscriptas  
Sigillo Regni communiri jussimus.

Datum Varsaviae die XVIII Octobris, Anno Domini  
MDCCXXXII.

Regni vero Nostri XXXVI Anno.

AUGUSTUS REX.

Confirmatio Generalis Jurium et Privilegiorum Mennon-  
istis in Prussia Servientium.

Andreas Skwarcynski,

Sae. Rae. Mts. Secretarius.

Locus Sigilli.

Wir, August II.

Von Gottes Gnaden König von Polen, Großfürst in Lithuanien, Neuf-  
sen, Preussen, Masuren, Samogitien, Kiejew, Wolhynien, Podolien,  
Podlachien, Plesland, Smolenski, Severien und Czernigow, so wie Erb-  
fürst von Sachsen und Princeps Elector, etc.

Thun kund durch gegenwärtigen Unseren Brief allen und jeden,  
die es angeht. Wie Wir bei Unserer glücklichen Thronbesteigung in Stra-  
kau am 20 ten September 1697 den Mennijten, die Unsere Erlauchte-  
sten Vorfahren aus Holland berufen haben, und deren Mühe und Fleiß  
sie in den Marienburger Wärdern zur Urbarmachung der Ländereien,  
Wäder und Wiesen und zur Erbauung von Wassermühlen gebraucht  
haben und welche selbst diese Mühen und Ausgaben zum öffentlichen  
Nutzen Unserer Deconomien sich zu machen nicht aufhören, wie Wir  
besagten Mennonijten also zu ihrer eignen Erhaltung und Beschützung  
in dieser die Deconomie betreffenden Angelegenheit alle ihre Rechte,  
Privilegien und Befreiungen von öffentlichen Leistungen, die ihnen von  
Unseren Erlauchten Vorfahren geschenkt sind, approbirt und bestätigt  
haben, so haben Wir gemeint, ihnen gegenwärtig nicht allein diese  
Privilegien Unserer Erlauchten Vorfahren sondern auch alle geistli-  
chen Conzessionen, Commissionen und Ordinationen bestätigen zu müß-  
sen, welche von den Ordinariis loci, besonders von den Hochwürdigem  
Vätern in Christo, Casimir Johann Opalinski, dem Cardinal Michael  
Radziowski, Theodor Potocki, Felix Ignaz Kretkowski und neuerdings  
dem Hochwürdigem Vater in Christo Czapski, Bischof von Kulm, ihnen  
gewährt sind, insoweit sie das freie Exercitium ihrer Religion und die  
gewohnte Gottesverehrung in Privathäusern, Schulen, und den alten

Stätten, die Verrichtung der Taufe und des Abendmahls, der Eheschließung, des Begräbnisses der Leichen auch der Unerwachsenen, d.h. noch nicht Getauften, auf Kirchhöfen, des Unterrichts der Kinder durch eigene Schulmeister an einem gemeinsamen Orte oder in ihrem gewohnten Schulhause und andere geistliche Befugnisse, die ihnen zugestanden sind, betreffen.

Wie Wir sie denn bestätigen und bei allen jenen weltlichen, wie geistlichen Erlaubnissen und Freyheiten die in Preußen bleibenden Mennonisten erhalten, damit sie nicht in diesen Rechten und Freyheiten und der Ausübung ihrer Religion, dem freien Begräbnis ihrer Leichen, auch derer der Minorennen, am Unterrichte ihrer Jugend durch eigne Schulmeister an den ihnen gut scheinenden und gewohnten Orten durch die verwegene Quälerei und ungebührliche und unerlaubte Übervorteilung von Seiten einiger Privatleute gestört werden, so hemmen und unterlagen Wir selbige unter der gegen die Verlecker Unserer Privilegien festgesetzten Strafe. Indem Wir dies zur Nachricht aller derjenigen, die es angeht, zumal aber den hohen Wohlmoden und Starcken der Preussischen Länder, des hochedlen Deconomus, Viceconomus und der Administratoren und anderer Beamten Unserer Marienburger Deconomie, darthun, befehlen Wir ihnen, daß sie dieselben bey vorbenannten Rechten, Privilegien, Befreyungen, die ihnen sowol in weltlichen, wie geistlichen Dingen zugestanden sind, soweit des Rechts ist, erhalten und schützen und sie von Allen schützen und erhalten lassen bey Unserer Gnade und ihrer Amtspflicht, jedoch unbeschadet Unserer Regalien und der Rechte der Republik, wie der römisch-katholischen Kirche.

Zur Beglaubigung haben Wir Gegenwärtiges eigenhändig unterschrieben und mit dem Reichssiegel bekräftigen lassen.

Gegeben zu Warschau am 18. October 1732 Unseres Reiches im 36ten Jahre.

August, König.

(L. S.)

Die Originale der Urkunden 3 — 5 befinden sich in den Händen der Mennonitengemeinde im Kleinen Marienburger Werder. Sie sind hier abgedruckt nach mehreren gerichtlich beglaubigten Abschriften der Generalbestätigungsurkunden von August II. (15. April 1736) und von Stanislaus August (22. December 1774).

Der Wortlaut des Manifestes Katharinas II. ist unter „22. Juli 1763“ und der des Manifestes Paul's I. unter „6. September 1800“ dieser Zeittafel nachzulesen.

#### Extract.

aus dem von Seiner Durchlaucht dem Herrn Reichsfürsten G. M. Potemkin-Lawritscheffij den Deputierten der Danziger Mennonisten bewilligten und von Ihro Russisch-Kaiserlichen Majestät Allergnädigst konfirmierten Privilegiis wie folgt, als:

Bittende Punkte der Mennonisten:

Entscheidung:

1.

1.

Daß ungehinderte Religionsübung nach ihren Kirchensatzungen und Gebräuchen erlaubt werde.

Wird zugestanden.

2.

Anzuweisen: A) Für jede Familie zu fünf und sechzig Dessätin, gegenüber der Stadt Berislav, längs dem Fluße Konskaja am Berekopschen Wege rechter Hand, ohne das untaugliche Land in die Zahl der fünfundsechzig Dessätinen mitzurechnen.

2

B) Es wird befohlen werden das Land anzuweisen.

B) Und die gegenüber Werslaw liegende Insel Lawan mit allen sie umfließenden Gewässern und herumliegenden Inseln worauf bis jetzt noch niemand einen Ukas oder Plan hat; dieses ist ihnen wegen der Heuschläge unentbehrlich.

C) Willige Gewalt über die Fischerei im Dnepr und in den Konstkischen Gewässern, soweit ihre Grenzen reichen, mit dem Verbot, daß Fremde dieses ihr Privilegium in ihren Grenzen nicht benutzen dürfen.

D) Da auf den oben beschriebenen Ländereien keine Waldungen befindlich, und diese ihnen zur Feuerung unumgänglich notwendig sind, so bitten sie unterthänigst, daß ihnen von denen auf der Insel Kairo befindlichen, noch nicht vergebenen eintausend fünfhundert Dessätinen, wenigstens die Hälfte der daselbst befindlichen Waldungen zu ihrem Gebrauche abgegeben werde.

