

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE BIRTH OF THE MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH:

AN INTRODUCTION

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Like most movements of reform and dissent, the Mennonite Brethren Church was born amid controversy and tension. Repudiating and denouncing the existing Mennonite leadership, the initiators of the new movement consciously and deliberately chose a position which emphasized new dimensions and new goals, and which thereby castigated existing power structures and value systems. Lines of division were quickly drawn, and a new entity appeared in the Mennonite setting. The justification for the formation of the new movement, and the validity of the charges hurled against traditional patterns, however, became at once issues of intense debate and difference. Questions of causation carried with the implicit authentication or condemnation of the founding of the new church, and so the interpretation of the events of 1860 became, on the one hand, an attempted self-affirmation; on the other, often an effort to demonstrate the erroneous assumptions and unwarranted action. Thus, from its birth, the new church was saddled with a historiography charged with emotionalism and often created by vested interest groups.

The earliest interpretations of the events of 1860 came from the participants themselves, whether protagonist, antagonist, or impartial mediator. Predictably, those who took the lead in forming the new church emphatically asserted that their action had been motivated by the noblest spiritual ideal—the creation of a church where the claims of Christ were taken seriously and where the beliefs and practices of the early Anabaptists were faithfully held and observed. Their opponents asserted rather that the causes were to be found in spiritual pride and disappointed personal desires.

Over the years, accounts written by the Mennonite Brethren have tended to follow the broad outlines of the founding fathers. Spiritual decadence on the one hand, and a sincere desire to build a fellowship faithful to the teachings of Christ on the other, were seen as the basic causal factors. In his *Origin of the Mennonite Brethren Church*,¹ Jacob Bekker, one of the founders, depicted the new movement as necessitated by the "decadent condition" of the "apostate church,"² and, as one of the eighteen men who signed the document of secession on January 6, 1860, he regarded the founding of the new church as the result of fervent prayer,³ and a bold venture of faith.⁴ Scant reference was made to any causative factors other than spiritual, although he felt that earlier disputes had fostered a spirit of animosity.

No single study, of course, has been even remotely as influential in shaping our understanding of the events of 1860 as has P.M. Friesen's celebrated history. His interpretation has largely been accepted as normative, not only by the Mennonite Brethren themselves, but by many others as well. In Friesen's analysis of the causes leading to the rupture of 1860, religious factors are clearly predominant, indeed, virtually exclusively so. In the numerous sources he has quoted, such as reports of various Mennonite Brethren founders, e.g., Jakob Reimer and Heinrich Huebert,⁵ as well as the analyses by leaders who never joined the movement, such as Elder Johann Harder,⁶ Friesen has chosen to highlight the spiritual dimensions of the crisis. The birth of the Mennonite Brethren Church is portrayed as the result of the interaction of a desire for spiritual renewal and recovery on the one hand, and a harsh, repressive, authoritarian resistance on the other. Social, cultural, economic, and political factors, though examined in other contexts, are not seen as significant dimensions in the events of 1860. It should be noted that Friesen himself was aware that he had not fully integrated historical event and contextual setting when, in his lengthy introduction, he admitted that pressures of time and health had prevented creation of a work characterized by unity and interpretive coherence.

In his narrative, Friesen has presented the broad outlines which formed the basis of most future Mennonite

Brethren historiography: the attempts to bring a spiritual awakening in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the numerous external factors which stimulated calls for spiritual renewal, the revivalistic ministry of Pastor Wuest, the Bible studies and missions festivals, the reading of pietistic books and periodicals, the formation of small groups of devout advocates of reform, the insistence of having communion only with serious believers, then the expulsion from the Gnadenfeld congregation, and the subsequent formation of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Most later Mennonite Brethren histories have rehearsed these familiar themes.

