

Her Imperial Majesty's Director and Curator of the Mennonite Colonies in Russia: Three Letters of Georg Trappe

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This paper is dedicated to the memory of Dr David G. Rempel (1899-1992)

In the founding of the Mennonite community in Russia,¹ Georg Trappe—or George de Trappe, as he signed his French-language letters—played a central and crucial role. A German in Russian service, he was sent by Prince Grigorii Potemkin to Danzig in 1786, with the rank of College Assessor,² and was outstandingly successful in persuading and arranging for the first Khortitsa Mennonite settler families to emigrate to New Russia (the lands north of the Black Sea). Trappe received the official title of Director and Curator of the new colonies thus created, and the Mennonites who left Danzig under his guidance expected him to accompany them to the south. Instead, after an initial visit to New Russia, he stayed abroad, travelling widely through southern and western Europe, in part on Potemkin's service, in search of new connections and further colonists. Subsequently, in the reign of Paul I (1796-1801) he was one of those whose lobbying of powerful figures at Court and in the central government in St

Petersburg contributed to the improved fortunes of the Russian Mennonite colonies, and to the issuing to them in 1800 of the special Imperial charter which became the foundation of their privileges and prosperity in the nineteenth century. Trappe himself, however, as we shall see, did not live to witness this later phase.

While the events and circumstances of Trappe's initial work in Danzig in 1786-87 have been recorded in great detail, other parts of his biography are less well-known and indeed uncertain. The nature of his place within the broader activities of the Russian Imperial government's policies on population and settlement, too, has often been obscured by narrow concentration on his role in the Mennonite emigration. Like so many of his eighteenth-century contemporaries, Trappe was a prolific letter writer; and much of his correspondence, with the Mennonites and with organs and representatives of the Russian government, has been preserved, scattered in a variety of repositories. Already David H. Epp made use of some of this material in his *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten* (1889); Paul Karge in his 1923 article on the Danzig and Prussian emigration drew upon Trappe correspondence and papers in the archives of Berlin, Danzig and Königsberg.³ The materials of the central Russian archives and the Trappe papers which they contain, first used by G. G. Pisarevskii in his works on foreign colonization in the Russian Empire,⁴ have been mined most thoroughly for Mennonite purposes by David G. Rempel, after his path-breaking access to Imperial government records in the 1960s.⁵

The three letters printed here, all from 1798, are contained in a file of the Board of State Economy, Guardianship of Foreigners and Rural Husbandry, a government office created by Paul I which oversaw both colonial affairs and agricultural development.⁶ They are addressed to the Board's controller, the Procurator-General Prince A. B. Kurakin,⁷ and to Karl Hablitzl (Russian Gablitz), a distinguished Board member and former Vice-Governor of the Taurida Region (*Tavrisheskaia Oblast'*, the Crimea and adjoining lands).⁸ They shed light both on the origins of Trappe's connections with the Russian service, on the workings of broader areas of colonization policy different from those through which the Mennonites were brought to Russia, and on the end of Trappe's career.

1. The origins of Trappe's connections with the Russian service.

Dr Rempel has speculated, I think very plausibly, that Trappe came to Russia with Paul's Empress, Maria Fedorovna.⁹ She was his chief patroness, and his connection with her certainly predated her acquaintance with the future Emperor. Before her marriage to Paul in 1776 as his second wife, and her conversion to Orthodoxy which brought with it a baptismal change of name, Maria Fedorovna was Princess Sophia Dorothea Augusta of Württemberg-Stuttgart. Her family had a seat at Treptow, near the Prussian city of Stettin on the Baltic,

where she spent much of her childhood: her father Duke Friedrich Eugen, a cadet son of the House of Württemberg, was in Prussian service and for a time held the post of Military Governor of Stettin. During the Seven Years' War (1756-63), while Friedrich Eugen was away on military duties, the family was forced to move temporarily to the greater safety of Stettin itself. It was here on 14 October (Old Style) 1759 that the future Russian Empress was born.¹⁰ Trappe alludes repeatedly to a connection between his fortunes and Maria Fedorovna's birth, and in the first letter here gives the most explicit hint of what that connection was: that the princess was in fact born in his father's house. He implies, too, that this event was the basis of some formal arrangement between his family and that of the princess, though he always stops short of any details. Like any other newcomer to high honours, Maria Fedorovna excited the hopes of many fortune-seekers from her homeland;¹¹ Trappe's connection, judging by its duration and value for him, was based on something more solid than mere shared nationality.

The second pointer in the same direction is his emphasis on the importance to his case of Petr Ivanovich Pastukhov. Pastukhov (1739-1799) was a Counsellor of State attached to the Cabinet or private office of Empress Catherine II at the time when the marriage of Paul and Maria Fedorovna was arranged, and Catherine sent him with the reception party to welcome her son's bride at the Russian frontier. His specific task was to teach the princess Russian, to enable her to communicate as soon as possible in her new surroundings, and especially to learn the Russian Orthodox creed, in preparation for her conversion. Catherine wrote to her correspondent Baron Melchior Grimm: 'I don't know how long the princess will need, to be able to read her profession of faith clearly and correctly in Russian; but the sooner this takes place, the better. In order to speed it all up, Pastukhov has been sent to Memel, so that he can teach the princess the alphabet and the creed on the way. Convincement can follow later.'¹² Pastukhov was also known as a translator into Russian of scientific works; he held a teaching post in the Land Cadet Corps, a prestigious college for the sons of nobles, and from 1782 an important position in Catherine's new National Schools Commission. Evidently Trappe became an associate or permanent client of Pastukhov, who was conversant with the details of his family arrangement with Maria Fedorovna.