3.

Eine zehnjährige Befreiung von allen Abgaben.

4.

Daß nach Ablauf der 10 Freijahre verfügt und auf immer unverlezt bestimmt werde, jährlich für eine Dessätine von jeder Familie fünfzehn Kopelen zu bezahlen, mit ewiger Befreyung von Podwoden, einquartierung und Kronz-Arbeiten.

5.

Daß jedem unter ihnen, dem es gut dünken wird, erlaubt werde, außer der Landwirtschaft in den Städten und Dörfern der Eaterinoslawischen Statthalterschaft oder des Laurischen Gebietes Fabriken und andere

B) Von dieser Insel kann nur ein Teil angewiesen werden, denn wegen des Baues einer Brücke über den Dnepr daselbst und wegen vieler andern Kronzarbeiten muß ein nicht geringer Teil derselben bey der Krone bleiben.

C) Das Recht wird ihnen vorbehalten, die Fischereien in denen ihre Ländereien bespülenden Gewässern zu benutzen, wie es gesetzmäßig ist.

D) Eine nicht große Quantität wird abgegeben werden.

3.

Zugestanden.

4.

Dieses wird hiemit bestätigt und sobald die 10 Jahre verfloßen sind, so will die Krone für jedes in den Besitzungen der Mennonisten befindliches Land fünfzehn Kopelen @ Dessätin haben, sie werden auch von Podwoden, Arbeiten und Einquartierungen befrehet, außer zu Zeiten wenn wo irgend einige Kommandos durchgehen und daß die Brücken in ihren Besitzungen unterhalten werden.

für sie notwendigen Gewerbe anzulegen, desgleichen auch zu handeln und in Kunstgemeinschaften zu treten und daß denen Fabrikanten und Künstlern ungehindert und ohne alle Abgaben sowohl in den Städten als auch in den Dörfern erlaubt werde, ihre Handarbeiten zu verkaufen.

6.

Daß laut dem am 22. Juli 1763 bekannt gemachten gedruckten Allerhöchsten Manifest einer jeden Mennonisten-Familie, die hilfsbedürftig seyn wird, zur Einrichtung ihrer Wirtschaft fünfhundert Rubel vorgehoßen werde, so daß mit der Auszahlung bey ihrer Ankunft in der Stadt Riga jeden Monat zu hundert Rubel der Anfang gemacht wird welche Summe sie nach Verfluß der zehn Freyhahre, dem Allerhöchsten Manifest gemäß, ohne Interessen in den drey folgenden Jahren an die Krone wieder zu bezahlen schuldig sind.

7.

Daß die Versicherung ihrer unverbrüchlichen Treue von ihnen und ihren Nachkommen nach ihrem Religions-Ritus angenommen werde.

8.

Daß sie und ihre Nachkommen auf ewige Zeiten von allen Kriegsdiensten befrehet werden, weil die Grundsätze ihrer Religion ihnen schlechterdings in Kriegsdienst zu treten verbieten.

9.

Daß nach ihrer Ankunft aus Danzig für jede Familie zum Bau eines ordentlichen Hauses nach deutscher Art alle notwendigen Materialien, desgleichen auch für sie alle zusammen eichenes Holz für zwei Mühlen und 6 gute Mühlsteine, nebst anderen zu zwey guten Mühlen nöthigen Sachen vorrätig angeschafft werden, damit sie bey ihrer Ankunft mit Hilfe einiger Kronsarbeiter dieses alles selbst aufbauen können.

10.

Daß jede Familie von denen, die nach Rußland emigriren wollen, zum Unterhalte auf der Reise selbst mit Geld versehen werden.

5.

Dieses wird erlaubt, nur nicht anders, als der Staatsordnung gemäß.

6.

Wird bestätigt.

7.

Dieses soll nach ihrem Gebrauch geschehen.

8.

Sie werden von dem Zwange zu Kriegsdienste befreht.

9.

Es sollen für jede Familie einhundert und zwanzig Balken von 4 Faden (28 Fuß) und die nötige Anzahl von Balken zu zwey Mühlen und 6 Steine gegeben werden.

10.

Für die Reise und ihren Reiseunterhalt wird bezahlt werden.



11.

Daß allen den an rußischen Grenzen angekommenen Familien bis Berislavl Fuhrwerke und Pferde gegeben werden und daß jeder Person von dem Tage ihrer Ankunft an dieser Grenze bis zur Beendigung dieser Reise zu 25 Kopelen pro Tag ausbezahlt werde. (Der mehrfachen Verbote der Auswanderung wegen war dieses besonders für solche notwendig, die sich in aller Stille auf den Weg machten.)

12.

Daß sie aus besonderer Schuld von der Wiedererstattung der ihnen nach dem 10. und 11. Punkt ausgezahlten Geldern, desgleichen auch für die Materialien zum Bau ihrer Häuser, dergestalt befreuet werden, daß sie diese auch nach Verfluß der 10 Freijahre nicht bezahlen dürfen, weil die Krone nicht wenig Nutzen haben wird, da die Mennonisten gute Fabrikanten und Künstler mit sich bringen und dadurch in kurzer Zeit durch Arbeitsamkeit im Feldbau und andern vorteilhaften Einrichtungen alle für sie verwendeten Kosten vergütet werden.

13.

Daß ihnen, bis ihre Häuser erbauet sind, die jenseits des Flusses Konstije Wode leerstehenden Quarantainegebäude eingeräumt und ordentliche Zelte für die Bauleute gegeben, denen übrigen Mennonisten einige Wohnungen in der Stadt Berislavl angewiesen werden.

14.

Daß allen Mennonisten am Tage ihrer Ankunft in Berislavl bis zur ersten Ernte für jede Person zehn Kopelen gereicht werden, mit der Bedingung, daß nach Verfluß der zehn Freijahre in den drei folgenden Jahren diese Summe wieder bezahlt wird, aber nur ohne Interessen.

15.

Daß nach Berislavl und Laurien Befehle geschickt werden, damit auf denen ihnen anzutweisenden Wäldereyen Holz zu hauen verboten und daß noch in diesem Jah-

11.

Fuhrwerke und Pferde werden ohne Ueberfluß gegeben werden, was aber die Gelder anbelangt; so soll eine jede Person männlichen und weiblichen Geschlechts die über 15 Jahre ist, — 25 Kop. die aber darunter sind — 12 Kop. erhalten.

12.

Das hängt von der Allerhöchsten Gnade S. M. Kaiserlichen Majestät ab.

13.

Wohnungen und Zelte sollen sie bekommen, aber nur auf eine zeitlang, welches alles sie wiederzugeben verbunden sind; Quartiere sollen ihnen gleichfalls angewiesen werden.

14.

Zugestanden.

re gar kein Vieh auf die von ihnen zu bit-  
tenden Stellen weiden gelassen werde, da-  
mit sie genugsame Gras für ihr eignes  
Vieh haben mögen.

16.

