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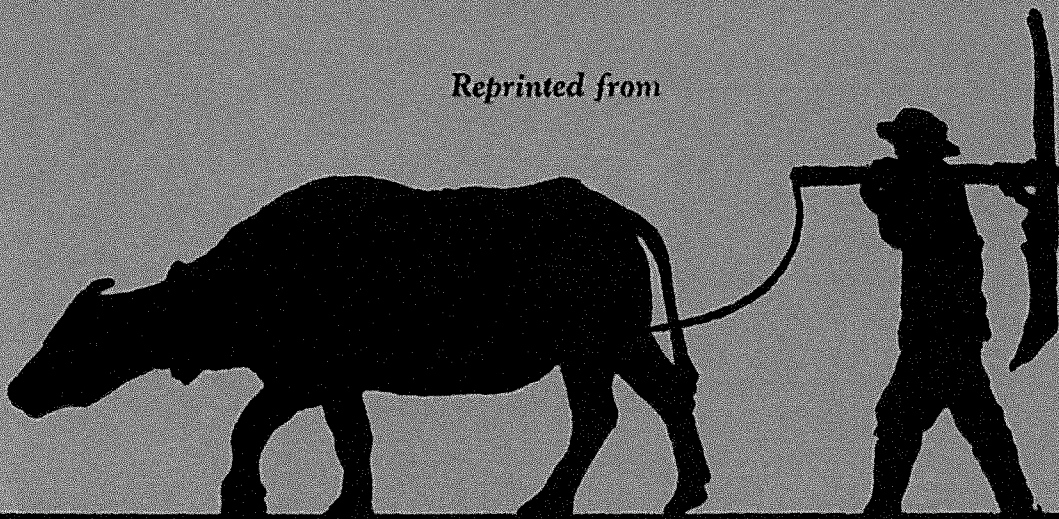
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German Agrarian Institutions at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century: Upper Swabia as an Example

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This paper deals with three dynamic factors leading to rural social change in the years before 1525. The rise of population changed man/land ratios, brought alterations in inheritance customs, and helped create a class of landless agricultural labourers. Alterations in the nature of market relationships changed the balance between city and country and introduced new wage relationships in the countryside with the putting out system. Increasing articulation of state institutions led to attempts to rationalise armed force, brought taxation to pay for larger and more complex armies, and changed the relationships between central authority and subjects. The effects of these changes should be investigated regionally before generalisations about all of Central Europe are made, and the paper shows how one such regional study might be done.

Historical research on Central Europe dealing with the peasantry or with peasant political activity has not been sufficiently concerned with sociological questions. It has been assumed that the degree of rural social differentiation either has not been great or has been of insufficient interest for analysing particular problems at hand. The research that has been done has tended to confine itself either to questions relating to legal categories [Seldner, Köppler, Vollbauer, etc.] or to gross measures of stratification such as frequency distributions of land holding. We know, for example, very little about such questions as how the internal working of the farm-tenant families differed from those of day labourers.

Nowhere is this approach clearer than in research devoted to the Peasant War—Marxist and non-Marxist alike. Smirin [1956 : 492, 497 ff], for example, penetrates no further into the society than to mention that the area around Memmingen was important for wheat cultivation. Franz [1965 : 22] mentions that the Remstal was particularly heavily populated because of the effects of viticulture but makes no more of the fact. Nowhere does an historian systematically explore regional differences in population density, mobility, village structure, social stratification, or integration into the market in

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order to explore uniformities and contrasts in political activity. Part of the reason for the neglect no doubt has been because the best research has been done on political programmes which do not seem to be the result of such differences.¹ Even Engels who gives the most detailed analysis of interest groups in German society at the beginning of the sixteenth century, relating class interests to ideological positions, confines himself to the grossest generalizations about differences within rural society. Working within Engels' tradition East German historiography has on occasion begun a more sophisticated analysis [Loesche, 1961].

The question boils down to whether in peasant uprisings or other protests against outsiders villagers act with solidarity or whether well articulated interest groups within the village press for different ends or indeed whether differences cancel themselves out, inhibiting revolt. Not all groups in rural society are equally capable of articulation of interests or in expressing themselves in political activity.