Typical approaches are to be found in the brief surveys written by Peter Regier (*Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde*)⁷ and J.F. Harms (*Die Geschichte der Mennoniten Brueder-Gemeinde*).⁸ The roots of the new movement are seen as being grounded in the desire for spiritual renewal; non-religious factors are not discussed. The later account by J.H. Lohrenz (*The Mennonite Brethren Church*),⁹ presents similar analyses, while the much longer and more interpretive account by A.H. Unruh (*Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde*)¹⁰ also stresses the quest for spiritual vitality, but examines virtually no causative factors other than religious. It should be noted, however, that Unruh is not content with an unquestioning, uncritical acceptance of traditional hagiography, and insists that the founders of the new church were unfair and unbalanced in their denunciation of the old church.¹¹

The recent work of John A. Toews (*A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church*),¹² draws attention to various renewal movements within the larger Mennonite community of Russia, and he too pays tribute to the positive efforts of numerous leaders who later declined to become a part of the new movement. As far as causative factors are concerned, however, only spiritual issues are emphasized; socio-economic issues are specifically rejected as being insignificant.¹³ Like Unruh, Toews concludes that the founders were far too sweeping and severe in their denunciation of the leaders of the old church.¹⁴ Like Friesen and Unruh, however, he leaves unanswered the request implicit in Elder Johann Harder's poignant letter to

Heinrich Huebert in which the Ohrloff elder agrees that the church desperately needs renewal and that he hopes united efforts will bring that revitalization.¹⁵ Indeed, one of the perplexing questions about the rupture in 1860 is the apparent unwillingness of the Mennonite Brethren leaders to work with and within the Ohrloff congregation.

Numerous short treatments of the rise of the Mennonite Brethren Church have similarly portrayed the 1860 division as the result of a quest for spiritual vitality, often expressed in Anabaptist and Pietist patterns. Among the several historical sketches which illustrate that approach are the writings of Frank C. Peters¹⁶ and Victor Adrian,¹⁷ as well as a number of short overviews which have appeared occasionally in denominational literature. Several studies by other than Mennonite Brethren writers have not deviated substantially from these basic outlines. Thus, John Horsch, in his *Mennonites in Europe*,¹⁸ after examining the familiar themes of Wuest's ministry and the impact of Bible studies, concluded that a major factor leading to the founding of the new church was the old church's leadership's "failing in regard to enforcement of discipline,"¹⁹ while C.H. Wedel, in his *Abriss der Geschichte der Mennoniten*, stressed the negative effect of the harsh authoritarianism of the church elders.²⁰ Similarly, Carl H.A. van der Smissen, in his *Kurzgefasste Geschichte und Glaubenslehre der Aeltevan-gelischen Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten*,²¹ commended the brethren for their desire to have only serious believers in the church; he did not, however, pass judgment on the necessity or validity of the actual methods used in forming a new church.

Not all interpreters of the events of 1860, however, have seen them as only religiously conditioned. Attempts have been made to examine the interaction of various social, economic and religious factors. One of the most widely-read books on Mennonite history has long been C. Henry Smith's *History of the Mennonites*,²² subsequently revised and enlarged by Cornelius Krahn.²³ This volume emphasizes the impact of external influences, especially that of the Pietists and Baptists, but then focuses on the economic tensions and social alienation as significant causative forces. The bitter struggle between the landowners and the large landless body of tenant farmers and laborers is seen as

especially crucial, so that the rise of the Mennonite Brethren is interpreted in large measure as a protest movement of the dispossessed.²⁴ A similar emphasis is developed by Cornelius Krahn when he writes that the Mennonite Brethren movement "found its adherents chiefly in the lower strata of society."²⁵ It should be noted that others, such as Alexander Klaus, in his *Unsere Kolonien*,²⁶ Adolf Ehrt, in his *Das Mennonitentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart*,²⁷ Franz Isaak, in his *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten*,²⁸ and E.K. Francis, in his "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia, 1789-1914: A Sociological Interpretation,"²⁹ regarded economic tensions as important factors in the birth of the new movement.