The other connection of Trappe's who figures in these letters is the 'Baron de Nicolay.' Ludwig Heinrich Nikolay (1737-1820), in his day well-known as a poet, was the son of a city councillor of Strasburg. He came to Russia in 1769 as tutor to the Grand Duke Paul, after serving as secretary to the Russian Ambassador in Vienna and as cicerone to the sons of the Ukrainian Hetman Razumovsky. On Paul's first marriage in 1773, which also marked the formal end of his education, Nicolay was appointed secretary to the Grand Ducal couple, and in this capacity, after Paul was widowed, he accompanied the Grand Duke on the journey to Berlin in 1776 to meet Sophia Dorothea Augusta. In his case as well the connection with the new Grand Duchess was evidently decisive in forming the relationship with Trappe. On her arrival in St Petersburg Nicolay became her secretary too, and was also involved with studies which she undertook of

Russian history. On Paul's accession to the throne in 1796, Nicolay was showered with honours, rising rapidly to the rank of Privy Counsellor and member of the Order of St. Anne. Paul also gave Nicolay land with nearly 5,000 peasants in Tambov province, but already in the 1780s Nicolay had bought a Crown estate, Monrepos, on the Gulf of Finland, formerly held by Maria Fedorovna's brother, Prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Württemberg, then Governor of Finland (Karelia). Ownership was confirmed by an Imperial rescript in 1801. In 1798 Nicolay became President of the Academy of Sciences, a post he held until his retirement in 1803.¹³

Others of Trappe's letters mention further contacts and friends in St. Petersburg, not surprisingly including other members of the capital's German community.¹⁴ He was also accepted into membership of the prestigious Free Economic Society of St Petersburg in 1789.¹⁵

2. Imperial immigration policy and its varieties.

In becoming a recruiting agent for Potemkin, to whom Maria Fedorovna personally recommended him in 1786,¹⁶ Trappe joined one of the great colonial enterprises of the age, of which the Mennonite migration was one vivid but discrete episode. The importation and settlement of foreign colonists, whether in metropolitan or overseas territories, was a favourite policy of contemporary economics. In the eighteenth century, 'cameralist' doctrines gained popularity among the governments of European states, and particularly the absolutist states, which concerned themselves above all with ways of increasing national wealth. Besides emphasising the productive potential of commerce and manufacturing, and exploring in detail such associated phenomena as taxation systems, they also paid great attention to the role of population in the economy. Many of the territories of central and eastern Europe at this time were relatively thinly populated: the European population explosion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was only just beginning. But the theorists of cameralism were especially impressed by the economic successes of the relatively most populous states—Britain and Holland—and drew commensurate conclusions: they considered that "the wealth of the monarch is proportionate to the number of his subjects." People were both producers and consumers, thereby increasing the circulation of goods; they were tax payers, filling the treasury, soldiers for the ever-expanding armies which defended native territories and conquered those of neighbours.... Consequently one must look after one's population resources, and seek to increase them by all means: for example the most obvious approach, of encouraging births and preventing deaths, included care for orphans and illegitimate children, the improvement of official population statistics and of national medical provision. The prevention of emigration and the importation of new settlers from outside were equally obvious and popular measures. In the mid-eighteenth century all the great powers had active pro-

grammes for encouraging immigration into their territories—not only Austria, Prussia and Russia, but Britain, France and Spain as well—and many lesser powers emulated them.

Catherine II of Russia (1762-96) was a fervent believer in such 'populationist' ideas, and her reign saw the most active government policy in that area: the first fruits of it were the creation in 1763 of a special Chancellery for the Protection of Foreigners (*Kantseliariia opekunstva inostrannykh*) under the powerful presidency of the favourite, Prince Grigorii Orlov, and the settlement in the period 1762-74 of the Volga German colonies around Saratov in the east of European Russia.¹⁷ These colonies, intended to fill empty and under-governed territories on the then frontier of permanent settlement, and to increase local agricultural activity, marked a shift which was taking place in 'populationist' thinking: a growing emphasis away from population growth per se, and towards concentration on the agricultural sector as the most fundamental to the national economy. This latter was a doctrine also associated with the French Physiocratic school of economics, which became prominent in the middle of the century. 'Populationism' remained popular until the end of the eighteenth century and beyond, despite the counterblasts of such theorists as Thomas Malthus in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* of 1798. But the focus was now above all on agricultural settlement rather than urban growth: a factor which would make the known excellence of Danzig and Prussian Mennonite farming increasingly attractive.¹⁸ It is worth adding that Trappe claimed or acquired extensive knowledge of agricultural and settlement practices, notably the Prussian Kammerpräsident von Brenkenhof's well-known writings and his settlements in Prussian territories.¹⁹ One of Trappe's general proposals in 1786, not directly connected with the Mennonites at all, was for the creation of a model settlement to enlighten the local New Russian peasantry²⁰—a proposal which foreshadowed the model role later assigned the Mennonites in official Russian policy of the nineteenth century.

After 1774 and the Russo-Turkish treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji, another factor came to support this policy line. Catherine's defeat of the Ottoman Turks and acquisition of the huge, rich but undeveloped territories which now form the southern Ukraine presented her government with the urgent task of securing the area against Turkish counter-attack and making it productive. This task was entrusted to Prince Potemkin, her favourite at the time. To the government's populationist policy, and its pragmatic need to fill the empty steppes with good farmers, Potemkin added his own personal aspirations and ambitions to make a dazzling success of the vast region entrusted to him: a potent combination of impulses favouring the fastest possible expansion of immigration. Potemkin was prepared to consider any source of human material whatever—not only dubious internal Russian migrants such as sons of clergy without a parish, persecuted Old Believer schismatics, and runaway serfs, but even such aliens as American Tory loyalists, and British convicts offered for deportation (nothing came of either of the latter schemes).²¹

Potemkin, who combined a wilful and egocentric temperament with unique personal influence upon the Empress, also operated very much as an autocrat in his own right, often by-passing St Petersburg. Trappe's initial dealings and contract were with the Prince personally, an ambiguity which later caused him considerable problems when he wished to appear as an official emissary of the Russian government: formal, public support from St Petersburg for his Danzig recruitment was promulgated only in 1787. The 1786 Danzig mission fell in the year preceding the Empress' famous tour through her new southern domains, in other words at a time when Potemkin was strenuously seeking to consolidate his work. In any event, in 1787, the Prince's combination of real achievement and skilful showmanship (the reality and legend of the Potemkin villages!) made a great impression upon Catherine and reconsolidated his influence. The Danzig Mennonite deputies then on the spot, investigating the possibilities of migration to New Russia, were presented personally to Catherine during her progress, and accompanied her to the Crimea.²²

The tempo of settlement and development in the area did not slacken through the 1790s; after Potemkin's death in 1791 his place was taken by the then current favourite, Count (later Prince) Platon Zubov. Paul's reign saw equally active concern with the region. His newly-created Board of State Economy, charged with developing the economy at large, paid great attention to the orderly and rapid development of the recently-acquired and still vulnerable south; and the incorporation of the foreign colonist administration within the Board made for the first time an overt official link between rural amelioration and foreign colonisation.