To some degree the question of rural social articulation is governed by the degree to which rural society is integrated into the market. A particularly good example of the problem is afforded by the analysis of Russian society at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Working with a model based on Western European experience, Russian observers expected class differences to be translated into political consciousness within village society. A recent systematic comparison of each Russian province in its participation in the fourth Duma fails to find any differences in political activity between different classes of peasants from Kulak to the poorest member of the rural community in most of the Russian regions [Vinogradoff, 1974]. The conclusion is that for most of Russia the market was hardly existent and that therefore politically conscious differences failed to arise. In the Baltic provinces, however, rural society was fully integrated into the market, which led to the transformation of agricultural structure and the articulation of clear social differences and consequent political ideology and activity [*ibid.* 129-194].

While agriculture was oriented towards the market by the early sixteenth century in Central Europe, the degree to which regional variations existed is not generally clear from the literature, nor is it clear to what degree village social differences were articulated and conscious to village members. As a consequence of a rising population, the sixteenth century saw increased specialization based on market exchange—one thinks immediately of viticulture, dairying, and rural textile production. To what degree these changes wrought significant sociological differences needs to be investigated.

This paper does not attempt to do what the author would like to see done—that is to survey regional differences in social structure and market orientation. Rather the purpose is to raise questions from an intense analysis of one region which participated in the Peasant War so as to provoke discussion from those whose specializations afford far more expertise on other regions than the author [Sabean, 1972] is able to muster.

In carrying out this task the paper will be concerned with various institu-

tions that express themselves at the village level. In doing so we will deal with certain structural problems and change effected by population, the market, and the state. The treatment will be rather uneven, with greater attention given to the first of these considerations. It is important at the outset to be clear about the way the problems are posed. The early sixteenth century was a period of population rise for Central Europe, but the question most simply put is not whether and to what extent population rose. For systematic and comparative analysis the proper question is related to the balance between population and resources at the village level. How are the balance of population and changes in its level expressed in the structure of social relationships? It is not enough, when one speaks of the market, to allude to increased monetarization of peasant economic activity or to refer generally to increased penetration of market relationships. The issue is to analyse exactly in what way changes in relationship to the market affects any particular peasant and how the experiences of different rural groups vary. Do these changes bring about consequent changes in attitudes or social relations between various rural groups? How do regions vary in response to change, for example, bocage vs. open fields, hilly vs. plains, dairying vs. viticulture, grain vs. market gardening, agricultural vs. rural industrial.

With regards to the state it is likewise not enough to compare directly different institutions such as *Leibeigenschaft*. This is a common error most recently evidenced in Gerlach's [1974] comparison of the Bauernkrieg with the 1381 peasant uprising in England. The fact that the peasant programmes in both uprisings inveighed against 'unfree' relationships, led the author to confuse different institutions—such as English serfdom, South German *Leibeigenschaft*, and different forms of personal bondage in other parts of Germany. The central sociological question is a broader one relating to the degree of penetration of the state into the village, how this is institutionalized, and how it affects social relationships inside the village.

Perhaps it would be well to pause here to detail the history of a 'typical' but nonexistent Wuerttemberg village during the early modern period as it relates to only one of the problem areas we have outlined—population—in order to illustrate the kind of issue that we wish to raise here, in this case the question of the social affects of changing population levels. This 'history' given here is based on scattered pieces of evidence and is subject to extensive revision in the future.²

A doubling of the population in a village between 1490 and 1560 would be well within expectations, so that a village of 500 people would have expanded to ca. 1,000. Between 1560 and 1620 a village would show a longterm stability in its population level, the mechanism being a periodic gouging effect of famine and epidemic disease. During the period it would not be unusual for a village of 1,000 to lose on at least three occasions 100-300 people in brief periods of exaggerated mortality. Fertility, however, remained high, causing the population to spring back to its previous level. It appears then that the rise in population found its level by the 1560s,

striking a balance between population and resources. Although Wuerttemberg appeared in the eighteenth century and even now as an area of extreme fragmentation of agricultural land, it does not seem that such great fragmentation took place in the sixteenth century. Rather a dependent group of landless labourers arose, with villages displaying great differences in wealth and in the distribution of land. The inception of a violent fluctuation in population levels does not seem to have affected this social differentiation.