Assumptions of this sort have been challenged by John A. Toews in his recent *History of the Mennonite Brethren Church*. He has demonstrated, rather conclusively, I think, that many of the early Mennonite Brethren leaders were prosperous business men, well-situated farmers, and teachers.³⁰ There can be no doubt that many of the founders of the new movement were economically well-to-do; some of their subsequent actions would have been impossible if that were not the case. When Toews goes on to state, however, that "the Mennonite Brethren did not chiefly belong to the landless group,"³¹ he is confusing the composition of the new movement with its reason for being, and he differentiates too sharply between the Mennonite Brethren and other Mennonites. Available evidence indicates clearly that a considerable majority of Mennonites in Russia in the early 1860s belonged to the landless class. Franz Isaak, in his *Molotschnaer Mennoniten*, asserts that fully two-thirds of the Mennonites in that settlement belonged to the landless majority.³² In Chortitzta the two groups were about evenly divided.³³ It would therefore be strange indeed if the renewal movement appealed mainly to the landowners. What seems more likely is that the rise of the new movement followed the classical pattern of dissident movements as portrayed in Crane Brinton's *Anatomy of Revolution*. Thus, the impetus and early direction of the upheaval came from business and intellectual leaders, but as the movement grew, it attracted those who saw in it the prospect of desired reform, whether they were of the landed or landless elements.

It must also be noted that the early Mennonite Brethren leaders deliberately attempted to divorce their movement from the agitation surrounding the landless dispute. To assert, however, as John A. Toews does, that such a separation of issues shows that the Mennonite Brethren did not attract members chiefly from the landless class may be drawing an unwarranted conclusion. It may just as well demonstrate that the new church wished to avoid involvement in an explosive economic and social struggle. It would seem not unlikely that a movement, already beset by innumerable pressures and tensions, might well decide to avoid further stress within its membership.

Economic tensions were not limited to the well-known quarrels over the landless issue. Another bitterly divisive confrontation grew out of the "barely dispute,"³⁴ which resulted in the isolation of Ohrloff from the other Mennonite congregations. It created a rift within the church leadership at the very moment when the Mennonite Brethren Church was being born. The letters from Elders Fast and Harder of Ohrloff to the five elders who figured so prominently in the opposition to the new church demonstrated clearly of the latter. It is thus not surprising that Ohrloff refused to join the five elders when they condemned the founders of the Mennonite Brethren. At the same time, it should be noted that the quarrel, which began over a rather insignificant field of barley, eventually involved all major religious and civic leaders of the Molotschna, and poisoned the entire atmosphere, further eroded religious unity, and created a climate of change and ferment which helped to set the stage for the development of the Mennonite Brethren. It thus seems safe to state that economic issues helped to create a situation which fostered a spirit of discontent with existing religious structures.

Several significant interpretations of the Mennonite experience in Russia—amongst which must be included the rise of the Mennonite Brethren Church—have warned against over-emphasizing the religious factors in the Mennonite community in the late 1850s in explaining the upheaval of 1860. David Rempel has noted that a growing spirit of reform was agitating Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the Mennonite world could not be impervious to these stirrings.³⁵ John B. Toews, in several

essays, has demonstrated how the formation of rigid politico-religio-economic structures led to a repressive authoritarianism,³⁶ while Robert Kreider has touched upon a crucial issue by demonstrating that a *Volkskirche*, which by its very nature was inseparably tied to the politics of power, could adapt to quiet, internalized piety but could not accept challenges to external form and ritual,³⁷ since this challenged the ecclesiastical system. Rempel also suggested that the personal ambition of some of the leaders may well have been a contributing factor. Indeed, later pursuit and incredible abuse of power by outspoken leaders such as Benjamin Becker lends credence to such an assumption.³⁸ Another fascinating dimension has been suggested by Alan Peters in his study of the close family ties among a significant number of the early leaders.³⁹ It seems almost certain that at least some early members were attracted to the new movement because of this factor.

