

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

June 11, 1959

To the Editor:

I appreciate the opportunity of responding to the review in the April issue of the source book which I edited, *European Origins of the Brethren*. Several errors are serious enough to warrant correction.

The reviewer finds that I have "overemphasized the importance of translation," because the "scholar . . . should always consider original documents." He seems to miss the point to criticize someone for performing the task which he was commissioned to do. This was to search out the scattered and inaccessible materials on the beginnings of the Church of the Brethren in Europe, and to present them in translation for American readers. It is hardly likely that anyone will soon repeat the research, following Dr. Kuhinka's principle. Moreover, it is my impression that the scholarly world has generally welcomed the appearance of similar source materials in usable form, albeit in translation.

This raises the problem of the validity of the translation. After a rather sweeping, if undocumented, charge that they do not follow "English structure," the reviewer devotes considerable space to a discussion of the terms *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*. While it is perhaps understandable, though hardly appropriate, that a sociologist would dwell on this point, it has no bearing on the book under review. The term *Gesellschaft* nowhere appears in the book nor did it in the sources; his seeming indictment that I translated *Gesellschaft* as "church" is therefore inapplicable.

The reviewer is not correct in his deduction that my wife did "most of the present work." I do not minimize her great contribution to its completion, as fully detailed in the preface, and indeed there suggest that her name might well have been included on the title page. Nevertheless, the publication committee, which would seem to be in a better position to judge the matter than Dr. Kuhinka, felt that they had adequate reasons for assigning responsibility as they did.

It is disappointing that the reviewer limited his critical attention to the problems which I raised myself in the preface, and to the table of contents (one chapter heading of which he lists incorrectly).

After having learned from Dr. Kuhinka that I am "neither sociologist nor historian," that I have not mastered English structure, that I am guilty of imprecision in translation, and that I am not free from the suspicion of claiming another's work as my own, it is with surprise that I read his conclusion that the book would "have a good effect." Not only does this seem inconsistent with the charges listed above, but it also sounds "unscientific" and "moralistic," which qualities he found objectionable in my preface.

Juniata College

Sincerely yours,
DONALD F. DURNBAUGH

To the Editor :

Mr. Durnbaugh is quite upset in his reaction to my review of his book in which I stated that the source-book will "have a good effect" on the members of the Brethren Church, but not on the "scholars," who from the point of view of their scientific training will always consider the original documents. According to him these statements are inconsistent.

Further, contrary to Mr. Durnbaugh's opinion, it is extremely appropriate that a sociologist associate the concepts *Gemeinschaft* or *Gemeinde* with their antonym *Gesellschaft*. These conceptual distinctions help compare social phenomena, *ergo* religious phenomena too. If Mr. Durnbaugh will re-read that short paragraph he will discover the connotation of Toennis' concepts, and will see that his work has already stimulated some sociological reaction, as he himself proposed (p. 12).

This reply, in keeping with the spirit of the review, will not detract from the importance of the book and the good effect it should have on the layman of the Brethren Church.

Dickinson College

ERNEST M. GAJÁRY KUHINKA