34. April 26, 1710.[[1]](#footnote-1) The City of Bern replies to the States General’s intercession of the previous month and refuses to yield. This is an interesting eighteenth-century translation into English of Document 34, but does not correspond in every detail to the German of that document.

[Page 9]

Recd 13 May 26 April 1710

a Copy[[2]](#footnote-2)

High and Mighty, well-descended, noble,

Specially esteemed, and much favoured Lords,

our kind Salutation and voluntary Service

By the honoured letter of your high & Mightinesses

sent to us from ye[[3]](#footnote-3) 15th of ye last month March, we have

seen at large; how ye Mennonites, so called, living in

your state have desired instantly,[[4]](#footnote-4) that your high and

Mightinesses would be pleased to employ their high recom-

mandation in favor of the Baptists dwelling in our

country & jurisdiction, in order that they might be

relieved from those hard oppressions, wherewith, according

to their presented complaint, they are burdened; and yt3

hence forth within our district they might dwell safely,

and enjoy the free exercise of their Religion.

We would not have delayed so long, to return our well-

intended thoughts in answer to your high & Mightinesses:

had not the usuall changing of our Government made a

stop thereunto; wherefore your high &Mightinesses are

kindly desired to take the said delay in good parts. We

are of opinion yt if we should make a due reply to all

the motives and serious admonitions contained in your

high &Mightinesses letter, we would fall into tedious

digressions, & so without all question become too troublesome:

wherefore we have been induced briefly to set down our

well-intentioned answer & fondamentall count[er]positions,

couched in the following manner, and onely to signify so

much to your high & Mightinesses, whereby we hope

your high & Mighti[nesses] will see sufficiently on one hand yt

the above mentioned Mennonites living in your state,

have propounded the condition of ye Baptists here, not

so as it is really, but too moderately; and on the other hand,

that we unavoidably have been necessitated to use the

required zeal against this humoursom[[5]](#footnote-5) people, to pre-

vent thereby a furder[[6]](#footnote-6) mischief which otherwise might

befall our country. May it please therefore your high

& Mightin[esses] to understand graciously that after we have apply’d

all imaginable means of instruction & other friendly admoni-

tions, in hopes of reducing those people from their erroneous

way to sound doctrine, and all this having been en [sic] vain,

we have allowed them a good while ago to depart from

our jurisdiction with their wives & children & goods

[page 10] towards such a pleace where they think to enjoy liberty

of conscience; in as much yt a pretty good number of them

is gone from hence; wch3 gave us hope, that they, according

to their promise with their so highly esteemed faith of a man,

not would [sic] have come again into our contries. But they

have been so bold, that from time to time they have

returned into our jurisdiction, and travelling to & fro,

have spread ye very dangerous seed of their erroneous

doctrine, & endeavoured to draw off others of our faithfull

Subjects from ye sound way, and bring them over to theirs.

So that at length we have seen ourselves necessitated to

prevent inconveniences & pernicious consequeness, that

might be raised in our countrys, as in the former age

happened in Germany & elsewhere, and by a serious pro-

vision to procure a further security. And thô we had just

cause to inflict due punishment on those, who are retur-

ned so boldly, & have committed such things; yet we

have lett lenity[[7]](#footnote-7) prevail, and by employing of a conside-

rable sum of money we have ordred that these Baptists

have been kept together in custody and according to agree-

ment, made wth3 ye English Envoye Extraordinary ye Lord

Stanian, should be carried into America, whereto they

declared themselves very willing and gave us their thanks

for the great mercy shewed them. In the mean while

we do not question but if your high & Mightinesses were

fully acquainted wth the constitution of our Canton, they

would approve our proceedings in this case, and conclude

with us that such people can not be tolerated in our coun-

try without appearent danger, because in case of need

ye constitution of our country requires from us to arm

our subjects, & to make use of them in steed of strange

forces, which also ye other Confederates can’t use, be-

cause it would be contrary to ye covenant & agreement of

the confederates. Wherefore we live in a certain hoope yt

considering this state of things no wrong impreßions a-

gainst us & our Canton will find ye least entrance

wth your high & Mightinesses; and so we desire you kindly

to be helpfull in facilitating the safe transporting of

these people towards America; unless you think it better

to lett them stay in ye low Countrys. For we can not hide

[page 11] from your high & Mightinesses that, if they return

into our contries, we would be constrained so to proceed

against them, that in time to come, we had nothing to

fear concerning them.

For ye remainder we assure your high & Mightinesses of

our true & sincere readiness to serve you, committing

you forever to the divine protection. given ye 26th

of Aprile Ao 1710.

Your high & Mightinesses

affectionate

signed,

The sherif & Council of the

City of Bern

[page 12]

Dit betreft de zwitsers

Maar is ondiÿts[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. 34 Municipal Archives Rotterdam, Mennonite Church Inventory No. 40, pp. 9-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Beginning here, the characteristic Dutch hand is the same as the earlier letter of March 15 (Document 15) in its English translation. Since this is an eighteenth-century translation into English, the page numbers do not match those in the original German on the facing page. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ye = the; yt = that; wch = which; wth = with. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “earnestly,” (obsolete) as in Luke 7:4; 23:23, Acts 26:7, and II Tim. 4:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “capricious.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “further,” (obsolete). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. “mildness, gentleness.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “This concerns the Swiss, but is not [written] in Dutch.” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)