The effects of the Thirty Years' War altered the structure, reducing a village of 1,000 to as low as 400. Recovery was slow since taxes were high, peasants were heavily indebted, domestic animal herds had been decimated, fields left uncultivated, buildings destroyed, and seed in short supply. Many peasants simply refused to take on inheritances, while many who wanted land could obtain it. The result in the first generation was to develop a relatively undifferentiated group of farm tenants on small properties. Successive generations partitioned each inheritance, so that by 1720 when the pre-war population level of ca. 1,000 was re-established, a completely different distribution of land and wealth had taken place. Between 1720 and 1760 the population tended to rise only very slightly, the mechanism of this stability being apparently on the fertility side. Between 1760 and 1800 the population could come close to doubling.

There are a number of lessons here that need to be stressed. A person born into this village in 1520 or 1570, 1660 or 1750 would face radically different societies simply in regards to the way population densities were related to the means of production. Population density is only one issue; one must also consider the rates of change and the mechanisms of change. The rules of succession to property, the division of labour, and mechanisms of social control are crucial institutions that channel forces of change into new sets of social relationships. How these social relationships find political expression either within the village or external to it is one of the issues that should concern the historian dealing with peasant uprisings.

Given this example and its consequent expectations it is disappointing to turn to the mass of data from the Peasant War because at first glance the differences that one expects do not seem to be evidenced in the data. The political demands of the peasants seldom reveal much about village structure or power relationships in rural society. If conflict existed in the countryside it is seldom brought to the forefront of peasant consciousness. In order to penetrate to the social reality behind peasant demands the historian must deal intensively with small regions to understand the extremely complex set of social relations and institutions. He has to imagine or reconstruct what the local effects of a set of demands would be.

A good example here is the notion of the *Gemeinde* which is so central to the Twelve Articles and emerges in other areas as well [*Sabeau*, 1972: 100 ff; *Buszello*, 1969: 16 ff]. To say that the *Gemeinde* should run the common land (*Allmende*) when only a few farm tenants are enfranchised is quite different from saying the same thing where most household heads take part in decision-making in a village. The *Gemeinde* would have quite

different meaning in an area of scattered farms with heavy out-migration on non-landholding population from one with nucleated settlements with a large dependent class of cottagers and landless labourers.

In Upper Swabia the movement for *Gemeinde* independence had become strong during the period of low population density and consequent reorganization of manorial economy following the Black Death. Bader [1962 : 2, 37-85] has shown the day to day pressure brought by villagers to take over the administration of their internal affairs and to punish offenders and settle local disputes. Since the lords had withdrawn from the economy of the village except to skim off a surplus in the form of rents, tithes, and minor services, this movement had considerable success. However, its effect was quite different in 1520 than 1420. For one thing by 1520 population densities had already altered considerably and a good deal of social differentiation had taken place. This is clear in the Twelve Articles (Article 8, above, p. 17) where the bitter complaint of tenant farmers against the alienation of common land for the landless to build cottages is expressed [Sabean, 1972 : 44, 83, 104].

One of the clearest examples of conflict between the two groups comes from Ochsenhausen which had an early revolt in 1502 settled by a treaty between the tenants and the abbot [*ibid.*, 42 ff]. In 1502 the tenant farmers obtained the right to hereditary tenures and the right to sell their farms so long as they were not split up. This latter point was clearly in their interests and in fact was part of their negotiating terms. Farm tenants as well as the abbot desired a society in which the number of farms were not increased and so the economic viability of each farm would continue. On the other hand the abbot had alienated some of the common land of the villages giving it out to landless peasants. Such practices were opposed by the tenants, and it was written into the treaty that they should cease.

In the Ochsenhausen articles of 1525 the landless group had increased to a size large enough to dominate the demands. Article 7 demands that all land be subject to piecemeal sale. Article 15 demanded the extension of the use of common land to all inhabitants of the village. Article 16 called for the extension of the use of wood and water to the *Handwerker* (craftsmen). That the treaty of 1502 and 1525 reflected the interests of different groups is made clear in article 9 which called for the setting aside of that of 1502, 'weil er ihnen unleidlich und nachtheilich ist und zu verderblichem Schaden gereicht' (because it is inequitable and disadvantageous to them and causes destructive damage).

As far as I know this is the only clear example from Upper Swabia in the 1525 revolt where the interests of any group outside of the tenant farmers was articulated. It is safe to say that the Twelve Articles was the programme of the tenant farmers, that is enfranchised members, those with proper *Hofstätte*, of the villages. They alone would control access to woods, fish ponds, and streams. They would appoint the priest, pay him from the tithe, and administer the rest to aid the village poor. They would select the village officials and man the village courts. No common land

would be alienated for the growing class of landless and presumably the latter would be excluded from any share in the *Allmende*.

