

#71

Chortitza Colony Mayors and Ministers Complaint about Hoeppner Brothers

From: St. Petersburg Archive Fond 383 Opis 29 Delo 162

Translated by Helen Ens (date unknown). Edited by Glenn Penner 2025.
[This document was rather difficult to translate]

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To the Highly-born and therefore highly honoured Sir Court Councillor Kontenius.

Highly honoured Sir is advised to know the reasons why the two farmers Jacob and Peter Hoeppner have been excommunicated from the church community and are being ostracized, which is in accordance with our confession of faith. This action is taken when the behaviour is not in correspondence with a Christian walk of life. This also excludes them from participating in the Holy Communion and the fellowship of the church.

From the time that the colony with the gracious permission of the government settled in New Russia- *[I am unable to translate what follows but I gather that Jac. Hoeppner has been asked by the Russian government to take over a certain position but he has proven to be unfaithful, acted selfishly – translator]*- but by his eight years of sly behaviour and actions through sheer selfishness he caused such confusion and complications, the consequences of which caused harm and disorder on the whole and for individuals and caused sorrow - For the continuation of the Hoe so (?) a big plea his uninterrupted..... misdeeds was added last year in August in spite of the supervision of the present Director the following: At a certain meeting regarding the erection of a house Jacob Hoeppner caused quarrels which resulted in physical hitting. As in this last incidence as well as in the others Jacob's brother Peter supported Jacob. Feeling very uncomfortable to see such behaviour we undertook the necessary action, went to the church and asked for church (discipline) punishment -

If- alas- he you the procedure (?) of, regret and heartfelt desire ... one memberwould like to why we ask you and God also. ???

Kortitz , July 3, 1798

Your High-Born's most humble servants

Mayors ["Schulzen den ganzen Colonie"]

Johan Schreder [Johann Schroeder – Rosenthal; #196630]

Wilhelm Fringel [Wilhelm Friesen – Schönhorst; #228193]

Peter Döll [Peter Doell – Neuenburg; #17771]

Herman Dieck [Hermann Dyck – Neuendorf; #266328]

Didrich Neufeldt [Diedrich Neufeld – Insel Chortitza; #134086]

Heinrich Dieck [Heinrich Dyck – Einlage; #197955]

Abraham Kop: [Abraham Koop – Chortitz; #146853]

[note: Kronsweide & Schoenwiese (founded in 1797) Schulzen missing]

Ministers [“Lehrer”]:

Jacob Wienss	[Jacob Wiens 1761-1812; #97289]
Gerhard Entz	[Gerhard Ens 1755-1813; #199341]
Heinrich Epp	[Heinrich Epp 1757-1805; #12610]
Peter Epp	[Peter Epp 1755-1802; #15893]
Heinrich Wunds	[Heinrich Wiens 1769-1821; #351557]
Jacoby Penner	[Jacob Penner 1756-1804; 21416]

[Several are missing: co-Elder David Epp (1750-1802), co-Elder Johann Wiebe (1766-1823), Gerhard Neufeld (b.1755), Peter Dyck (1749-1808), Gerhard Willms (1766-1832)]

[note that 4 of the 6 signers were elected in 1796 or 1797]

Since the original German document proved to be hard to translate, a translation of the Russian translation is provided below:

St. Petersburg Archives Fond 383 Opis 29 Delo 162 Translated by Danila Sobchakov
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Translation of the Khortitsa Mennonites' Response
to Court Councillor Kontenius dated July 3rd 1798.

The Right Honourable Councillor wished to know, why two proprietors Jacob and Peter Hepner were excluded from our community and why we do not associate with them in any way. Our law dictates that depraved people, who live disorderly, must be removed from the community and must be forbidden to partake of the Blessed Sacrament. Since the day our colony was established in the Novorossian Guberniya by the high will, we have been striving to organize it properly. Jacob Hepner joined us with the same objective, but over the course of eight years, through his deceptive actions and lies, acting out of sheer avarice, he disarrayed all the affairs so utterly that it resulted in great harm and disorder, both communal and individual, accompanied by many regrettable actions. These ceaseless misdeeds would be enough, but on top of that, last year in August, during an assembly gathered on the issue of aiding a household in strained circumstances, resisting our current Director's good decision and improvement efforts, Jacob Hepner raised a ruckus and started a brawl. As for Peter Hepner, both in this latter case and many others he behaved like his brother. Looking at these events, with a heavy heart and out of necessity we had to resort to our ecclesiastic punishment. Oh, if only this could move them to confession, repentance and heartfelt desire to be accepted into our community once again! We pray God for this to happen on their behalf and on behalf of others like them.

The original is signed by Mayors [Schulzen] and Ministers (Lehrer) from the colonies.
See above.

Translated [from German to Russian] by Titular Councillor Trofim Tsalaba[k]