Wenn vielleicht nach ihnen viele Familien  
von Mennonisten nach Rußland zu emigri-  
ren sich entschließen möchten, daß dieselben  
einerley Rechte und Vorzüge mit ihnen ge-  
nießen und ihnen erlaubt werde, sich in  
den herrlichen und fruchtbaren, die sie,  
nämlich die Deputierten, in Bewunderung  
geseht haben, nämlich in Staro-Krym, Fe-  
odosia, Wasschi-Sarai und andern Orten,  
wo sie selbst verlangen werden und wo die  
Ländereyen noch nicht vergeben sind, sich  
niederzulassen, und mit dem Bedinge, daß  
sie keine Bürgschaft für die Gelder zu lei-  
sten verbunden sind, die für dieselben ver-  
braucht werden, welches sie untereinander  
ausmachen können.

17.

Daß Allergnädigst beschloßen werde, zu ih-  
nen den Herrn v. Trappe zum andern Ma-  
le mit gehörigen Instruktionen zu senden,  
der sie zur Emigration nach Rußland be-  
wogen und willig gemacht hat, und dem  
alle ihre Umstände ganz genau bekannt  
sind, derselbe auch imstande ist, alle Hin-  
dernisse abzuwenden, die ihnen in Danzig  
wegen ihrer Ablassung aufstossen könnten,  
und sicher für ihre Nothwendigkeit sorgen  
kann, und wenn sie in Laurien angekom-  
men sein werden, daß er ferner seiner er-  
haltenen Instruktion gemäß zu ihrem Di-  
rektor und Curator verordnet werde, da-  
mit er sie in ihren Einrichtungen zurecht  
weisen und für ihre Ruhe und Sicherheit  
sorgen möge.

18.

Daß nach ihrer Ankunft in Berislawl ih-  
nen ein der deutschen Sprache kundiger  
und geschickter Landmesser zugegeben wer-  
de, der nicht nur ihre ganze Besizungen zu-  
sammen, sondern auch zwischen einem jeden  
unter ihnen seinen eignen Theil abtheilen  
und bemessen könne.

19.

Da die weite Entfernung Lauriens von

15.

Diese Befehle werden er-  
lassen werden.

16.

Wenn von denselben De-  
putierte geschickt werden,  
so kann auch mit ihnen  
unterhandelt werden,  
gleichfalls wie mit die-  
sen.

17.

Er wird dazu bestellt  
werden.

18.

Wird ihnen gegeben  
werden.

ihrem Vaterlande sie verhindert, verschiedene zur Aussaat nöthigen Sämereien mitzunehmen, daß ihnen zum Aussäen verschiedenes Korn gegeben werde, welches sie mit der Zeit wiederzugeben schuldig sind.

20.

Zuletzt bitten sie, daß bey ihrer Ankunft in Berislaw aufs strengste geboten werde, ihr und ihres Vermögens wegen, bis sie sich angebaut werden haben, Sorge zu tragen, damit sie weder beleidigt, bestohlen oder beraubt werden.

Daß Vorstehendes eine getreue Uebersetzung derer mir im Original vorgezeigten Privilegien enthält, attestire hiedurch mittelst meiner eigenhändigen Unterschrift und beygedrucktem Beschaft.

Danzig, den 3. März 1788. (Unterschrift) S.de Sokolowsky  
Russisch-Kaiserlicher Reichs Collegii Uffessor und bey der Stadt  
(Siegel) Danzig accreditirter Charge d'affairs.

Datiert ist der obige Entwurf der schriftlichen Einwanderungsbedingungen unterm 22. April 1787; seine genehmigende Resolution hierzu schrieb der Reichsfürst und Premier-Minister Grigorij Alexandrowitsch Potemkin am 5. Juli 1787 hinauf und die Kaiserin Katharina II. sanktionierte diese Bedingungen, die mit dem Thronfolger, dem nachmaligen Zaren Paul I., vereinbart waren, am 7. September 1787 durch einen Sumenoi Ukas, dessen Wortlaut in der amtlichen Uebersetzung folgender ist:

„Ihro Kaiserliche Majestät geruhen Allerhöchst zu befehlen, den Deputierten der Mennonisten-Gesellschaft, die sich im Gebiete der Stadt Danzig aufhält, wissen zu thun, daß wenn ihre Gesellschaft nach dem von ihr geäußerten Verlangen in Rußland sesshaft zu werden, mit den in der Resolution des Herrn General-Feldmarschals, des Kaiserlichen Kriegs-Kollegiums Präsidenten, des Ekaterinowskischen, Charkowschen und Laurischen General-Gouverneurs Fürsten Grigorey Alexandrowitsch Potemkin-Lawritscheskiy, wie auch in der von Ihro Kaiserliche Majestät auf die von ihnen vorgestellten Punkte erteilten Resolution erwähnten Vorteile und Beihülfe sich befriedigen wird, so erhält sie ein Privilegium mit Ihro Kaiserlichen Majestät eigenhändiger Unterschrift und Beidruckung des Kaiserlichen Reichs-Fustiegels, über dessen Ausfertigung man dem dirigirenden Senate zu wissen gethan hat. Den 7. Sept. 1787.  
Auf speziellen Befehl Ihro Kaiserlichen Majestät unterzeichnet  
Graf Alexander von Besborodko.“

Daß vorstehende Abschrift mit dem mir im Original vorgezeigten Kaiserlichen Sumenoi Ukas von Wort zu Wort gleichlautend sey, wird hiedurch von mir zur Versicherung derer nach Rußland emigrirenden Mennonisten attestiert.

Danzig, den 3. März 1788. (Unterschrift) S.de Sokolowsky  
Russisch-Kaiserlicher Reichs Collegii Uffessor und bey der Stadt  
Danzig accreditirter Charge d'affairs.

19.  
Wird ihnen gegeben  
werden.

20.  
Hierüber wird Befehl erteilt  
werden.

APPENDIX XII

Decree of Wladislaw, 1642<sup>12</sup>

VLADISLAUS, DEI GRATIA REX POLONIAE, Magnus Dux Lithuaniae, Russiae, Prussiae, Masoviae, Samogitiae, Livoniae, Smolensciae, Chernigoviaeque, nec non Suevorum Gottorum, Vandalorumque haereditarius Rex.