Only once was the *Gemeinde* movement specifically noted as an internal village conflict. The Zimmern Chronicle made this point, arguing that the peasants held no real dispute with their lord; rather their concern was with the landless labourers who were agitating for access to common rights. The dispute was made the more poignant because the tenant farmers and farm labourers were related to each other by blood [see above, p. 69].

The point of all this is to argue that social differentiation had clearly taken place by 1525 and consequent conflict over the division of resources was part of the revolt. Apart from the statements in the Ochsenhausen articles and the short passage in the Zimmern Chronicle it would be easy to read all the rest of the chronicles and the articles of grievance and to miss this aspect. It would be natural to conclude that the '*Gemeinde*' of 1525 was the same thing as that of 1425, that political consciousness was that of closed, unified villages gradually extending their competence vis-à-vis their lords. The questions to be opened for discussion here are: what was the regional distribution of the *Gemeinde* movement in 1525? Where was it central, where peripheral, where non-existent? What were the different social contexts in which it was articulated? If it were successful in any region who would gain, who suffer?

Now it is necessary to turn to a more systematic examination of the three forces of change affecting institutions and agriculture, first the rise of population which in Upper Swabia became important from 1450 onwards. Annual growth rates of 1-1.5 per cent are quite possible for the region, which would mean at least a doubling of the population in 70 years.

In a period of rising population each village was faced with the problem of dividing resources among more people. It should be remembered that 'land' is not a static concept, for it can be worked with more or less intensity depending among other things on the number of people to work it. Under certain conditions a rise in population simply results in a similar rise in production. In Upper Swabia there is evidence of renewed clearing, but at some point late in the fifteenth century expansion of the arable could be done only at the expense of existing farms, by dividing the *Allmende*.

The mechanism which allocates rights to property and access to village resources is in the first place the rules of inheritance. Where all children of a family are treated equally under conditions of growing population increased social differentiation takes place as a matter of course, since families vary in size. Le Roy Ladurie [1966 : 1, 237 ff] has given a good example of the process for Languedoc in the sixteenth century. But in this as in everything else regions react quite differently. It is not enough to compare regions of partible inheritance with those of impartible, for legal requirements are constantly twisted according to peasant requirements.

In Upper Swabia as a result of population pressure a series of changes in inheritance rules took place. There were two basically different reactions associated respectively with the city of Ravensburg and the abbey of Wein-

garten. Ravensburg let out its farms as inheritable tenancies at the beginning of the fifteenth century [Sabean, 1972 : 22 f, 40 ff]. As population rose the city first fought demands to split up farms among the heirs, but by the 1480s the movement was in full swing. As farms fractionalized the city purchased the portions from the heirs, reunifying them and letting them out as life-time leases to only one person. Thus the century saw a movement away from a structure where all siblings shared equally in the inheritance as long as they stayed on the farm. Low population density allowed a farm to maintain a balance between its population and resources. Extra young people could leave to go to other, underpopulated farms as spouses or for a time as servants or farm labourers. As population densities increased greater competition forced farms to accommodate more people and brought pressure to break them up. The result of the city's policies was to maintain the farms as a constant number and to ensure that only one child would take over the farm in each generation. This effectively meant that the remaining siblings were sharply differentiated from the heir and were reduced to the permanent status of farm labourers or servants.

Weingarten Abbey's history is slightly different [Sabean, 1972 : 21]. Between 1440 and 1470 farms were leased for the lifetime of a married couple and all of their children, reflecting the conditions of relatively low population density. Between 1470 and 1540 leases were for the lifetime of the couple and their youngest son. This effectively worked the same as in the Ravensburg case, radically differentiating between the heir and the other siblings. After 1540 leases were for the lifetime of a married couple only.

These two are an instructive example of different forms of land tenure and inheritance rules existing in close proximity. They both reacted to the same pressures in ways that fulfilled the logic of the institutions themselves and the pressure they underwent. Although the rules at both ends of the process were different as were the paths they took in going from one condition to the other, the upshot was the same—care for an entire family throughout its lifetime by the home farm with relative maintenance of status of all siblings at the beginning of the process and radical differentiation of status for the adult siblings at the end.