Paul's government showed great benevolence towards all the foreign colonists, but particularly to the Mennonites.²³ It is notable that Paul, despite his autocratic tendencies and exaltation of Russian national honour, was in general unusually sensitive to the position of ethnic minorities and non-Russian groups in his Empire.²⁴ His Imperial endorsement of demands that officials fulfil the formal agreements made with Mennonites (which were nevertheless honoured as often in the breach as the observance) also reflected his general policy of demanding that his officials live up to the letter of the laws that they were administering. But it is very likely, too, that Empress Maria Fedorovna, before her eclipse at Court in 1798 when the Emperor turned against her, was a good channel for Trappe and for concern with Trappe's protégés, whose representatives she and Paul, furthermore, had met personally in the 1780s. Nevertheless, internal difficulties, and the turmoil in Europe caused by the French revolutionary wars to which Trappe refers in his letters, frustrated at this stage both Trappe's projects (set out below) to attract disgruntled or displaced potential settlers, and the government's wish to receive them. During Paul's reign no serious immigration took place, the flow restarting only after his death, in the reign of Alexander I.

In working out its immigration schemes after 1762, the Russian government, like those of other 'populationist' powers, sought by trial and error to find the

most effective recruiting methodology. At first, diplomatic representatives abroad were entrusted with the recruitment of settlers, but this caused political difficulties and was not successful. The main method adopted by the Imperial government, following the successful example of its competitors in the field, was the use of private recruiting agents. Swarms of these men, mostly foreigners, flaunting the official authorisations and proclamations of their employers, sometimes affecting grandiose assumed titles and all too often promising far more than they could deliver, scoured Europe in search of settlers for the Austrian Banat, the lands of East Prussia, Danish Jutland, the Volga and Ukrainian steppes, southern Ireland, Spain's Sierra Morena, not to mention the overseas possessions of Britain and France.

This was the fraternity which Trappe joined upon his appointment to Potemkin's staff in 1786.²⁵ It should be remembered that Trappe recruited not only Mennonites during his Danzig mission, but also a heterogeneous group of local people subsequently known in the Russian records as 'Danzig colonists'. On his way back to Russia in late 1786 he stopped in Courland, and there too looked for colonists, recruiting workers in the ship-building industry, even including one Englishman, for the Black Sea. He also found unexpected support from one Russian diplomat's wife, who in best 'populationist' fashion had taken a number of illegitimate babies into her own household, and now wished to send them with hired nurses for settlement in the south: Trappe was cool towards this proposal! In subsequent years he sought further colonists in Mecklenburg, Holland, and elsewhere in Western Europe.²⁶

But besides using recruiting agents, the Russian authorities tried several other methods of attracting immigrants. The Imperial Russian government had proclamations published across Europe, in newspapers and as broadsheets, which aroused enormous interest. It was one of these, issued in 1785 with a view to attracting settlement to the Caucasus region, which first caught the attention of the Danzig Mennonites. Many individual foreigners were persuaded by such invitations to travel to Russia under their own steam; and the government at least initially was very happy to welcome and accommodate all comers.

A further method used was the encouragement of entrepreneurial spirit among native subjects by making available free grants of unused land, contingent upon its settlement within a set time with a stipulated number of colonists. The new landowner contracted to bring in the required quantity of foreigners by his own means. This system was introduced by special legislation in 1765, at first only for the province of Ingermanland (around St Petersburg), but then in 1767 extended to the whole of the Empire.²⁷ It found a ready response among Russian actual and would-be landowners, both in New Russia and elsewhere; it also established pockets of free foreign peasants among the overwhelmingly servile Russian peasantry, something Catherine was concerned to promote at the time.

It was through this system that Trappe hoped initially to make his fortune in Russia, but through which he suffered shipwreck. In the very year of Maria

Fedorovna's arrival in Russia, in 1776, Trappe became possessor of two wastes (empty plots), named Mukova or Kukova,²⁸ and Detkova, comprising a considerable estate, near Narva in the Estonian part of Russian Livonia, on the Baltic. His contract with the government required him to bring in sixty settler families to populate the estate. During the next ten years he was active in developing it, as his first letter here declares; Karge quotes correspondence date-lined Mukowa which tends to confirm that Trappe was no mere absentee landlord.²⁹ But in the ten-year span allotted by his contract, he brought in not sixty, but only twenty-eight settler families.

In 1786 Trappe applied to Maria Fedorovna for support, and through her recommendation to Potemkin was taken on by the latter as a recruiter of colonists. There is no information on why he sought state employment at this particular juncture, or whether this engagement preceded or followed the expiry of the Mukova-Detkova term. But while he was away on the Prince's business, recruiting settlers for New Russia, his contract came up for review. He was found to be in breach of his agreement to settle sixty families and in 1787 the estate was accordingly declared confiscated, although he was not immediately dispossessed. Subsequently, his property was sold at auction to recoup what he owed the Treasury:³⁰ Trappe in his letter quoted below expresses particular outrage that the local authority included in the sale his personal servants, serfs whom he had bought in Estland and, he claims, was intending to manumit. Trappe says that he spent fifteen years on the estate, which would give a date of 1791 for his final eviction.

Trappe made immense efforts to reverse the confiscation decision. He could expect Potemkin to intervene on his behalf, but the latter's influence was waning in St Petersburg already before his death in the south in 1791, when Count (later Prince) Platon Zubov, favourite after 1789, became all-powerful. It is significant that the estate was not reassigned until 1792, although Trappe was travelling abroad in these years, and that Trappe complains that the new recipient, General Germann (a Russified form of Hermann), is a Zubov protégé. Nor was Maria Fedorovna's influence, on which Trappe says he relied to assure his possession, sufficient to achieve the desired result. In the last years of Catherine's reign, the ageing Empress's relations with the 'young Court' of Paul and his wife became increasingly strained, and (Trappe tells us) Catherine's long-time Procurator-General Viazemsky turned a deaf ear to the Grand Duchess's intercession on Trappe's behalf. It seems likely from the correspondence here that Trappe waited until the new reign of Paul and his patroness Maria Fedorovna was well launched before trying to re-open the case. (In the meantime he continued living abroad, having defied earlier requests to return to Russia: perhaps this was the recent Swiss period to which his letters below refer.) Even then, he failed to have the verdict changed. Paul's Board of State Economy duly reviewed the matter, but treated it strictly formally as a breach of contract: Trappe had failed to comply with the terms of his grant, and confiscation had been justified.³¹

3. The last phase of Trappe's career.

The letters published here date from the last year of Trappe's life, 1798, and are date-lined Beverley, Yorkshire, England, where Trappe was apparently staying with friends. There is no indication in the sources used here as to who these friends were, but possible candidates are the family of Johnson Newman, Russian Consul at the time in Hull (the major port near Beverley which was an important gateway for Britain's Baltic and Russian trade) and a long-standing servant of the Russian crown. (Newman was accepted into membership of the St Petersburg Free Economic Society in 1789, the same year as Trappe.)³²