Significamus praesentibus literis nostris quorum interest, universis et singulis. Quod enim industria studiumque omne cum publico commodo conjunctum merito gratia et patrocinio Principum dignum censi debet, Nosque probe cognitum et perspectum habeamus Mennonistarum in Insulis Nostris Mariaeburgensibus tam vct (sic!) Majori quam Minori Incolarum Antecessores a Loysiis cum Consensu et scitu Serenissimi olim Sigismundi Augusti Antecessores at Avi Nostris ob certas libertates jura et immunitates concessas evocatos ad deserta paludinoso et inutilia tum temporis in dictis Insulis loca venisse, multoque labore et sumptibus maximis, quos partim in exstirpationem virgultorum partim in aedificationem Molendinorum ad pellendas aquas ex locis uliginosis, et aquis obrutis necessariorum partim vero in aggeres ad Istulae Nogatti, Drausen, Habi et Tugae aliorumque fluminum inundationes arcendas extractos erogarunt, utilia et fructifera reddidisse, suisque Successoribus exemplum singularis industriae laboris et expensarum imitandum reliquisse. Ideo ad supplicationem praedictorum Insularum Nostrarum Marieburgesium Incolarum eadem omnia et singula jura privilegia libertates et immunitates per Serenissimum Olim Sigismundum Augustum Avum Nostrum concessa et a Serenissimis Stephano et Sigismundo III. Regibus, praedecessoribus Nostris confirmata auctoritate Nostra Regia memorata omnia et singula privilegia jura et immunitates libertatesque ac consuetudines, Quibus hucusque usi sunt, nullis penitus exceptis aut exclusis approbanda ac circa eadem dictos incolas integre conservandos et manutenendos esse duximus. Uti quidem praesentibus literis Nostris approbamus conservamus et manutenemus. Volentes ea omnia et Singula, vim et robur dabitae ac perpetuae firmitatis obtinere debere. Quoniam vero promptum obsequium, uti

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 7.

fideles subditi, certa in pecuniae summa pro usibus Nostris numerata et repraesentata praestiterunt, eosdem de levata et percepta dicta summa non modo per praesentes literas Nostras omnimode quietamus et liberos facimus, Verum etiam promittimus pro Nobis et Serenissimis Successoribus Nostris, Nos Serenissimosque Successores Nostros praenominatos Incolas Insularum Utrarumque Nostrarum Mariaeburgensium a similibus Contributionibus liberos ac immunes imposterum ac perpetuis temporibus reddituros neque a quopiam ab ipsis tale quidpiam exigi permissuros. In quorum fidem praesentes manu Nostra subscriptas, sigillo Regni communiri mandavimus.

Datum Varsaviae die XXII Mensis Decembris, Anno

Domini MDCXLII.

Regnorum Nostrorum Poloniae X, Sueciae vero XI Anno.

VLADISLAUS REX

Thom. Vicysky

R. M. Secretarius mpp.

(L. S.)

(R. P.)

Die deutsche Übersetzung dieser Urkunde ist beifolgend:

#### Wir Wladislaw IV.

Von Gottes Gnaden König von Polen, Großfürst in Lithauen, Neussen, Preussen, Masau, Samogitien, Liefland, Smolensk und Chernigow, wie auch der Schweden, Gothen und Wenden Erbkönig:

Un kund durch gegenwärtigen Unsern Brief allen und jeden, denen daran gelegen. Demnach aller Fleiß und Bemühung, so zu gemeinem Nutzen gereicht, Fürstlicher Gnade und Schutzleistung billig wert zu schätzen. Und Uns wohl bekannt ist, welcher Gestalt die Vorfahren der Mennonitischen Einwohner in Unserm Marienburgischen sowohl großen als kleinen Werder, so von denen Koszits mit Einwilligung und Vorbewußt des weiland Durchlauchtsten Sigismundi Augusti, Unseres Vorfahren und Großvaters, wegen gewisser ihnen verliehener Freyheiten, Rechte und Gerechtigkeiten berufen worden, damals an wüste, sumpfige und unbrauchbare Örter in selbigen Werdern gekommen und selbige durch viel Arbeit und große Unkosten, so teils in Ausrottung des Gesträuches, teils in Aufbauung notwendiger Mühlen um das Wasser aus denen sumpfigen und überschwommenen Örtern abzuführen, teils auch auf die Dämme, welche sie die Ergießungen aus der Weichsel, Mogat, Drusen, Gaff und Tiege und andern Strömen abzuhalten gebauet, angewandt worden, nutzbar und fruchtbar gemacht und ihren Nachkömmlingen hiedurch Exempel sonderbaren Fleißes, Arbeit und Kosten dergleichen zu tun hinterlassen haben: Als haben Wir auf unterthänigstes Ansuchen vorbesagter Einwohner Unserer Marienburgischen Werder alle und jede Rechte, Privilegien, Freyheiten und Ge-

rechtligkeit so von dem Durchlauchttesten Sigismundo Augusto, Unserem Großvater verliehen und von denen Durchlauchttesten Stephano Sigismundo III., Unserem Königlichem Vorfahren, bestätigt worden, kraft Unserer Königlichem Autorität, alle und jede gedachte Privilegien, Rechte, Gerechtigkeiten, Freyheiten und Gewohnheiten, deren sie sich bishero gebraucht, keine im geringsten nicht ausgenommen, approbieren und gedachte Einwohner dabey vollkommen erhalten und schützen wollen, wie Wir durch gegenwärtigen Unseren Brief dieselbe approbieren, sie dabey erhalten und schützen wollende, daß dieselbe sambt und sonders ihre immerwährende Kraft behalten sollen.

Weil sie auch als getreue Unterthanen ihren Gehorsam in Darreichung einer gewissen Summe Geldes zu Unserem Gebrauch bezeuget, so quillieren Wir sie nicht allein wegen Empfang dieser Summe durch gegenwärtigen Unseren Brief, sondern versprechen auch vor Uns und Unsere Durchlauchttesten Nachfolger daß Wir und Unsere Durchlauchttesten Nachfolger vorgedachte Einwohner beyder Unserer Marienburgischer Werder von dergleichen Auflagen hinfüro und zu ewigen Zeiten befreyen, auch nicht zugeben wollen, daß dergleichen etwas durch jemand von ihnen gefordert werde. Zu Urkund dessen haben Wir gegenwärtiges eigenhändig unterschrieben und mit dem Reichsiegel besfestigen lassen.

Warschau, den 22. Dezember 1642. Unserer Reiche des Polnischen im 10-ten und des Schwedischen im 11-ten Jahre.

( L. S. )

Wladislaus, Rex

Obiger Wortlaut ist der, der amtlichen Uebersetzung des Danziger Scheppenstuhls aus dem Jahre 1695. Abgedruckt bei Dr. W. Mannhardt.

Die Urkunde, auf Grund welcher die Mennoniten von den Gebrüdern Lohsen aus den Niederlanden in die Weichselgegend berufen worden sind, steht mir leider nicht zur Verfügung; ebenso auch nicht der Wortlaut des Privilegiums des Königs Sigismund August. Daß solche aber gegeben worden sind, geht aus dem Privilegium vom 22. Dezember 1642 klar hervor. Freiheit vom Militärdienst war unter consuetudines verstanden und einbegriffen. „Omnia et singula privilegia jura et immunitates libertatesque et consuetudines, quibus hucusque usi sunt“ sagte sehr viel.

APPENDIX XIII

Decree of John Casimir, 1650<sup>13</sup>

JOANNES CASIMIRUS, DEI GRATIA REX POLONIAE, Magnus Dux Lithuanae, Russiae, Prussiae, Masoviae Samogitiae, Livoniae, Smolensciae, Czernichoviaequae nec non Suecorum, Gottorum, Vandalorum haereditarius Rex.