The way these changes affected the family is important. Relations within the family and the nature of the domestic unit are among the least researched questions relating to German rural society. Le Roy Ladurie [1966 : 1, 160ff] has demonstrated how population pressure brought to an end the extended family characteristic of parts of Languedoc in the fifteenth century. Perhaps such an extended family existed in early fifteenth-century Upper Swabia. Pulverization of land made large family units unnecessary and impractical in Languedoc. The threat of pulverization or overpopulation on farms also reinforced the nuclear family in Upper Swabia, even though farms often remained large enough to need labour from outside the family.

With the stress on the nuclear family of mother, father, and dependent children came the process of radical social differentiation among the sibling group once it attained adulthood. The effects of this kind of social structure

can have quite different implications depending upon the region involved. Where rural weaving became important, children might be attracted by the possibility of moving out relatively early, marrying, and becoming independent [Mendels, 1970]. In other regions the attraction of a city or frontier might siphon off the excess population. Where a region maintained primary dependence on agriculture, however, and mobility played a minor role, a family could have quite fierce competition for succession within its ranks. There are cases in Europe where the son who has no hope for inheritance developed an 'entrepreneurial' spirit [Kasden, 1965]. In other instances the prospect of not receiving the land is debilitating and develops a spirit of dependence [Authenrieth, 1779 : 40].

In Upper Swabia at the beginning of the sixteenth century the region was still in a process of rapid change, and it is to be expected in such circumstances that the family would develop unusual tensions. Earlier in the fifteenth century primary links were probably those between first-degree kin, parents and siblings. Younger children probably in fact often succeeded to farms since older children, reaching their majority and wishing to marry and become independent, could go elsewhere, the sons, e.g., marrying into farms where only daughters survived. The pressure to remain at home that developed later in the century gave the advantage to elder sons who could lay claim to rights earlier than the younger children. The prospect of winning all or losing all must have created unusual tensions in the family, the experience of each succeeding generation being different from the former. By the early sixteenth century primary links between siblings were being de-emphasized (the Messkirch example) as tenant farmers closed their ranks together. A good modern example of this has been discussed for lower Austria by Sigrid Kehera [1972], where the same kind of radical social differentiation among siblings took place. Adult siblings avoided each other except for a formal bow at the church door on Sunday mornings. Farm tenants developed associations (e.g., *the Stammtisch*) among themselves that excluded their siblings.

Another important issue that needs to be discussed relates to the fabric of village relations, especially with regards to the use of common land. It is a common practice among historians to view the peasants as a conservative force. With population, the market, and the state constantly altering conditions, the peasantry is seen as fighting a rearguard action. This is not the whole picture, as the *Gemeinde* movement in South Germany shows. Still, as we have seen, 1525 is not simply the high point in this movement of village self control. In the early fifteenth century the *Gemeinde* movement implied a conflict between lord and villager. In 1525 it was more of a three way tangle between lord, tenant farmer, and labourer or cottager. The question of who had rights in the village and how they were to be parcelled out and regulated was a dominant one. The dispute was expressed in *Gemeinde* movement ideology because the village corporation was by this time so strong and was used to accommodate new pressures. Tenant farmers resented lords interfering either to protect a portion of the population or to

extend the latter's own income by allocating village resources unilaterally to those not enjoying such rights [Sabeau, 1972 : 44, 83, 104].

So far we have dealt with the effects of population rise in increasing social differentiation. It also helped to exacerbate the economic tensions. An increased population puts greater pressure on the demand for foodstuffs, particularly grain, and increases the labour supply. It also helps through the price mechanism to increase regional specialization—sheep raising in the Thüringer Wald and wine in the Remstal. Looking at the problem from the point of view of real wages—the exchange rate between wages and wheat—over the long term before 1525 there was little change; the radical downswing came only in the 1530s [*ibid.*, 76 ff]. What does take place is an increase in the rate and severity of short term fluctuations. In a period of bad harvest prices are driven much higher than before and real wages plummet. In the 25 years before the Peasant War there were two such severe periods. Since the issues between labourers and tenants were becoming so great in the period, this must have exacerbated the tensions. For a large producer (many of the farmers in Upper Swabia regularly produced a marketable surplus) a short harvest is not necessarily a bad thing: his labour needs are less and the cost of what labour he requires is much less. The offsetting rise in prices makes it possible for him to reap an extra profit. This in turn allows him to lend money and goods to the small farmer or landless labourer, collecting the debts in the subsequent period. Fluctuations by their very nature create a situation where the well-off individual can profit from the problems of the less well off.