Trappe's hope in 1798, as his letters published here show, was to capitalise on his known success and expertise in the colonist field, and, if his claim to the confiscated estate was rejected, to use it nevertheless as a bargaining counter to gain recompense through reinstatement in the Imperial service. He accordingly proposed a new recruiting scheme, aimed at Swiss vine-growers who should develop the Crimea. He hoped likewise to extract financial advantage in the form of a life pension from his long-standing claim upon Maria Fedorovna, while his most ambitious ideas stretched to a government post of Consul or Russian resident Agent abroad. Most of these ideas failed to impress the Russian authorities; nevertheless, his claim for re-employment in the service, unlike his Mukowa case, was successful. In April 1798 the Board of State Economy decided that in view of his valuable services to the state "in the recruitment of no small number of Mennonites," for which he had received no official reward, he should be reinstated at the higher (VIth) rank of College Counsellor, at the appropriate salary. The new recruiting project which he outlined was acknowledged basically sound, but considered for the moment untimely in view of the political situation. Initially the decision was taken to post Trappe in Neufchatel, Switzerland, until the time was ripe to harvest the vine-growers. The Board then decided to recall him for work in the Mennonite colonies in the south until such time as his Swiss project could be properly pursued.³³

The Board's instructions to Trappe crossed with his second letter, printed below, to Kurakin, and were accordingly repeated at the end of April. However, silence ensued, until a further letter from Trappe—the third, below—reached Karl Hablitzl in St Petersburg. Trappe reported the sudden collapse of his health through a serious attack of "apoplexy": he could not obey the Board's instructions to take up his new position. In a letter of the same date to Prince Kurakin, Trappe announced his predicament to the Prince direct, adding that his doctor insisted on his going to Bath the following month to take a cure, but that "nervus rerum gerendarum," money, was lacking. Trappe therefore begged Kurakin to have his salary transformed into a pension "for the little time that I shall still have to live, so that the world should know that I owe this benefaction partly to the justice of His Majesty the Emperor and partly to the gracious intercession of Her Majesty the Empress, who for a long time has been nobly concerned to effectuate that the happy Event of her birth, source of the enduring happiness of the Russian Empire, should in my old age shelter me from

indigence.” He once again rehearsed his claims upon the Russian Crown: his failure to get back the confiscated estate, despite the Empress’ support, and the ruin that its loss had caused him; that in the years 1776 to 1786 he had asked no other favours; that the 270 Mennonite families, and the numerous other colonists, whom he had recruited were of real value to the Empire.³⁴ The letter to Hablitzl ends with a touching plea that the latter concern himself with the fate of the Mennonites: even in his own misfortunes, Trappe was mindful of those who had entrusted themselves to his care.

Trappe’s request was granted: he was retired from service with a pension of half his salary, the full rate being paid from the date of his original appointment to that of his retirement, 29 April to 19 September, 1798.³⁵ Perhaps he did set out to return to the continent, for he apparently died suddenly in Sussex, in the south of England³⁶—not on the direct route from Yorkshire to Bath—without having lived long to enjoy the award.

Trappe’s letters are worth reproducing verbatim not only for the detailed information they give about him and his affairs: their style—prolix, rather breathless, allusive, ingratiating, but also self-assured, immodestly asserting competence and expertise—is personal to their writer and provides a definite impression of the character guiding the pen. Georg Trappe was a memorable bit player in the drama of his time.

The texts of Trappe’s three letters that follow have been translated from the French originals.

1. Trappe to A. B. Kurakin,

Beverley [Yorkshire, England], 8 March (O.S.) 1798.³⁷

My lord,

It was by the last post that Messrs de Pastuschew [sic, Pastukhov] and de Nicolay did me the honour of writing that, Her Majesty the Empress having deigned to employ her magnanimous intercession on my behalf, His Majesty the Emperor has charged you, my lord, to inform yourself about my case; and it is for this reason that I dare to address myself directly to Your Excellency to beg the honour of your powerful protection.

Baron de Nicolay informs me that he has communicated to you the papers I gave him, and that for fuller information he has referred you to Mr de Pastuchow [sic], who is doubtless the person in the whole world most able to give you a complete account of everything, since I have the honour to have been known to His Excellency since the year 1776, when H.M. the Empress [Maria Fedorovna], four months after Her arrival in St Petersburg, graciously addressed me to him, to consult with him as to how H.M. could arrange to procure title for me to the waste of Mukowa and Detkowa, which I was going to bring into cultivation at my own cost and expense. Mr de Pastuchow [sic] will have had the honour of explaining to you how the Empress, having had the chagrin of not succeeding

with the late Prince Wasemsky [Viasemskii], then Procurator General, deigned to recommend me to the late Prince Potemkin, who gave me his word that in return for my important service to Russia in procuring 270 Mennonite families, as well as a great number of other colonists, he would obtain for me from the late Empress [Catherine] the title to the said waste. In the belief that the intercession of the most magnanimous Princess [Maria Fedorovna], object of the admiration of the whole universe, would not fail to assure me possession of the said waste, situated in the district of Narva near Velikino, I employed infinite care, trouble and expense there over fifteen years, constructing a manufactory for which I obtained the materials from Holland which were found in situ, that is to say at Mukowa, constructing in addition forty-four buildings large and small intended for 28 German families which I brought in at great cost and who have been cruelly expelled, and having cleared and reclaimed land with great difficulty, given that I found there nothing but woodland and bogs which I drained to create meadows, I suffered a loss of more than 16,000 roubles: for, alas!, despite the repeated intercession of Her Majesty the Empress [Maria Fedorovna], despite the fact that I was absent by order of Prince Potemkin, that I was exposing myself [to difficulties and dangers] in Holland and afterwards in France etc. to carry out his plans and intentions, in accordance with his instructions, and that I had had great success in rendering most essential services to population, agriculture, commerce and manufactures, convincing proofs of which are in my possession: despite all that, the great influence of Prince Subow [Zubov] succeeded in cruelly depriving me of the said waste and in having it granted to General German [Russified form of Hermann] who is currently in possession of it, the sad news of which I learnt from Mr Inspector Mandelin like a thunderbolt as I was on my way back to Russia, having just arrived in Berlin as I can prove from my passport. I fear to bore Your Excellency with a recital of all the injustices and iniquities which I have to complain of, especially regarding the corruption involved in the sale of the above-mentioned materials and my other effects, it is for that reason that I refer to what I have had the honour to write on this subject to Mr de Pastuchew. The thing that caused me most tears was that the dreadful, unworthy and unjust Court at Narva had the temerity **ILLEGALLY** to put up for public sale my faithful house servants, for whom I had sent letters of emancipation to the late Count of Anhalt³⁸ and on whom, since I bought them in Estland, no certificate of ownership has been registered in any court in my name,³⁹ which is the greater proof of the said Narva Court's perversity and malice. Having lost fifteen years' infinite troubles and labours, I begged H. M. the Emperor that his magnanimity might recompense me for the loss of the waste Mukowa and Detkowa; that He might deign to grant me the rank of College Counsellor, I having been named Court Counsellor in 1787 and by personal decree [of the Empress Catherine] Director and Curator of the Colonies; and that I might be gratified with a small pension from H. M. the Empress [Maria Fedorovna] for some reasons and causes well known to Messrs de Pastuchow and Baron de Nicolay, based on a family arrangement made and juridically registered after H.

