35. April 26, 28, 1710. A hearing in Amsterdam of the recently released Swiss brothers concerning their mistreatment in the Canton of Bern for the sake of their faith.

[recto]

Questions to the Swiss brethren and their answers

April 26 & 28, 1710, in the council

room of the church at the Tower, by the

Amsterdam Committee members for Palatine & Bernese matters.

Questions Answers

1 Their names and places of 1 Bendicht Brechtbühl of Trachselwald,   
residence?  preacher

 Hans Bürki of Langnau, deacons[[1]](#footnote-1)

2 2 Melchior Zahler of Frutigen

 Hans Rupp of Sigriswil } now of

 Peter Thönen of Reutigen } Deventer.

3 Whether they have property? 3 The majority does, and most has been

 confiscated, and in some cases twice.

4 Whether they had movable 4 Yes, and they have been assessed quite  
goods or furniture?  fairly, and for this assessment wife &

 children were allowed to keep such

goods.

5 Whether the others who were 5 Some, and a very few have left their  
imprisoned with them have goods  children with their Reformed friends as well, and whether they also  at their own expense.  
have children, and whether or    
not taken from them?

6 Where they think their wives or 6 They keep them secretly in Switzerland.  
other family members are?

7 Whether their wife and children 7 Yes, if they are Reformed, but if  
are free to live on their property?  they do not report their husbands

 they are penalized with a large fine.

8 Whether all of them live in the 8 Yes, all in the country.  
country and not in the cities?

9 The size of their brother- & 9 Some think about a thousand, others  
sisterhood?  about six hundred.

10 How old is their confession in 10 From 1527 and has been upheld

Switzerland?  until now.[[2]](#footnote-2)

11 Whether there has been 11 Constantly, although sometimes

persecution on account of these harsher than other times, and in 1645,

confessions repeatedly, and when? when an official proclamation was to be

announced from all pulpits, there was a

very severe persecution again, with great

turmoil all over the country like a

hurricane, and a stone fell on the sheriff’s

pew, so that it broke, with the result that

they were so changed that for some years

they did not persecute anyone.  
[verso]

Questions Answers

12 Whether there are any brothers 12 To their knowledge none, except for a  
 remaining in other cantons? very few in Solothurn, because the others

are too harsh, in fact, have killed some.

13 Whether all of them agree to 13 They have no information other  
the Confession made in Dordrecht than that all are in agreement with it.  
in 1632, and appropriate it as   
their own?

14 Whether the government of 14 No, none, but last Christmas or  
Bern or of all of Switzerland have Christmas time they tried to persuade  
other charges against them, or them that they should confess at their  
have ever accused them of baptism that no one outside their  
something other than that which religion could be saved, which they  
is named in three main points denied absolutely but commend such a  
in the edict referred to ? matter to the Lord.

15 Whether they are aware that 15 No, but have willingly paid all  
anyone of them has been taxes, nor has there ever been a  
disobedient in what the complaint about anything other than is  
government has decreed except expressed in the three well-known  
that concerning which they judge points.  
to be forbidden in God’s Word?

16 Whether they are willing to 16 Yes, and that they have declared  
pay the government for the verbally and in writing that they are  
journey and the guard in the willing to pay what they can; in  
amount of 2 to 4 rix- dollars addition on the express order of the

annually for each person, and, if government, to support some soldiers  
necessary, to assist the government from their property. This they therefore  
with their labor and in developing declare they are willing to submit to.  
domestic food resources?

17 How their arrest occurred, }

and where? } 17}

18 Where they were imprisoned?} 18} This will be evident from their  
 report.

19 How they were treated there?} 19}

20 Whether they were } 20}

 interrogated, and by whom?

21 Whether they all remained 21 One named Niclaas Reuttiger has

 faithful? converted to the Reformed religion.

22 Whether they also know of 22 No one better than the clerk, Mr.  
anyone in Bern with whom one Knopf.[[3]](#footnote-3)  
might correspond confidentially?

23 What the difference is between 23 They know of no more kinds than  
those known under the name the two. The difference consists in this:  
Hans Reist’s people and those of that Jacob Ammann’s group carries  
Jacob Ammann, and whether through on excommunication,   
there are more than two kinds shunning, and the washing of feet more  
in Switzerland? strictly than the others.

24 Whether they understand the 24 This is answered with Article 13 [of  
government to be of God, etc.? the Dordrecht Confession], and it will  
 further be expressed, along with the  
 two other main charges, in their formal  
 response.

1. 35 Brüsewitz, “Een opmerkelijke ontmoeting,” p. 104 applies this to both Bürki and Zahler. The remark about Deventer was added later. Brüsewitz gives an interesting introduction to this meeting on pp. 100-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This indirect reference to the Schleitheim Confession of Faith confirms its on-going importance among the Swiss Brethren. See Urs B. Leu and Christian Scheidegger, Das Schleitheimer Bekenntnis 1527 (Zug: Achius Verlag, 2004), pp. 15-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Document 86 and note there. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)