A theme common to a number of Mennonite writers is the view that the Mennonite Brethren were justified in their call for renewal, but that this desire need not have brought schism in the larger brotherhood. Some contemporary observers applauded the goals but could not condone the means. Thus, the elders, Bernhard Fast and Johann Harder, emphatically agreed that the congregations were badly in need of renewal.⁴⁰ The way to correct the error, however, they contended, was to work for renewal from within. Even Elder August Lenzmann, who later became a most determined opponent of the new movement, at first expressed support for the goals of the reformers, and was prepared to work for revitalization.⁴¹

Similar expressions of concern are reflected in the *Mennonitische Blaetter*. This paper was especially important because the Russian Mennonites at this time did not have their own periodicals. Numerous articles and lengthy letters in the early 1860s presented both sides in the dispute. Eventually, however, the editor, the respected Pastor Jakob Mannhardt of the Danzig Mennonite Church, emphatically opposed the development of what he regarded as a divisive and destructive force. He concluded that the "spiritual pride" of the "erring brethren"⁴² was at the heart of the problem. He hoped that a rebirth of Christian humility and love would end the rupture. At the same time he noted that

the detached position of the Ohrloff congregation divided the Mennonite leadership precisely when it so desperately needed unity. It would be unfair to editor Mannhardt to dismiss him as someone who placed little emphasis on genuine spiritual vitality and was primarily concerned with retention of ritualistic formalism. In earlier issues, he had repeatedly carried sympathetic reports of Bible study meetings and missionary festivals, and he viewed these as hopeful signs on the Russian horizon. Indeed, he had earlier expressed concern for spiritual conditions in South Russia. For him, however, the formation of a schismatic group seemed a tragic mistake which could only bring more bitterness and deterioration.

Another contemporary account, but from a non-Mennonite, came from the pen of Alexander Klaus.⁴³ In his capacity as an official in the Ministry of Crown Lands he was in a good position to observe life in the colonies. In his analysis of various movements and events in the decades prior to 1860, he concluded that significant motivation for the rise of new religious movements among the Mennonites was presented by the economical problems. He also suggested that earlier tensions, such as the emergence of Flemish and Frisian congregations, had left an enduring legacy which made division a common part of the Mennonite landscape.⁴⁴ This tension was ready to surface when occasion warranted. Similarly, Klaus contended that what he called the "lust for power of the church elders"⁴⁵ added to feelings of alienation in the Mennonite community. Then, when the bitter struggle between the landless settlers and the landowners dragged on without resolution, impatient elements, Klaus contended, turned to religious protest, and began to use the church as a focus of their discontent.⁴⁶ This procedure was regarded as especially appropriate because church leaders were almost always drawn from the ranks of the wealthier classes, and so religious leaders were also seen as agents of economic oppression. Klaus did not interpret the events of 1860 in terms of simple monocausation. While he stressed economic considerations, he did recognize the significance of Baptist and Pietist influences. He did not, however, offer any explanation as to why the leaders of the early Mennonite Brethren were often drawn from the ranks of the well-to-do

business men and farmers, as well as teachers. Beyond that, Klaus is largely uninformed on the inner dynamics of the Mennonite Brethren as his indiscriminate use of the term "*Huepfer*" for the whole movement of religious renewal, both before and after 1860, demonstrates.