M. the Empress with her august parents had spent three years in the house of my late father, HAVING BEEN BORN THERE FOR THE HAPPINESS OF RUSSIA, that is all that my profound respect for this august and magnanimous Princess permits me to say, but Mr de Pastuchow is fully informed about everything. His Excellency [Pastukhov] knows likewise that already in 1776 H.M. the Empress did me the grace of recommending me Herself to a Prince de Kurakin, but I could not say at present whether it was to you, my lord, or to your illustrious brother my lord the Vice Chancellor, but the fact is quite certain, and gives me good auguries of the powerful protection for which I dare to ask Your Excellency.

In case H. M. the Emperor should wish to employ my services, I am ready and able to render them to Him, and to that purpose I refer to the memoranda which I have had the honour to address to H. E. Baron de Nicolay and to the attached memorandum. When once harmony has been reestablished between Russia and France, it would be in the southern parts of France that by my strong connections I could be most useful to Russia. The Prince Potemkin, who was well disposed towards me after I had procured him the Mennonites, whose Deputies he presented to the late Empress [Catherine] and the Emperor Joseph [II, of the HRE and Austria], and after he had seen at Kiev by my letters from Dutch Mennonites, very rich people but who did not like the reestablishment of the Stadhouder, that I could render services of importance, accorded me eight hundred louis d'or per annum, including all my travelling expenses; it goes without saying that it would be absurd to claim such a salary if there is no question of any further travelling, or if my travelling expenses were reimbursed separately. If I were engaged as College Counsellor and Consul, or Agent, or Director of Colonies, or Intendant of Black Sea Commerce, I am sure I should succeed in being very useful to Russia.

The orders of Your Excellency will not fail to reach me safely if directed to H. E. Mr de Pastuchow, or at the following address: To G. de Trappe Esqr., to be left at the Post Office at Beverley, Yorkshire. I have the honour to be, with the deepest respect, my lord, Your Excellency's most humble and obedient servant,
G. de Trappe.

Memorandum

The present moment would be most favourable for procuring very good wine-growers and farmers for the Crimea, very decent people who could be selected in the Rheingau and in the Pays de Vaud. I lived for three years in those two regions and I acquired such popularity among the country folk, that Chancellor de Boyvre of Neufchatel, and Baron de Watteville of Berne who was Bailiff of Vévay the year that I lived close by in the village of Corseaux, often expressed their great surprise at it, as did other gentlemen from the vicinity of Lausanne, Mayence [Mainz], etc.

My plan would be to take up residence in Neufchatel or on the frontiers of [Franche] Comté to start my operations without engaging the local people, but

only those of the Pays de Vaud; and my system would be not to give any advance to such colonists, except a little Crown, three French livres per day per head, for subsistence on the journey until they reach Russia, and to children under fifteen, half a little Crown. I would propose that H. M. the Emperor should deign to grant each family a fixed number of desiatinas,⁴⁰ NOT TOO MANY, of which one part should be used for vines, another for meadows, and the rest for arable land; that each family on arrival at the place of settlement should be provided with a small house, a stable, provisions for the first year, and an advance of one hundred Dutch ducats, for ten years free of interest. That is all that is required to allow good people to prosper, and when one is master of one's own choice, lazy people can be avoided; but the essential thing, following the example of Frederik the Great (see *Oeuvres posthumes*, vol.3, p.259), is not to bring in a larger number of colonists at any one time than can be well settled and provided for.⁴¹ For example, if H. M. the Emperor should wish to make a trial with 50 families of good wine-growers, it would be necessary to make a rough preliminary calculation of costs, assign at the place of settlement the necessary funds for house-building, advances promised, etc.: so that, when the colonists arrived, everything should be ready for them to be lodged and fed, and enabled to make a start on their work. For I know nothing more cruel or repugnant to humanity than the confusion which prevailed in Russia with the colonies under Catherine II when, alas!, all too often, great numbers of colonists were brought in by dint of brilliant promises which were later not kept, and then left cruelly *without shelter or subsistence*, so that many died of hunger and destitution, after the government had incurred enormous costs without insight or proper understanding of the matter.⁴² I had occasion to preach this truth especially to Governor Sinel'nikov at Kremenchug, without being able to make him understand the full horror of such a proceeding, which could call down the malediction of the good Lord!

8th March 1798.

George de Trappe

2. Trappe to Kurakin, Beverley, 17 March 1798

My lord,

Referring to the letter which I had the honour to send Y. E. on the 8th of this month, I think it my duty to inform you, my lord, that I have since received not only various letters from the region of Vévay, Lausanne and Morges which confirm what I had the honour to report to you latterly about the wine-growers, who are very eager to go and establish themselves in the Crimea, *especially as these good folk always recall with immense satisfaction the marks of kindness and affability given by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Russia during their journey in Switzerland*;⁴³ but also I must give you notice that I have just received by the last post a letter from the *government*, by which I mean a member of the government of Bienne, who just like the former Mayor M. de