Another issue that needs to be explored more closely is the changing balance between city and country. Since grain prices were rising and prices fluctuating more (note that the prices of industrial goods were not subject to the same fluctuations), cities were increasingly concerned with supplying themselves with a regular grain supply at steady prices in order to dampen social tensions within the walls. Perhaps some of the tension between town and village in Württemberg was generated by this problem. Another region where it seems to have played a rôle is the Thüringer Wald.

Changes brought by the market are much more difficult to deal with; a thorough analysis of regional differences is not yet possible. First there is the change in relations of supply and demand stimulated by population rise. Pressure on foodstuffs is expressed primarily in grain prices. Rising demand aids in increasing regional specialization which in turn increases the rate of trade and thus creates more demand for silver. There was an increasing demand for mining products and textiles, especially for linens and fustians (*Barchent*). Profits in trading, mining, and textiles increased bourgeois wealth which in turn could be ploughed back into enterprise [Steinmüller, 1961]. Some of the articles of grievance from the Thüringer Wald complained about the activity of urban entrepreneurs associated with the *Verlagssystem* [Fuchs, 1964 : 141]. Often bourgeois wealth was invested in land so that a part of peasant land was held in tenancy from city dwellers [Loesche, 1961].

The chief aspect investigated here are changes brought about in rural textiles, which have a direct bearing on village social structure. Weaving became an occupation of households that could not subsist purely on agriculture. It is hard to get data on the exact social effects in the early sixteenth century, but from studies done for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [Mendels, 1970; Levine, 1974], there is the suggestion that dependence on weaving has a direct effect on marriage age and population structure. All over Western Europe where traditional patterns of agriculture or urban handicraft prevailed, marriages of both men and women were considerably delayed [Hajnal, 1965]. The man waited until his inheritance was available or until he could afford to set up a proper household. The woman had to wait until a dowry was forthcoming. In general the average age of marriage for men was ca. 26 and for women ca. 24, but there are examples where first marriages took place at much later ages [Wrigley, 1966]. The effects of rural textile manufacturing, in many areas, freed people from the land/marriage pattern. It allowed for earlier independence and thus earlier marriage. With early marriages came increased fertility and a shortened period between generations, so that regions associated with rural weaving also showed faster increases in population. The ultimate result was to create a population with lower per capita incomes subject to the vagaries of demand in regions far removed from the centres of production. For the eighteenth century one thinks of Silesia, Flanders and the English Midlands. In Saxony regional development displayed a pattern of traditional agricultural production, with single son inheritance, stable population, and outmigration, coupled with areas of population rise, rural industry and land fragmentation [Blaschke, 1967].

This rural textile production seems to go with new marriage patterns, an acceleration in population increase, greater rural poverty, agricultural intensification, greater social differentiation, and land fragmentation for at least a part of the population. Such regions often came to be dependent on the importation of grain, so that the population was subject to vagaries in the demand for their product and in the supply of their necessities. All of this it seems to me was only at the beginning stages by 1525, but already was affecting some regions.

In Upper Swabia the data is hard to come by. Rural weaving had been important as a part-time occupation around Ravensburg in the late fifteenth century [Sabeau, 1972 : 39]. But as Ravensburg's part in the long distance trade declined, so apparently did the demand for locally produced cloth. In some areas of Upper Swabia, however, rural weaving did develop significantly [Mottek, 1968 : 189, 210].

What rôle did weavers play in the Bauernkrieg? Returning once more to the Ochsenhausen Articles, *Handwerker* are expressly mentioned in Article 16. One suspects that many of the farm labourers or cottagers who were behind the articles did some weaving. For the rest the character of the Upper Swabian revolt as being in the interests of farm tenants suggests that rural weavers may not have supported it. One more piece of evidence is important to note. In Lotzer's sketch for a *Bundesordnung* it was assumed that rural

Handwerksleute would not be part of the union [Sabeau, 1972 : 12]. It was suggested that their interests did not coincide with those of the rebels.