One of the more significant recent interpretations of the events of 1860 is to be found in James Urry's *The Closed and the Open: Social and Religious Change Amongst the Mennonites of Russia (1789-1889)*.⁴⁷ Here the new movement is portrayed as a logical religious extension of a whole series of changes which were transforming the Mennonite community during the first half of the nineteenth century. Urry contends that this was a time of increasing emphasis on rugged individualism and aggressive economic practices, as seen in the development of the "*Musterwirte*" and the vigorous industrial enterprises.⁴⁸ The community was being supplanted by the individual. Aggressive self-assertiveness, a relentless drive for success on the individual level, a quest for new exposure and stimulation in the academic arena—these were characteristics which undermined the conservative traditions which fostered continuity, community, and unity. New ideas and new approaches gave birth to new attitudes and values. The Mennonite Brethren were "those brought up in an atmosphere of change, improvement, and achievement. These were the educated men, taught to develop their own personalities and to attempt to change the world and the people around them. But they were also Mennonite: a people taught to realize that all of life was religious, so they searched to find a system which, like their desire to improve the material world around them, encouraged the improvement of faith, and in a world bent on personal achievement, to create a religious person who had achieved their (sic) own salvation. It was these people, the educated, the people who knew and worked outside the confines of the colony and the way it thought, who sought this new religious meaning for their lives."⁴⁹ Urry also suggests that the *Froehliche* phenomenon, the extremists disciplined in the June reform, were at least in part the result of a temporary aberration of some Brethren who were trying to get everyone into the movement. This unhappy experience, Urry concluded, convinced the Brethren to be more careful about whom

they allowed to join their ranks; they promptly returned to their exclusiveness.⁵⁰ Apparently, the early Mennonite Brethren are to be regarded as having developed a world view different from that of the traditional Mennonite community, of stressing aggressive individualism rather than communal responsibility, of being exclusive and elitist rather than inclusive and universal. In their determination to emphasize their distinctiveness, the early Brethren found a fitting spiritual symbol—that of baptism by immersion. Urry asserts that the mode of baptism had been discussed by the members of the new movement before the secession,⁵¹ and that the adoption of immersion gave the Brethren “The criteria of differentiation which would give their movement sacramental distinctiveness.”⁵²

There is much that is intriguing in the Urry analysis. Many of the early leaders were dynamic champions of change in various dimensions of community life, such as education, business and religious matters. It would seem, however, that it would be more accurate to state that the early Mennonite Brethren rebelled against a situation in which the community had already been overshadowed by the aggressive individual, whether personified in the powerful colony administrators or in authoritarian church elders and ministers. Also, while they championed education, as is evident from the role Johann Claassen and Jakob Reimer played in the founding of a special private school, the disruption at that school, caused by the dismissal of someone noted for his spirituality but not scholarship, and the subsequent appointment of someone in whom these qualities were apparently reversed, suggests that the Brethren were more concerned about spirituality than about scholarship, while their opponents were the ones who fit Urry's model. Furthermore, when Urry speaks of immersionist baptism as having been adopted to emphasize distinctiveness, he fails to give any supporting evidence. His assertion that the Brethren had discussed the mode of baptism before their separation lacks any factual basis, while the available literature on this subject refutes Urry's notion that immersion was adopted because it would distinguish the members of the new movement from the larger Mennonite community.

What, then, are some conclusions which may be drawn from the rather large body of writing which has tried to interpret and explain the rise of the Mennonite Brethren? Are there guidelines which may help us in our present understanding?

In the first place, it would seem that too often the issue has been seen in terms of black and white: either it was right and necessary, or else it was wrong and unnecessary. Such value judgments seem to be especially quickly made if only strictly religious dimensions of the whole question are examined.

Beyond this, it seems essential that the whole issue be seen in its broad historical and cultural context. Religious renewal and agitation had long been part of the South Russian Mennonite experience, as the numerous missions festivals, the revival meetings, the Bible study and prayer meetings, demonstrate. Furthermore, prominent Mennonite leaders, such as Elders Lenzmann, Fast, and Harder, supported these ventures, although they refused to join the new movement when it became a separate entity. At the very least, one must admit that many who were part of spiritual renewal movements remained in the old church. It is therefore impossible to speak of the new Mennonite Brethren Church as a church of serious believers vis-a-vis a church of the uncommitted. A simple black-white juxtaposition is both inaccurate and unfair.