Significamus praesentibus literis Nostris, quorum interest, universis et singulis, Supplicatum Nobis esse nomine Hollandorum Tigenhoffensium Berwaldensium aliorumque omnium in Oeconomia Nostra degentium Subditorum Nostrorum, ut ipsos in patrocinium et protectionem Nostram Regiam suscipe-

remus ac a contributionibus insolitis et extraordinariis quibus se a diversis Personis saepe gravari conqueruntur, praecipue vero quod a generoso Wilbaldo Haxberg non tantum annis praeteritis varie turbati atque ad conferendam magnam pecuniae vim fuerint coacti, sed etiam hoc ipso anno novis citationibus ad Inducium Nostrum Assessoriale, ratione persolutionis duorum ungaricalium a quolibet manso: cum olim a Serenissimo Vladislao IV. Fratre Nostro desideratissimo jam literis certis universalibus liberati fuerint, se evocari experti sint, eximeremus, liberosque ac immunes faceremus.

Cui supplicationi, uti justae, benigne annuentes promptamque industriam quam per tantam annorum seriem incolendis et redigendis in supra nominata Oeconomia Nostra Mariaeburgensi sterilibus fundis ad frugem probarunt, eosdem subditos Nostros Gratia Nostra Regia prosequentes, Omnes Citationes et literas universales quocunque praetextu et colore a Serenissimis Antecessoribus Nostris vel etiam a Nobis ad male narrata contra ipsos emanatus cassamus et annihilamus, illosque praetextu Mennonisticae Religionis alteriusve cujusvis praetensionis imposterum hujusmodi pecuniarum expressione aggravari nolumus ac a persolutione duorum ungaricalium a quolibet manso liberos et absolutos facimus. Ac circa possessionem bonorum juraque privilegia immunitates ac consuetudines antiquas integre conservamus. In hujus modi vero privilegio contra venientes poenam gravissimam statuimus. In cujus reifidem praesentes manu Nostra subscriptas Sigillo Regni communiri jussimus.

Datum Varsaviae XVI die Mensis Junii Anno Domini MDCL.

Regnorum Nostrorum Poloniae et Sueciae II Anno.

CASIRIMUS REX,

Albs. Kadsislawski,

Secret. Reg. Majest. mpr.

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<sup>13</sup>ibid., 9.

Wir, Johannes Casimirus,

Von Gottes Gnaden König von Polen, Großfürst von Lithauen, Neufsen, Preussen, Masuren, Samogitien, Liefland, Smolensko und Czernigow, wie auch der Schweden, Gothen und Wenden Erbkönig:

Thun kund durch Unseren gegenwärtigen Brief allen und jeden, denen daran gelegen; daß an Uns im Namen der Holländer in Liegenhof, Bärwalde und aller andern in Unserer Oekonomie befindlichen Unterthanen supplicirt worden, daß Wir dieselben in Unsern Schutz und Königliche Protection nehmen, und sie von allen ungewöhnlichen und extraordinären Contributionen, damit sie durch unterschiedene Personen öfters beschweret zu sein sich beklagen, insonderheit aber, daß sie von dem Edlen Wilbald Garberg nicht allein in vorigen Jahren

mannigfaltig turbiret und eine große Post Geldes aufzubringen gezwungen worden, sondern auch in diesem jetzigen Jahre erfahren müssen, daß sie durch neue Citationses die Unser Assessoral-Gericht wegen Zahlung zweier Floren Ungarisch von jeder Hube (da sie doch vorhin von dem Durchlauchtigsten Vladislaw IV., Unserm geliebten König-Bruder bereits durch gewisse Univerfales befreyet worden) ausgeladen worden, befreyen, frey und loßsprechen möchten. Wenn Wir dann diese Supplication, als in der Willigkeit bestehende, gnädig ansehen und wegen des unerbittlichen Fleißes, welchen sie so lange Jahre hero darin bewiesen haben, daß sie die unfruchtbaren Aecker in Unserer vorgedachten Marienburgischen Oekonomie gebaut und urbar gemacht, selbigen Unsern Unterthanen Unsere Königliche Gnade spüren lassen wollen: Als cassiren und annulliren Wir alle Citationses- und Univerfal-Briefe, unter was Schein und Wortwand selbige von Unseren Durchlauchtigsten Vorfahren, oder auch von Uns, auf üblem Bericht, wieder ausgebracht seyn mögen, und wollen nicht, daß dieselben unterm Wortwande Mennonitischer Religion oder irgend einer Prätension halber hinfüro mit dergleichen Geld-Auspressung sollen beschweret werden, sprechen sie auch von Zahlung der 2 Floren Ungarisch von jeder Hube frey und ledig und conserviren dieselben völlig bey dem Besitz der Güter, ihren Rechten, Privilegien, Gerechtigkeiten und allen Gewohnheiten. Diejenigen aber, so diesen Privilegien zuwider leben, wollen wir mit harter Strafe belegen.

Zu Urkund dessen haben Wir Gegenwärtiges eigenhändig unterschrieben und mit dem Reichs-Insigel befestigen lassen.

Gegeben in Warschau den 16ten Monatstag Juni im Jahr 1650 Unserer Reiche des Polnischen und des Schwedischen im 2-ten Jahr.  
Casimirus, König.

(M. S.)

Wilbald Garberg war ein geriebener Schalk und Erpresser.

Die Originale dieser Urkunden befinden sich im mennonitischen Gemeindearchiv zu Orloffersfelde in Preussen. Am 27. Februar 1697 wurden die von den polnischen Königen erhaltenen Urkunden „auf Ansuchen der Ehrsamten David Hejn und Claas Westwader, beyder Machthabere und Bauersleute von dem Ohrlaser Felde im Liegenhöfischen Gebiete gelegen, vor gehegtem Ding eines Edlen Gerichts der Rechten Stadt zu Danzig verlesen und in das — noch vorhandene — Scheppenbuch ingrossirt.“



APPENDIX XIV

Decree of John Casimir, 1660<sup>14</sup>

JOANNES CASIMIRUS, DEI GRATIA REX POLONIAE, Magnus Dux Lithuaniae, Russiae, Prussiae, Masoviae, Sarnogitiae, Livoniae, Smolenskae, Czernichoviaeque, nec non Suecorum, Gottorum, Vandalorumque haereditarius Rex.