Wildermet is my very good friend and well-disposed towards me, and who tells me that several of the Mennonites settled in the diocese of Basle, especially three of their ministers, of whom they have twenty-six, came to his home at Bienne to ask if he knew where they could find me, in order to find out if I could not so far succeed with H. M. the Emperor of Russia, that they should receive asylum in the Russian Empire, for these good people, TRULY KNOWN AS EXCELLENT FARMERS, HOLD IN ABHORRENCE THE FRENCH REPUBLICANS WHO HAVE SEIZED THE ERQUEL, where the Bishop of Basle had wisely and generously accorded a refuge to these same Mennonites or Anabaptists, after the citizens of Berne had had the stupidity, long ago, to drive out these honest folk because their religion does not permit them to bear arms. During the four weeks of my residence at Bienne, I had occasion to read in the Letters of the celebrated Prof. Meiners (see *Letters concerning Switzerland*, 2nd Berlin edition, vol. 1, the third letter pp. 208-9) his eulogy of the good old Pastor Benz.⁴⁴ This gave me the desire to make his acquaintance, I saw him often, and I became his favourite and confidant to such an extent that he told me, some 7 years ago, that he considered he had persuaded some hundred persons of his confession to come and settle either in the Crimea or in New Serbia, or wherever Prince Potemkin should think best. I duly reported on the matter to Prince Potemkin, who ordered me to tell those good people that they should be patient until peace was restored with the Turks. Please believe me, my lord, the acquisition of the aforesaid Mennonites of the Erquel would be immensely profitable to Russia, and it is for that reason that I make bold to beg you to put the proposal to His Majesty the Emperor. Y. E. can count upon my zeal and my ability little by little to make this acquisition, as well as that of the aforesaid vine-growers of the Pays de Vaud and the Rheingau; especially if I could have the happiness to be under your orders, for then I should be quite sure—for my own encouragement and my peace of mind—that business would be treated with order and punctiliousness, and that promises made to these good people would be regarded as they should be, that is as a sacred matter, and that nothing more would be undertaken at any one time than could be properly carried out.

I cannot think that H. M. the Emperor would wish the most beautiful and fertile deserts of all Europe to remain fallow, unpopulated and uncultivated any longer; or that [he would want] considerable sums to continue leaving Russia to pay for products which could be produced at home, and the country still to see itself deprived of the advantage of exporting through the Black Sea more cereals etc. which will always command high prices on the shores of the Mediterranean. I am sure that if I could have permission to send next summer FOR A FIRST TRIAL a score of those good wine-growers from the Pays de Vaud, and the same number from the Rheingau, so that Y.E. could present them to Their Imperial Majesties, you would be greatly pleased and satisfied. I could have all those people accompanied by a man of confidence who is at my disposal, as far as Lübeck, instructing him to give out en route that these people are going to Hamburg to embark for America, so as to avoid ill feeling against Russia. I must

observe that it has become very COMMON for some years now to see large groups leaving to emigrate to America; three years ago I myself saw three large ships quite filled with them, almost all the emigrants being German or Brabantine [Belgian]. I would wish that it was H. M. the Emperor's pleasure to send me for three or four years to procure and dispatch to Russia some good people, not rogues but people carefully selected, and that during that time, to keep the love and confidence of the peasants and others, I could retain the title of Director and Curator of Colonies, once H. M. the Emperor had been pleased to nominate me his College Counsellor; and that when I have dispatched whatever number of colonists it is judged appropriate to settle, I could be employed either as an Agent in Switzerland or, when once harmony is restored with France, at Bordeaux or Montpellier, or at Marseilles or Nice, as a Consul, since in all these towns and their environs I have important contacts from which Russia could draw great advantage. I could leave here without delay for Neufchatel, just as soon as Y. E. gives me the order and also assigns me a banker or merchant at Hamburg who should hold at my disposal from 600 to 1,000 new Louis, depending on the number of people it is desired to have sent, to cover the colonists' transport and subsistence costs, and who should pay my salary regularly every four months, together with whatever His Majesty may graciously accord me to defray my own travel costs. I am well known as a man who observes strict economy in his travels, but even so, to do things in the proper fashion and decently, so as not to compromise the dignity of a great SOVEREIGN, the money disappears imperceptibly and if I were to meet all my own travel costs as well as extraordinary expenses, for example from time to time it is necessary to make little presents to Ministers and even sometimes to Magistrates to attract their good graces and secure myself in the good opinion of the people: if I have to take all that upon myself, I should need for an honourable subsistence 800 new Louis per annum, INCLUDING MY SALARY, which is what Prince Potemkin allowed me from the moment that I had sent him the deputies of the 270 Mennonite families and he judged it appropriate to send me abroad for a second time.

If contrary to all my expectations H. M. the Emperor should want neither wine-growers from the Pays de Vaud or the Rheingau, nor those good Mennonites from the Basle diocese, nor the petty manufacturers whom I mentioned in the Memorandum sent to the Baron de Nicolay on 9th December last, in that case I must beg the favour, my lord, of your earliest instruction on the matter, so that I can give a final response to so many decent people who are awaiting it with impatience, as I see by the all too frequent letters with which I have been overwhelmed since the French entered the Pays de Vaud and the Erquel.

In begging the honour of your powerful and gracious protection, I have the same to be with a most profound respect, my lord, Y. E.'s most humble and obedient servant

G. de Trappe
Beverly, 17 March 1798

3. Trappe to Hablitzl, Beverley, 14 June 1798

Sir,

With the last post I had the honour to receive the letter with which Y. E. honoured me on 30 April/11 May, and by which I saw with infinite satisfaction that by a Senate decree of 16/27 April His Imperial Majesty has deigned to grant me the rank of College Counsellor, ordering me to be under the direction of the Commission of State Economy with annual emoluments of 1,200 roubles. I have the honour to assure you, Sir, that I should consider it the greatest happiness to serve H. M. the Emperor with an unshakeable fidelity and indefatigable zeal, but alas!, I have grounds to fear that I shall not be so happy as to enjoy that honour as soon as I should like, for about three weeks ago it pleased God to afflict me and alarm me with an attack of apoplexy, from which thanks to Him and to a skilful doctor I have partly recovered, except that I still suffer from spells of giddiness and I feel my memory a little impaired and from time to time experience apoplectic symptoms.

Having enjoyed for thirty years the best possible health, and wishing with all my heart to come to St Petersburg in accordance with the orders of the Commission of State Economy, I summoned the courage to decide to set out in the present fair season; but my doctor protested, assuring me that this would be the means of exposing myself infallibly to a further attack and to certain death, and that the only means of saving my life was to abstain for some time yet from all business matters, to be quiet, to submit myself to a very rigorous regime, and to have recourse to [healing] baths, and he has undertaken to give me his opinion and his reasons in writing. I find myself, then, in the sad necessity of renouncing at least for the present my desire to go and join the good Mennonites in New Russia and to carry out there the beneficent ordinances of the Commission of State Economy, which—under a Director as just, magnanimous and far-sighted as is H. E. the Procurator-General, Prince Kurakin, and with Members who resemble Y. E. whose rare merit is well-known and much admired in this country—cannot but wish and do good, which will be the more necessary as the chaos of confusion and iniquity which prevailed in the colonies in the last reign did so much harm. The poor Mennonites! how I pity them with all my heart, that their privileges, granted with so many formalities and such pomp, were not respected. It is a well-known fact that people once driven out of their communities are no longer considered Mennonites, and for this reason I had strongly recommended to Mr. Sokolovsky, then Chargé d' Affaires in Danzig, at the same time leaving him 24,000 roubles with Messrs Barstow and Elliott, that he should only use this money to send to Riga people certified as Mennonites by the Deputies Höppner and Bartsch, but he did just the opposite and did not hesitate to send rogues and unruly persons who had been expelled from Mennonite society in Danzig and its surroundings. Probably he did this to show his power and authority, but it did grave harm to the decent people among the Mennonites and surprised me especially because I can prove by two letters of the aforesaid