It thus becomes imperative to see the rise of the new movement in broad perspective and in contextual relationship. Among factors which shaped the Mennonite world of 1860, and which influenced the rise of the Mennonite Brethren, are the following:

1. The emergence of a harsh, rigid ecclesiastical system which was expressed perhaps most clearly in the formation of the authoritarian *Kirchenkonvent* in the middle of the nineteenth century. This action concentrated power in the hands of a few leaders, and often deprived local congregations of significant decision-making power.

2. In the civil arena, power was concentrated in the hands of the colony administrator and his office. The inordinate influence of the colony administrator is suggested by the tactics he used to dominate ecclesiastical leaders.

Thus, in both the religious and the civil sphere, the old Anabaptist ideal of congregational participation in decision-making was substantially undermined and often non-existent. It must, however, be remembered that courageous leaders, such as the elders of Ohrloff, successfully resisted civil authoritarianism, but in so doing also set themselves against most of the religious leaders, thus creating ecclesiastical division so that the early Mennonite Brethren never faced a united front.

3. In economic affairs, a serious imbalance and debilitating injustice had become established. Some $\frac{2}{3}$ of the people in the Molotschna were part of the landless group. Thus, not only were they economically dependent on, and exploited by, the one-third which owned the land, they were also voiceless in the village assembly, for the landless had no right to vote.

4. The decade of the 1850s witnessed a number of sharp clashes within the larger Mennonite community. The "barley dispute", to mention only one, embittered relations among several congregations, and divided Ohrloff from other Molotschna congregations.

5. Another lingering dispute arose in connection with the Brotherhood School. When two of the founders of the school were unable to control the development of the school, they withdrew, and only a few months later they had become leaders in the newly-established Mennonite Brethren Church. Again, one may fairly ask if this is mere coincidence, or were these two men susceptible to ordinary human frailties so that their wounded pride found its cure in the new movement?

Thus, the Mennonite Brethren Church arose in an atmosphere characterized by ecclesiastical rigidity which tended to stifle vigorous congregational development; a politico-ecclesiastical partnership which concentrated power in the hands of the few; a sharp class struggle between the landed and the landless, which poisoned relationships at all levels; a number of acrimonious disputes which pitted congregation against congregation, and member against member. When, in the midst of this turmoil and struggle, the Mennonite Brethren Church came into being, champions of the old order were distressed to see another apparently

divisive and disruptive force taking concrete form. They were convinced that a new division would not bring healing to an already troubled and torn community, and so they opposed the new movement. The Mennonite Brethren leaders, on the other hand, were not convinced that anything less than radical surgery could effect a cure.

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FOOTNOTES

- 1 Jacob P. Bekker, *Origin of the Mennonite Brethren Church*, trans. by D.E. Pauls and A.E. Janzen (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1973).
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 5 Friesen, *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruederschaft in Russland, 1789-1910* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1911), pp. 206ff.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 236ff.
- 7 Peter Regier, *Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde* (Berne, Ind., 1901).
- 8 J.F. Harms, *Die Geschichte der Mennoniten Bruedergemeinde* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1924).
- 9 J.H. Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro, Kansas, 1950).
- 10 A.H. Unruh, *Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Bruedergemeinde* (Winnipeg, 1955).
- 11 See especially p. 62.
- 12 John A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Fresno, Calif., 1975).
- 13 *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 52. See also, by the same author, "Reflections on Mennonite Brethren Historiography," *Direction*, III (July 1974), 222.
- 14 Toews, *History of the Mennonite Brethren Church*, p. 36.
- 15 Friesen, *Mennonitische Bruederschaft*, p. 236.
- 16 "The Mennonite Brethren Church" in C.J. Dyck, ed., *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1957); "The Early Mennonite Brethren Church: Baptist or Anabaptist?" *Mennonite Life*, XXV (October, 1959), 176-178.
- 17 "Born of Anabaptism and Pietism," in *Mennonite Brethren Herald* (March 26, 1965).