Significamus praesentibus literis Nostris quorum interest, Universis et singulis, Continuo jam fit quot indebita aut intempestiva Legum interpretatio plurimos eo animet ut leviter in aliorum Jura bona et publicae quietis Securitatibus incurrant

et magnis involvant innocentes litibus. Praevenire itaque volentes imminetia damna, quae per Similes privatorum inconvenientias facile in Bonis Oeconomia Nostrae Tygenhoff et Berwald proventibusque Nostris pateremur, qui praecipui in possessionibus subditorum Religionis Maenisticae consistunt, tum et impedire cupientes temerarios importunorum ausus, qui praetextu Zeli publici per usurpationem Constitutionis novellae juxta Jura antiqua de Arianis Sancitae homines illos Maenistas vexare exindeque ultimae vastitatis occasionem subito dare possent, Nostrisque Proventibus non mediocrem afferent jacturam et diminutionem. Proinde ejusmodi incommodis et inconvenientiis obviam euntes tum et indemnitati Nostrae ac nominatorum Subditorum in Tygenhoff Providendo illos eosdem in Protectionem et Tutelam Nostram Regiam recipiendos esse duximus, prout de facto praesenti Diplomate Nostro recipimus. Et quia periculum a Lege Metusque omnis pullulat, ideo eandem Legem de Arianis in Comitibus Generalibus Regni Anno 1658 sancitam et de novo in Anno 1659 ex mente Reipublicae reassumptam ita declaramus quod praefata Lex in omnibus, qui sunt conditionis Nobilitarum et civilis: a quibus ex praerogativa Immunitatum aut Dignitatis par perpetuo metus, tanquam a Personis tam famosae Sectae, Reipublicae esse potest extendi, intelligi, adhiberi, interpretari, practicarique debet, quod idem minime aut prorsus non est metuendum Nobis ac Statibus Reipublicae a memoratis hominibus Agriculis nihilque liberale exercentibus, quorum item ritus nullus publicus sed is tantum, quem per conniventiam et tolerantiam personarum ecclesiasticarum nanciscuntur. Qua declaratione Nostra ita praemissa omnia illa Privilegia quaecunque subreptitiae aut ad Sinistram Informa-

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 11.

tionem, contraque mentem et consensum Nostrum a quocumque cujusvis Status et Conditionis impetrata ex Cancellaria Nostra emanarunt, ceu nullo innixa fundamento et sub velamine Legis Juri contraria cassamus et annihilamus nullumque robur ac firmitatem habere debere declaramus atque si aliqua alia in posterum emanare contigerit, talia omnia nulla esse et haberi volumus, ita ut nemo possit et audeat nunc in futurum ullis quaecumque illa fuerint Privilegiis et Donationibus Nostris supradictis Menistis in Tygenhoff ex hac causa praedicta Constitutionis de Arianis potiri et gaudere. Promittentes pro Nobis et Serenissimis Successoribus Nostris, quod eosdem Subditos et Maenistas in Tygenhoff cum Succedaneis eorum circa Immunitatem praesentis Diplomatis conservabimus, Serenissimique Successores Nostris conservabunt. Quod ad notitiam Omnium Officiorum et Jurisdictionum Palatinalium, Terrestrium Castrensium et Civilium in Terris Prussiae aliisque in locis Regni ac Dominiorum Nostrorum deducendo mandamus, ut praefatos

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Maenistas juxta tenorem praesentium manuteneant et ab aliis manuteneri curent circaque illam securitatem, quam iisdem speciali rescripto Nostro Varsaviae die XVI Mensis Novembris (sic!) Anno MDCL praecavimus in toto conservent. In cujus rei fidem praesentes manu Nostra subscriptas sigillo Regni communiri dessimus.

Datum Cracoviae die XX Mensis Novembris, Anno Domini MDCLX.

Regnorum Nostrorum Poloniae XII Sueciae XIII Anno.

CASIMIRUS REX,

Joannes Ignatius Bakowski,

Succamerarius Culmensis mpr.

(L. S. Maj. Cancellariae R.)

Wir, Johannes Casimirus,

Von Gottes Gnaden König von Polen, Großfürst von Lithauen, Neussen, Preussen, Masuren, Samogitien, Plesland, Smolensk, Czernigow wie auch der Schweden, Gothen und Wenden Erbkönig:

Thun kund durch Unsern gegenwärtigen Brief allen und jeden, so daran gelegen. Beständig geschieht es, daß eine unbillige und unzeitige Auslegung der Gesetze sehr viel Leute dazu antreibt, einen leichtsinnigen Angriff auf die Rechte und Güter Anderer und auf die Sicherheit der öffentlichen Ruhe zu machen und Unschuldige in große Streithändel zu verwickeln. Da Wir nun den bedrohlichen Verlusten zuvorkommen wollen, welche Wir durch dergleichen Unfug von Privatleuten gar leicht an Unsern Gütern in der Oekonomie Tiegenhof und Värivalde und an Unsern Einkünften zu erleiden haben würden welche vorzüglich in den Besitzungen der Unterthanen Mennonitischen Glaubens bestehen, und da Wir auch den Wunsch hegen das verwegene Unterfangen der ungefümen Leute zu verhindern, welche etwa unter dem Vorwande des Eifers für das Gemeinwohl mit Anführung einer Novelle zu den alten Gesetzen über die Arianer jene Männisten heunruhigen, dadurch Gelegenheit zu äußerster Entvölkerung geben, und Unseren Einkünften eine nicht geringe Einbuße und Verfüzung bereiten möchten, also um derley Nachtheilen und Unzuträglichkeiten ent-

gegen zu treten und für Unsere und Unserer genannten Unterthanen in Liegenhof Schadlosigkeit Fürsorge zu treffen, haben Wir gemeint, ebendieselben in Unsere Protection und Unsern Königl. Schuß aufnehmen zu müssen, wie Wir sie denn durch dieses Unser gegenwärtiges Diplom aufnehmen. Und weil die Gefahr und alle Furcht aus dem Gesetze entspringt, so erklären Wir jenes Gesetz über die Arianer, welches auf dem allgemeinen Reichstage 1658 sanctioniert und 1659 mit Willen der Republik wiederholt wurde, dahin, daß vorbesagtes Gesetz auf alle, welche Adelligen oder bürgerlichen Standes sind (vor welchen die Republik in Folge der Prærogative ihrer Freiheit oder