Mr Sokolovsky that he found it extremely easy to make up the number of 270 families engaged by my efforts and influence, so much so that he himself communicated to me a letter from the Riga merchants, who were charged with the dispatch of the colonists and who reported the completion of the said number of Mennonites, adding that he did not know what to do with about 60 families who had offered themselves to him *in excess of the number stipulated.*

I make bold to implore Y.E.'s help and protection for all the honest Mennonites, who are still alive and can become most useful in all respects to Russia, especially under a SOVEREIGN who has understood the incontestable truth that nothing can contribute more to the prosperity of his vast Empire than to make Agriculture, Commerce and Manufactures flourish there. It is with sentiments of respect and the highest consideration that I have the honour to be, Sir, Y. E. 's most humble and obedient servant,

George de Trappe
Beverley, 14 June 1798

P.S. In case Y.E. wishes to honour me with his orders, I beg that they be addressed in future: To George de Trappe, Es^{qre}, to the care of Messrs U. Ackermann & Son at Hamburg.

I give this address for the sake of economy, as my friends Messrs Ackermann at Hamburg have eight vessels which come constantly to England and bring me my letters without cost, whereas by the packet-boat or the post it is immensely expensive. You would find it hard to believe, but it is nevertheless a fact, that latterly I had to pay for your letter and another small letter from St Petersburg slightly more than four and a half roubles. The mere envelope costs the same as a letter. I am sending this one with a vessel from Hull.

Notes

¹ David G. Rempel, 'The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: A Sketch of its Founding and Endurance, 1789-1919', *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XLVII (1973) and XLVIII (1974), and separate off-print; id., 'From Danzig to Russia: the First Mennonite Migration', *Mennonite Life*, XXIV (1969), 8-28. The most recent overall account is J. Urry, *None but Saints. The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789-1889* (n.p. [Winnipeg]: Hyperion Press, 1989). On the terminological problems surrounding the Mennonite area of settlement (the northern littoral of the Black Sea) see J. Urry, 'Places, people and identities: talking about Mennonites in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union', *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, forthcoming.

² The eighth in the 14-step Table of Ranks of Peter I (running from I at the top to XIV at the bottom). He was subsequently promoted to Court Counsellor (VII) and finally College Counsellor (VI).

³ D. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten. Versuch einer Darstellung des Entwicklungsganges derselben* (Odessa: A. Schultze, 1889; reprinted Winnipeg: Northwestern Press, n.d.), Vorwort; Paul Karge, 'Die Auswanderung west- und ostpreussischer Mennoniten nach Südrussland (nach Chortiza und der Molotschna) 1787-1820,' *Elbinger Jahrbuch* 3 (1923), 65-98 (80-83).

⁴ G.G. Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii inostrannoï kolonizatsii v Rossii v XVIII veke* (Moscow: Pechatnia A.N. Snegirevoi, 1909), especially pp. 265-340; id., *Pereselenie prusskikh mennonitov v Rossiiu pri Aleksandre I* (Rostov na Donu: Tip. Tov-va S.S. Sivozhelezov i Ko., 1917)

⁵ D. G. Rempel, 'Bemerkungen zu unserer mennonitischen Geschichtsliteratur', *Der Bote*, Nrr 29 (19 July, 1966), 10-11; 30 (26 July), 10-11; 31 (2 August), 10-11; 32 (9 August), 10-11; 33 (16 August), 10-12; 34 (23 August), 10-11; 35 (30 August), 10-12; 36 (6 Sept.), 10-12.; id., 'The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: A Sketch of its Founding and Endurance, 1789-1919' (note 1); id., 'Important Historical Facts Discussed', chapter 2 of N.J.Kroeker, comp., *First Mennonite Villages in Russia 1789-1943*. (Vancouver, B.C.: N.J.Kroeker, 1981); and others.

⁶ Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), St Petersburg, fond 398, opis' 81, delo 95, listy 1-4, 17-18ob., 38-39.

⁷ The Kurakin family came to high office under Paul and Alexander I. Aleksei's brother Alexander, to whom Trappe probably refers in his letter below, was a childhood friend of Paul and had accompanied him on his 1776 journey to Berlin to meet his new bride. Trappe's patroness.

⁸ Karl Ivanovich Gablitz (1752-1821), born Königsberg i. Preußen. Distinguished scholar and Russian civil servant, participant in the scientific-geographical expeditions of the Russian Academy of Sciences. From 1776 held various official posts in the south under Potemkin, Taurida Vice-Governor 1788-96. Appointed to the Board of State Economy on its creation 1797, with special responsibility for colonist affairs. Trappe would certainly have had dealings or connections with him over the Chortitzer settlement. See *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, vol. Gaag-Gerbel' (Moscow, 1914), pp. 10-14.

⁹ Rempel, 'Mennonite Commonwealth', p. 21. It is however unlikely that Trappe, apparently a long-time resident of Stettin, was a Württemberger.

¹⁰ J. Merkle, *Jugendjahre der Kaiserin Maria Feodorovna von Russland, geborner Prinzessin von Württemberg, 1759-1776* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1892), p. 8; J.H. Schnitzler, *La jeunesse de l'impératrice Marie Feodorovna jusqu'à son mariage* (Colmar: C. Decker, 1864).

¹¹ E. S. Shumigorsky, 'Imperatrissa Mariia Fedorovna. Ee biografiia', *Russkii arkhiv*, 1889 no. 3, 195-6, citing however poor evidence.

¹² Quoted in Merkle, pp. 77-8: See also *Ausführliche Beschreibung der Reise Sr. Kaiserlichen Hoheit des Großfürsten Paul Petrowitz von St. Petersburg an den Königl. Preuß. Hof nach Berlin nebst den dabey vorgefallenen Feyerlichkeiten und Freundsbezeugungen, wie auch die Reise Thro Kaiserl. Hoheit der Prinzessin Sophia Dorothea Augusta Louisa von Württemberg-Stuttgard verlobten Braut des Großfürsten von Berlin nach St. Petersburg* (Berlin: 1776), p.228.