- 18 John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1950).
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 278.
- 20 C.H. Wedel, *Abriss der Geschichte der Mennoniten*, III (Newton, Kansas, 1901), 171.
- 21 Carl H.A. van der Smissen, *Kurzgefasste Geschichte und Glaubenslehre der Altevangelischen Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten* (Selbstverlag, 1895).
- 22 C. Henry Smith, *History of the Mennonites* (Berne, Ind., 1941).
- 23 Cornelius Krahn, *History of the Mennonites*, 4th ed., revised and enlarged (Newton, Kansas, 1957).
- 24 Smith, *History of the Mennonites*, 1957 ed., p. 435.
- 25 Cornelius Krahn, "Some Social Attitudes of the Mennonites in Russia," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, IX (1935), 173.
- 26 Alexander Klaus, *Unsere Kolonien*, trans. from the Russian by J. Toews (Odessa, 1887), pp. 267, 284-289 *inter alia*.
- 27 Adolf Ehrt, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart* (Langensalza, 1932), p. 59.
- 28 Franz Isaak, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten* (Halbstadt, Russia, 1908), p. 174.
- 29 E.K. Francis, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia, 1789-1914: A Sociological Interpretation," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXV (1951), 173-182, 200.
- 30 See especially pp. 51, 52.
- 31 Toews, *History of the Mennonite Brethren Church*, p. 52.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 174.
- 33 David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: A Sketch of Its Founding and Endurance, 1789-1919," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XLVIII (January, 1974), p. 25.
- 34 See especially Isaak, *Molotschnaer Mennoniten*, pp. 123-135; also Friesen, *Mennonitische Bruederschaft*, p. 109; Bekker, *Origin*, pp. 48, 49. Bekker asserts flatly that this issue led Ohrloff to refuse support to the other

church leaders as they attempted to crush the secessionists.

- 35 David Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: A Sketch of its Founding and Endurance, 1789-1919," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XLVII (October, 1973), 259-308; XLVIII (January, 1974), 5-54. See also, by the same author, "The Mennonite Colonies in New Russia. A Study of Their Settlement and Economic Development from 1789 to 1914," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford, 1933.
- 36 John B. Toews, "Die Entwicklung der Mennonitischen Kirche in Russland," *Heimatbuch der Deutschen aus Russland* (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 419-431; "The Russian Origins of the Mennonite Brethren: Some Observations," in Paul Toews, ed., *Pilgrims and Strangers* (Fresno, 1977), pp. 78-107.
- 37 Robert Kreider, "The Anabaptist Conception of the Church in the Russian Mennonite Environment, 1789-1870," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXV (January 1951), pp. 17-33.
- 38 Becker's rash use of the ban against those who questioned his harsh and despotic rule illustrates his thirst for power (Friesen, *Mennonitische Bruederschaft*, pp. 416ff.).
- 39 Alan Peters, "The Impact of the Family in Mennonite History: Some Observations," *Direction*, I (July 1972), 74-81.
- 40 Friesen, *Mennonitische Bruederschaft*, pp. 234-236.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 233.
- 42 Jakob Mannhardt, *Mennonitische Blaetter* (Danzig), editorial (July, 1864), p. 52. Mannhardt referred to the "geistlichen Hochmuth" of the "irrenden Brueder."
- 43 Klaus was a Volga German and served in several ministries of the Tsarist government in St. Petersburg. When he wrote *Unsere Kolonien*, he was an official in the Ministry of Crown Lands.
- 44 Klaus, *Unsere Kolonien*, p. 260.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 263.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 259.
- 47 James Urry, "The Closed and the Open: Social and

Religious Change Amongst the Mennonites of Russia (1789-1889)," unpublished thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Keble College, Oxford, 1975.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 524.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 660.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 662.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 628.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 629. Frank Epp makes the same observation in his *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920* (Toronto, 1974), p. 173. No substantiation is given.

