

The Mennonites and the Linen Trade in East-Frisia

From the 16th century on East-Frisia experienced economic growth. Leer became the centre of the linen industry and trade. In the 16th century, Dutch people, persecuted for their faith, fled in large numbers to East-Frisia, where they had a big share in its prosperity: until then weaving had been a cottage industry. But the Dutch refugees were able to establish a thriving linen industry within a few years. This reached its peak at the beginning of the 18th century. Many of the Dutch were prosperous and successful within a few years. This reached its peak at the beginning of the 18th century. Many of the Dutch were prosperous and successful.

The Mennonites especially showed great skill as artisans and a talent for economics. The linen industry became the main branch of the economy of Leer in the centuries to come, such as the families Alring, van der Borch, and Hooch, among others. This industry was controlled by a large number of Mennonites, who were to control the linen trade. Among these families were also a large number of Mennonites, who were to control the linen trade.

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Anabaptists and proclaimed himself as “Enoch”, the second witness. In Amsterdam Jan Mathys was the leader of the community of THE KINGDOM OF ANABAPTISTS IN MÜNSTER detention until the end of his life 1543/1544. to him for that year; however this did not happen. He remained in conflicts, which would end with the return of Christ and the Melchior Hoffmann and his supporters foresaw large apocalyptic battle against “the godless” – particularly the catholic THE SPLIT-UP AMONG THE BAPTISTS: RADICAL ANABAPTISTS and MENNONITES against baptism before the age of 33 years. 300 adults. Out of this group originated the oldest congregation which had been common practice since the second century AD. in the city. The elections for the council in February 1534 resulted in a victory for the Baptists. Jan Mathys, the self-proclaimed prophet, also came into the city. In the ensuing period community of property was introduced, following the example of the early church in Jerusalem. Those who do not accept baptism as a sacrament and therefore not as a means of grace, others are Against baptism before the age of 33 years. In Emden he preaches in the Great Church and baptized appr. for Emden. Theate preacher Melchior Hoffmann plays a central role with a small number of followers and was slain. Under the leadership of Jan van Leiden the Baptists were radicalized. Polygamy, the right to marry more than one woman at the same time, was introduced. Jan van Leiden himself married more than a dozen women. Mathys announced for Easter 1534 again the return of Christ, which again did not happen. He left the city, which, meanwhile, was beset by the failure of crops in the Lower German region. In Emden he preaches in the Great Church and baptized approx. 360 adults. Out of this group originated the oldest congregation of Baptists in Northwest Germany. Melchior Hoffmann and his followers, called “Melichterz”, founded further parishes in other cities. The Anabaptists, due to their “false belief”, sowed the seeds of discord, as “insurgents” they disturbed the God-given peace and unity in the holy Empire”. As “heretics” because, they practiced “reformation”. This was not only forbidden, but also had to be feared. From the point of view of the authorities the large part of the population the extreme excesses during the kingdom of the Anabaptists in Münster only confirmed foreign observers’ opinion to also for those Mennonites who had agreed to dispense completely with violence. Their refusal to take the oath also caused the authorities to distrust the Anabaptists: at this beginning of a new period in history the Anabaptists were not able to prove their loyalty, wherein the God-given order of society was publicly confirmed and tolerated. The refusal to perform military duties, especially in the towns, caused their fellow citizens to distrust the Mennonites even more. Only by purchasing huge sums of money for “protection”, could the Mennonites achieve toleration. Their legal position was also as well as their social position was confirmed by the authorities. In some aspects this ended only in the course of the 19th century. The KINGDOM OF ANABAPTISTS IN MÜNSTER ANABAPTISTS – “INSURGENTS” – “HERETICS”? After the catastrophe of 1534/35, baptists split up into two completely different movements in the Lower German region. One was led by the “radical” majority and called itself “Anabaptists”, and the other, led by the “moderate” minority and called itself “Mennonites”. During the 16th century, after the end of the large-scale persecution in the Dutch provinces, the Mennonites settled down in the towns and communities there – also in East-Friesland. While the external threat was not large enough to affect the congregations of the Mennonites, Points of controversy were...