¹³E. Heier, *L.H. Nicolay (1737-1828) and his contemporaries* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1965 [Internat. Archives of the history of ideas, vol. 9]); H. Ischreyt, hrsg., *Die beiden Nicolai. Der Briefwechsel zwischen L.H. Nicolay in St. Petersburg und Friedrich Nicolai in Berlin (1776-1811)* (Lüneberg: Vg. Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1989).

¹⁴Karge, 'Die Auswanderung', p.82: Trappe refers to Bürgermeister Vogt and Pastor Wolff of the Petrikerche.

¹⁵H. Mohrmann, *Studien über russisch-deutsche Begegnungen in der Wirtschaftswissenschaft* (1959), p. 118. For this reference and other assistance I am indebted to the kindness of Prof. E. Amberger (Gießen). I also take this occasion to thank Ken Reddig (Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg) and James Urry (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand), for generously supplying me with copies of necessary material.

¹⁶Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii inostranoi kolonizatsii*, pp. 265-8; Rempel, *Der Bote*, no. 33, 16 Aug. 1966, p. 10, and "Mennonite Commonwealth," p. 21.

¹⁷For a full account both of 'populationist' ideas and of Russian policy and settlements under Catherine, see my *Human Capital. The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia 1762-1804* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

¹⁸This is not to say, however, that urban settlement ceased altogether. See my article 'Die Einwanderung von Ausländern und die staatlichen Urbanisierungspläne in Rußland im 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert', in I. Fleischhacker und H. Jedig, hrsg., *Die Deutschen in der UdSSR in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos Vlgsgt, 1990), pp. 45-62.

¹⁹Karge, 'Die Auswanderung', p.82; and letter to Kurakin, below. On Brenkenhoff see B. von Knobelsdorff-Brenkenhoff, *Anhalt-Dessau 1737-1762. Seine vier Fürsten und Brenkenhoff* (Bonn: 1987) and id., *Ein Provinz in Frieden erobert: Brenkenhoff als Leiter des fredericianischen Retablisements in Pommern* (Köln-Berlin: 1984, Studien zur Geschichte Preußens, Band 37).

²⁰Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii inostannoi kolonizatsii*, pp. 287-88, note.

²¹Bartlett, *Human Capital*, pp. 124-31.

²²Rempel, *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, p. 28. In 1798 Trappe succeeded with a claim for 16,000 rubles against the heirs of Potemkin personally (information from Prof. Amberger).

²³Rempel, *Mennonite Commonwealth*, pp. 42-45; Bartlett, *Human Capital*, chap. 6.

²⁴The most recent account of Paul and his reign is P. McGrew, *Tsar Paul of Russia, 1754-1801* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

²⁵Besides Bartlett and Pisarevskii, op. cit., see especially on the recruiters or *vyzyvateli* and German emigration Hetty Plum Williams, *The Czar's Germans. With Particular Reference to the Volga Germans* (Lincoln, Nebraska: American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1975).

²⁶Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii inostrannoi kolonizatsii*, pp. 284-85.

²⁷Bartlett, *Human Capital*, pp. 81-4.

²⁸I have found no explanation for the fact that both forms appear in the sources; I have used Mukova throughout here.

²⁹Karge, op. cit., p. 82, note 42. This reference, to a letter of 1785 to the Bürgermeister of Danzig regarding 'the transsettlement of the ... girl Florentina Renata Ludwig to her parents in Mukowa', suggests that Trappe recruited colonists for his own estate in Danzig.

³⁰RGIA, f. 398, op. 81, d. 95, ll. 11-12.

³¹Loc. cit., ll. 11-15.

³²A. G. Cross, 'Johnson Newman, a Little-Known Englishman in Russian Service in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century', *Newsletter of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia*, 21 (Cambridge, England, 1993), 36-47.

³³Loc. cit., ll. 11-16. 7th-19th April 1798. *Senatskii Arkhiv* I (St Petersburg: Tip. Prav.

Senata, 1888), 388: 16 April 1788.

³⁴ Loc. cit., ll. 44-45.

³⁵ Loc. cit., ll. 53-57. *Senatskii Arkhiv* I, 441: 19 Sept 1798.

³⁶ Kroeker, comp., *First Mennonite Villages in Russia*, p. 39.

³⁷ RGIA, St Petersburg, fond 398, opis' 81, delo 95: Delo po predstavleniiu Koll. Sov. Trappe v rassuzhdenii zhelaniia ego k vyzovu iz Shveitsarii znaiushchikh razvodit' vinogradnye sady i zemledel'tsov, i ob opredelenii ego v vedomstvo Ekspeditsii, pri sem i ob uvol'nenii ego. 30 March 1798-15 March 1799. Ll.60, here ll.1-4, 17-18ob., 38-39. The translations that follow are my own.

³⁸ Count Friedrich von Anhalt (1732-94), after a distinguished military career in Prussian and Saxon service, entered Russian service in 1783 as Lt.-General and Adjutant General to Catherine II, and was appointed Governor of 'Finland' (including Karelia and Estland); from 1786 Inspector General of troops for that area, 1786 Director of the Land Cadet Corps, 1788 President of the Free Economic Society. *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'* vol. II, Aleksinskii-Bestuzhev-Riumin (St Petersburg, 1900), pp.109-110. As highest civil authority, he would have been an appropriate addressee for emancipation papers.

³⁹ The sale of serfs at auction was forbidden by Russian law; evidently Trappe thought the Narva court was *ultra vires* in selling them at all. His humanitarian concern for his servants is noteworthy.

⁴⁰ 1 desiatina = 2.7 acres, 1.09 hectares.

⁴¹ Presumably *Oeuvres posthumes de Frédéric II*, ed. J.C.T. de Laveaux, 15 vols (Berlin-Strasbourg: Voß und Decker, 1788). The reference appears to be incorrect.

⁴² There were indeed serious difficulties with the immigration programme and procedures under Catherine II, which led to a much more cautious approach under her successors: see Bartlett, *Human Capital*, chaps 3 and 6.

⁴³ A reference to the European tour undertaken by Paul and Maria Fedorovna in 1780-81 under the incognito of Comte and Comtesse du Nord: McGrew, op. cit., chap. 5.

⁴⁴ Christoph Meiners, *Briefe über die Schweiz. Zweite durchaus verbesserte und vermehrte Auflage*. Teil I (Berlin: C. Spener, 1788), [Dritter Brief], pp. 208-10.