This then is my suggestion. Rural weaving, particularly of fustians, became important in Upper Swabia by the fifteenth century and was increasing in importance. A large part of the population which had no land or only small plots were engaged in the *Verlagssystem*. These were the same people who put on pressure to divide land, to get part of the commons, to build cottages, and to take part in the use of the *Allmende*. If they acted as other rural weavers acted later, they married young, aiding the population rise, and became increasingly impoverished. In considering these issues discussion might well focus on the regional effects of market changes associated with specialization in agriculture, textile production, and mining. How was the social structure affected—density of population, the division of resources, the structure of the household and family, mobility, and the relations between city and country? To what degree did growing capitalist production affect rural social relations? Important here is the regional spread of the *Verlagssystem* and the investment of capitalist wealth into further production, consumption, or land.

The last question to be taken up is the rôle of the state in effecting change in peasant institutions and political consciousness. For Upper Swabia the chief issue was *Leibeigenschaft*. It is not necessary to discuss this institution in detail since this has been done by Blickle [1973 : 318 ff; 1974] (see also above, 71-73). Suffice it to say *Leibeigenschaft* played an important rôle in the cross-cutting jurisdictions in the territory. Weingarten claimed the right to tax all of its *Leibeigene*, entering into disputes with a number of neighbours on the issue [Sabeau, 1972 : 95 ff]. Überlingen for one argued that taxation was based on the *Vogtrecht* or arose out of lower justice.

Briefly, it can be argued that much of the dynamism of the early modern state stemmed from the changing character of warfare and the needs of the state in maintaining internal order and waging external warfare. Widening the tax base was crucial as was the clear definition of those subject to taxation. Much of the interest in drawing boundary lines, untangling jurisdictions, and standardizing peasant inheritance rules and property rights stemmed from the interests of higher authorities in increasing taxes and in participating in warfare of various kinds. For territories such as Weingarten, *Leibeigenschaft* was important as an instrument of this policy. Much of the peasant participation in representative institutions in Southern Germany (as Blickle [1974 : 435, 487] has shown) revolved around the question of military obligations and taxation. The wider question to be posed then is not where *Leibeigenschaft* existed and how heavy its financial burdens were or whether peasants felt demeaned by its status. It is rather the systematic problem of how various regions were affected by the new tax demands of the state and by the attempts of the state to rationalize and standardize the conditions of the subjects. What were the variations in the tax burdens of various regions? Did different kinds of taxes affect rural

society in different ways. What place did state exactions take in the entire extraction process of the peasant surplus?

With regards to *Leibeigenschaft* for Upper Swabia there are a number of ways that peasant institutions and agriculture were affected (see above 66-68). One important possible effect of increased taxation was to stimulate monetarization of the peasant enterprise, which in turn meant greater rationalization and increased production [Tilly, 1973 : 1-10; Ardant, 1965]. *Leibeigenschaft* being a personal form of bondage often posed a principle contrary to village self-jurisdiction. Where several lords had *Leibeigene* in the same village, they laid conflicting claims to jurisdiction, this precisely at a time when tenant farmers were stressing ties of neighbourhood [Sabeau, 1972 : 86, 100, 116].

Paradoxically the issue of taxation was one of the few that turned peasants outwards from their villages in a common issue over any extended period of time [Blickle, 1974 : 487 ff]. For Upper Swabia it might be argued that within the village the direction of movement was from kin to class over the issue of participation in the *Gemeinde*. Viewed from outside the village at the same time the tendency was from village isolation to 'peasant estate' over the issue of taxation. Still in Upper Swabia this latter movement was only a tendency and it is important to distinguish between articulation of demands by the peasants themselves and by those leaders in the Peasant War who came from outside the peasantry [Sabeau, 1972 : 109].

This paper has been a plea for a more sociological analysis of the German peasantry. Historians need to concern themselves with systematic, comparative questions relating to population structure, the nature of the family and the structure of kinship relations, village stratification, social control, the nature of dependence, mobility, and the articulation of the village within the wider society. It is not my purpose to press for the primacy of economic or social relationships, but only to argue that political and ideological consciousness is molded by a complex set of social relationships which in turn are closely dependent on ecological and economic factors. By and large I have neglected the aristocracy in this discussion—not a trivial omission—in order to emphasize that not all important conflict in rural society was between lord and peasant. The understanding of Central European rural society in the context of its economic, political, and institutional structure is a wide-open field for research.

NOTES

¹ Horst Buszello 1969 finds differences in political ideology a function of the kind of state structure of any particular region.

² I am presently working on a history of the Württemberg village of Neckarhausen. A useful book is Paul Sauer 1972 : 32ff. I have consulted the Kirchenbücher for Neckarhausen and numerous sources on population levels from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century in the Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart.

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