Würden eine ewig gleiche Furcht als vor Personen einer berücktigten Sekte haben kann) ausgedehnt, von ihnen verstanden, auf sie angewandt, gedeutet und an ihnen gehandhabt werden soll, daß Wir und die Stände der Republik ebendasselbe jedoch keineswegs und ganz und gar nicht von den vorbenannten Menschen zu fürchten haben, die Aderbauer sind und keine freien Künste treiben, deren Gottesdienst nicht öffentlich, sondern nur von der Art ist, wie er ihnen durch die Nachsicht und Toleranz der geistlichen Würdeträger zugestanden wird. Durch diese Unsere vorangeschickte Deklaration heben Wir auf und annulliren Wir alle jene Privilegien, welche nur immer heimlich erschlichen oder auf ungünstigen Bericht hin gegen die Männisten und ohne Unsere Zustimmung von irgend jemand, sei es wer es sei und wes Standes und welcher Würde er wolle, erlangt und aus Unserer Kanzlei herausgekommen sind, und ohne ein Fundament zu haben unter dem Deckmantel des Gesetzes dem Recht zuwider laufen. Wir erklären, daß sie keine Kraft und Wirkung haben sollen und wenn irgend andere Privilegien derart aus Unserer Kanzlei heraus kommen sollten, so wollen Wir, daß dieselben null und nichtig sein, und dafür gehalten werden sollen; so daß in Zukunft niemand die Macht und die Kühnheit habe, auf Grund der Constitution über die Arianer irgend welche Schenkungen und Privilegien von Unserer Seite welcher Art sie auch seien, gegen vorbesagte Männisten in Lügenhoff zu erhalten und zu genießen. Wir versprechen für Uns und Unsere Durchlauchtsten Nachfolger, daß Wir dieselben Unterthanen und Männisten in Lügenhoff sammt ihren Nachkommen bey der Freiheit gegenwärtigen Diploms erhalten wollen und daß Unsere Durchlauchtsten Nachfolger sie dabey erhalten werden. Indem Wir dies zur Nachricht für alle Beamte, Palatinal-, Land-, Burg- und Stadtgerichte in Preussischen Landen auch an andern Orten des Reichs und Unserer Herrschaften vortragen, befehlen Wir, daß sie benannte Männisten laut Inhalts gegenwärtigen Briefes schützen und dafür sorgen, daß sie von andern geschützt werden, und daß sie bei der Sicherheit, die Wir ihnen in Unserem Specialrescript, Warschau, den 16. November 1650 vorsorglich erteilt haben, vollständig erhalten.

Zu urkund dessen haben Wir gegenwärtigen Brief mit eigener Hand unterzeichnet und Unser Siegel darunter setzen lassen,

Gegeben zu Krakau am 20. November 1660 Unserer Reichs des Polnischen im zwölften, des Schwedischen aber im dreizehnten Jahre.

Johannes Casimirus, König.

(R. S. M. C.)

APPENDIX XV

Decree of John III, 1695<sup>15</sup>

JOANNES TERTIUS, DEI GRATIA REX POLONIAE, Magnus Dux Lithuaniae, Russiae, Prussiae, Masoviae, Samogitiae, Kyoviae, Volhyniae, Podoliae, Podlachiae, Livoniae, Smolenskiae, Severiae, Czernichoviaeque.

Significamus praesentibus Literis Nostris quorum interest Universis et Singulis. Eam esse instituti ac muneris Nostrae Regii peculiarem curam et continuam Sollicitudinem Nostram ut Jura et Privilegia per Serenissimos olim Praedecessores Nostros Reges Poloniae benigne incolis Regni Nostrae ac Terrarum Prussiae collata, non tantum inviolabiliter conservemus, verum etiam majora indies incrementa ipsorum augeamus, ac ideo cum inter Caeteros Terrarum Prussiae Incolas et Incolae Territorii Elbingensis Jurisdictionis Subarcensis Mariaeburgensis Insulae utriusque Oeconomiae Nostrae Mariaburgensis Bonorum Nostrorum Tygenhoffensium et Berwaldensium Mennonistae ac Insulani dicti, promptum studium ergo Nos benemerendi praestiterunt, dignum et conveniens censuimus, ut eisdem circa Jura Privilegia Consuetudines memoratis Incolis Maennonistis tam Elbingensibus quam Mariaeburgensibus, Tygenhoffensibus et Berwaldensibus per Nos et Serenissimos Antecessores Nostros benigne concessas conservaremus et manuteneremus. Cum Vero Nobis nomine Ipsorum himiliter expositum ac plurimis Communitatis dictorum Incolarum, Juribus, Privilegiis, Immunitatibus derogari ac in Religionis exercitio turbari, Juribusque quae ipsis competant contrariari, et exinde ipsos ad Miseriam Calamitatemque adduci ideo ejusmodi derogationi Juribusque ipsorum providere cupeintes, Omnia et Singula Privilegia, Jura, Immunitates etiam respectu Religionis ipsis Servientes, Omnesque Consuetudines Communitati ipsorum clementer concessas approbandas, confirmandas circaque easdem ipsos manutendos et conservandos esse duximus, prout quidem praesentibus literis Nostris approbamus et confirmamus, conservamusque ac manutenuimus atque defectus Omnes et derogationes Jurium in quantum aliquae intercesserunt, ex Suprema Potestate Nostra Regia supplemus, eisdem sua Jura redintegramus, liberumque exercitium Religionis ipsius Mennonisticae prout antea habuerunt permittimus et concedimus, permittique nec impugnari a quopiam volumus eosdemque in Protectionem Nostram Regiam accipimus, et ab Opturbatione, molestatione quarumvis Personarum, quovis colore vel pre-

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 14.

textu eximimus et liberamus, quod ad Notitiam Omnium et Singulorum quorum interest, praesertim vero Magistratus Elbingensis Administratorum Marieburgensium et Tygenhofensium Possessorisque Bonorum Berwald nunc et pro tempore existentium deducendum mandamus quatenus circa Jura Privilegia Immunitates et Consuetudines a Serenissimis Antecessoribus Nostris ac Nobis ipsis concessas; praesentibusque confirmatas et declaratas Suprascriptos Incolas Mennonistas, quisque in Jurisdictione sua conservent conservarique faciant, Juribusque ipsorum non derogent, nec impediunt, sed iisdem libere uti sine quavis difficultate, turbatione, Comminatione ac molestatione permittant, ab Omnibus et Singulis, qui ipsos turbare ac molestare velint, defendant, protegant ac tueantur

pro Gratia Nostra Juribus Nostris Regalibus et Reipublicae Salvis manentibus.

In quorum fidem praesentes manu Nostra Subscriptas Sigillo Regni communiri mandavimus.

Datum Varsaviae die XXII Mensis Augusti, Anno Domini MDCXCIV.

Regni vero Nostri XXI Anno.

JOANNES REX.

Locus Sigilli Majoris Cancellariae Regni.

Albertus Franciscus Paszynski,

Sae. Rae. Mts. Secretarius mpp.

Wir, Joannes III.,

Von Gottes Gnaden König von Polen, Großfürst in Litthuanien, Neussen, Preussen, Masuren, Samogitien, Kiew, Wolhynien, Podolien, Podlachien, Liefland, Smolensk, Severien und Czernigow

thun kund und zu Wissen durch gegenwärtigen Brief allen und jeden, denen daran gelegen, daß es Unseres Königlichen Amtes und Berufes eigenste Sorge und beständige Bemühung ist, die Rechte und Privilegien, welche von Alters von Unseren Erlauchten Vorfahren, den Königen von Polen, den Einwohnern Unseres Reiches und der Preussischen Lande gnädig erteilt sind, nicht nur unberlezt zu erhalten, sondern auch ihr von Tag zu Tag größeres Wachstum zu fördern. Da nun unter den übrigen Einwohnern des Landes Preußen auch die Einwohner des Elbingischen Territoriums, der Schloßjurisdiction, des Marienburger Werders, Unserer beiden Marienburger Dekonomen, Unserer Güter zu Liegenhoff und Bärwalde, welche Mennonisten und Werderaner genannt werden, großen Eifer gezeigt haben, sich um Uns wol verdient zu machen, so haben Wir es für würdig und geziemend erachtet, dieselben bey allen Rechten, Privilegien und Gewohnheiten, welche vorerwähnten Mennonistischen Einwohnern, sowohl des Elbingers als des Marienburger, Liegenhöfer und Bärwalder Landes durch Uns und Unsere Durchlauchtesten Vorfahren gnädigst zugestanden sind, zu erhalten und zu schützen.

