36. May 1, 1710. Statement by Hans Bürki and his companions about the complaints made against them concerning their view of the government, the swearing of oaths, and nonresistance. This is not the original copy, which is lost, but a translation into Dutch. This statement gives evidence of editing by Dutch Mennonite brethren, who want it to be as acceptable to government officials as possible.

[recto]

Copy

Our response to the charges of the government of Bern is as follows: First, we believe and confess that the office of government is ordained by the Almighty God for the purpose of punishing evil and protecting good, Romans 13, and that every Christian person is therefore obligated to acknowledge it as God’s servant, and not only to acknowledge it as such, but to obey it without resistance, and also to pray to God for its well-being, so that we may live a quiet and peaceable life. 1 Timothy 2. And to give to them what is owed them, customs, taxes, and every honor, subjection, and respect. Romans 13, Titus 3, 1 Peter 2.

Concerning the oath, we believe that according to Christ’s words in Matthew 5, our yea should be yea and our nay be nay, which words we understand to mean that we are as strongly bound[[1]](#footnote-1) as all others who do swear an oath,[[2]](#footnote-2) and we believe that when we violate our yea or nay, we violate God’s command.

Concerning protection of the fatherland, from which we are accused of wanting to withdraw ourselves entirely,[[3]](#footnote-3) we reply as follows, that we want to give the government as much as is required of us according to our means and our ability for the purpose of defense and protection and in times of distress to work on the defense works[[4]](#footnote-4) of the city inasmuch as is possible.

This is testified to by the following

This has been signed personally Hans Bürki[[5]](#footnote-5)

by the five persons listed. Bendicht Brechtbühl[[6]](#footnote-6)

Melchior Zahler[[7]](#footnote-7)

Hans Rupp

Peter Thönen

In the year 1710, May 1

written in Amsterdam.

[verso]

Declaration of the 5 Swiss Brethren

in Amsterdam concerning the 3 main

charges.

1. 36 Here “is of the same strength for us, and by which we consider ourselves equally bound” has been crossed out. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The crossed out words “considered bound to it” follow. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Here “want to neither march nor do watch duty” has been crossed out. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Here “ramparts” has been crossed out. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Here “as elder” has been crossed out. Document 35 says Bürki and Zahler were deacons. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Here “as preacher” has been crossed out. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Here “as elder” has been crossed out. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)