Da Uns aber in ihrem Namen unterthänigst vorgestellt ist, daß man die meisten Rechte Privilegien und Befreyungen von öffentlichen Leistungen, welche der Gemeinde besagter Einwohner zustehen, schmälere und sie in der Religionsübung störe, den Rechten, welche ihnen persönlich zukommen, entgegen handle und sie dadurch persönlich

in Elend und Verlust bringe, so haben Wir, um einer solchen Schmälerung ihrer persönlichen Rechte vorzustehen, alle und jede Privilegien, Rechte und Befreyungen von öffentlichen Leistungen, auch insofern dieselben in Rücksicht der Religion ihnen dienlich sind, und alle Gewohnheiten, die ihrer Gemeinschaft gnädig nachgesehen werden, approbiren und bestätigen und sie bey denselben erhalten und schützen zu sollen geglaubt, wie Wir denn durch diesen gegenwärtigen Brief dieselben approbiren, bestätigen, aufrecht erhalten und schützen, und jeden Verlust und Abbruch an den Rechten, insofern solcher eingetreten ist, aus höchster Königlichcr Machtvollkommenheit wieder ergänzen, ihnen ihre Rechte wieder herstellen und das freie Exercitium der Mennonitischen Religion, so wie sie es früher hatten, gestatten und nachgeben, und von Niemandem bekämpft wissen wollen, sie in Unsern Königlichcn Schutz aufnehmen und sie von jeder Störung und Belästigung durch beliebige Persönlichkeiten, unter welchem Schein und Vorwande es auch geschehe, befreien und los machen. Dies haben Wir zur Nachricht für alle und jeden, die es angeht, zumal aber für den Elbinger Magistrat, die Deconomieadministrationen von Marienburg und Liegenhoff, die Besitzer der Güter von Bärwalde, die jetzt und künftig im Amte sind, darzuthun befohlen, damit sie, ein jeder in seiner Jurisdiction, die vorerwähnten Mennonitischen Einwohner bey den Rechten, Privilegien, Befreyungen von öffentlichen Leistungen und Gewohnheiten, welche ihnen von Unsern Durchlauchtsten Vorfahren und von Uns selbst gestattet sind, erhalten und erhalten lassen, ihren Rechten nicht Abbruch thun, oder in den Weg treten, sondern sie dieselben in Freiheit, ohne Beschwer, Störung, Verkürzung und Belästigung genießen lassen, sie vor allen und jeden, welche sie stören und belästigen wollten, verteidigen, schützen und decken, bey Unserer Königlichcn Gnade, jedoch unbeschadet Unserer Königlichcn Regalien und der Rechte der Republik.

Zur Beglaubigung haben Wir Gegenwärtiges mit Unserer Hand unterschrieben und mit dem Reichsiegel bestätigt lassen.

Gegeben zu Warschau am 22. August 1694 Unseres Reiches im 21sten Jahre. Johann, König.

(L. S. M. C. R.)

APPENDIX XVI

BOOKS FAMILIAR TO THE FLEMISH  
AS LISTED BY HANSEN<sup>1</sup>

Books With Which They Agreed

Menno Simons Writings

Spiegel den Maerterer

Dirk Philips Enchiridion oder Handbuechlein

Hans von Dantzick Tracktaten

Herman Zimmerman Tracktaetlein

Johannes Traecktaten

Pieter Cornelius Harisg neue Tracktaetlein

Alte Liederbuecher

Das Zweyde Liedbuchlein

Jacob Jacobs Preusch Liedbuchlein

Cardel Vermander sein Harffe

Lucas Philipfens sein Liedbuchlein

Pieter Carneliffen vo Soett sein Buechlein

Francois de knuyt Tracktaetlein

Klas Gangeloffs' Von der Gemeinde

Die Auslegung des Vaters Unsers

Vincen de Hont sein Buch

Peter von Cassel sein Tracktaetlein

Jan de Buyser sein gross Haussbuch

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<sup>1</sup>This list is taken from Hansen Antwortzum Erforscher,  
125-128.

Jan Gerritz sein Buch und andere mehr.  
Die Disputatie zu Franckenthal  
Die Disputie zu Leuwaerden  
Klas Klaessen sein Buch gegen Hermanus Faukelus  
Die Wandelende Seele  
Das Tracktaetlein von die Himmelsche Bruelofft  
Den Trosstein der Menschen  
Pieter Jansz Twisck seine Buecher  
**Books That Mennonites Wrote Against Each Other**  
Cornelius Jantzen sein Buch  
Jacquis Outerman sein Tracktaetlein  
Osewalt Hendrichs sein Buch  
Lawrence Willems sein Buch  
**Books That Create Confusion And So Not Read By The Flemish**  
Thyman Klassen Honig sein Buch  
Das Bekuemmerte Herz  
Benn Israel  
Obbe Philips neuen Tracktaetlein



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\_\_\_\_\_. Ein Fundamentbuch der Christlichen Lehre, welche unter den Mennoniten in Preussen (die man zu Danzig "Clerken" nennt gelehrt wird; Welche Lehre in dem Jahre Christi 1678, den 20. Januar, zu Danzig untersucht und geprueft ist, und ist also nicht allein in des uebergebenen folgenden Bekenntnisses, sondern um der darauf folgenden muendlichen Besprechung willen offenbar an den Tag gekommen, welche Antworten in diesem Buche breiter erkluert, und mit der heil. Schrift beweisen sind, alles zur Ehre Gottes und zum Dienste der Einfaeltigen aufgestellt, und in ein Buch zusammengebracht. Amsterdam: Barent Visser, 1696. Trans. Isaac Peters. Elkhart: Mennonitische Verlagsanstalt, 1893.

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Danzig Flemish Mennonite Church Records: Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, Newton Kansas.

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Schluesse Ehrbaren Raht wegen den Mennisten so aussen der Stadt Erben wollen. Several other resolutions are attached to this.

Religionspuncton Der Mennisten so man die Bekumerte Nennet in gegenwart der Erleuchstesten Gnaden Heiligen Stanislaw Sarnowski Lasslandischen und Pomerischen hiesigen Bischof dero Ermahnern Heindrich von Duehren vorgehalten und von ihm beantwortet wie folget den 17 Januar, 1768.

Einer Mennistischen Schreiben wieder Tauffe.

Informatio contra Mennonista. 12 pp.

Eine gleichmaessige Copulation wird nachgegeben von Koehischen Prediger.

Schluesse und Privilegia zu dieser Stadt Gehoerig. Seventy-two items in 67 pp.

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"Ein Aufsatz von Klaas Reimer Petershagen welcher der erste Aeltster der Klein Gemeinde war." Box 135

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