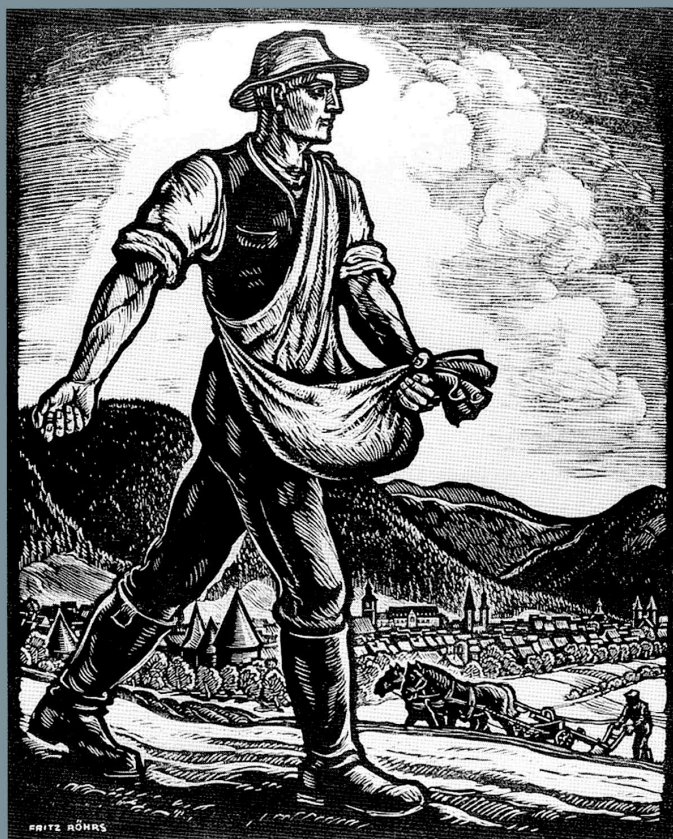


The Path of the German Farmer



Johann von Leers

The The Path of the German Farmer

from the early days to the present

By

Dr. Johann von Leers



HERITAGE

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Foreword

After seeing history for so long as the history of dynasties, cultural history, and intellectual history of the various foreign spiritual currents in our country, it is necessary for once to resume the attempt that has already been made less often to present the history of the German peasantry, its path through the centuries. It will be presented here from the point of view of the Nordic race R. Walther Darri's seminal work "Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rasse" has provided the inspiration and direction for this particular work. Peasant history is in the deepest sense folk history, we came from peasant soil, and Nordic, peasant humanity in its greatest heights and best manifestations has given the face to German intellectual life and German statesmanship.

The history of the German peasantry, however, is at the same time a history of German rebelliousness, a struggle for freedom of the soil and freedom of the race's own development; what had to be said in this area has been said here with candor. The Nordic view of the world does not tolerate any compromises while avoiding any unnecessary violation of other people's souls.

At the same time, this booklet is intended as a stimulus to take a fresh look at German history. It refrains from both exaggeration and flattery, but wants to say what was, what became, how it became and why it became that way.

Dr. von Leers.

The German farmer in early history

Our roots go deep down to the beginnings of the Nordic race. We want to call the entire period from the oldest recognizable beginnings of our race to the great moral break of the conversion period after the migration of peoples early history. We reject the term "prehistory" as illogical. Whatever we can know from written evidence, archaeological finds, symbolic historical tradition or any other conceivable source that it happened and how it happened is history. What happened very early and can only be partially or only to a very limited extent determined is for us early history or earliest history. Strictly speaking, however, there is no prehistory, because no one can know or describe what happened before history, i.e. where all sources leave us. Strictly speaking, there are no "specialists" for this either.

We divide the early history of our people into three groups:

- a) Pre-Indo-European period;**
- k) Indo-European period;**
- c) Germanic period.**

All three periods are racially determined by the Nordic race. Between about 20000 and 15000 BC, the

seems to be the Nordic Rafft, whose home is the German Baltic coast, Jutland, Denmark and southern Sweden.

This Nordic race is already peasant-like, speaking languages that have not yet taken on the forms of the later Indo-Germanic languages, but are still preforms of them. The culture of that time is primarily a wood culture - no wonder that so little of it has survived. It is a forest peasantry which, in addition to small-scale agriculture, raises livestock and at the same time uses the forest, collects honey, tends forest bees and hunts. But it is not primitive hunting. The hunter wanders, r o a m s the forest with his wig wam, the farmer settles down in the light of the forest and clears a piece of arable land. In the Central European deciduous forest region, this Nordic pre-Indo-Germanic peasantry has endured for thousands of years. We can imagine their way of life to be similar to that of Russian farmers in Siberia in the last century. The houses are square and made of wood, the posts are embedded in the ground, all utensils are primarily made of wood, animal sinews and bones. R. Walther Darr6 writes very correctly: "The more one affirms the connection between the Central European deciduous forest area and the peasant culture of the Nordic Rhaetians, the less one can actually expect to f i n d archaeological remains of this culture. An ancient Finnish farm with all its stables and outbuildings has been built and preserved in the open-air museum in HelsingforS. What is very instructive about this farm is that, apart from four axes and a few pots, nothing in the entire extensive complex is made of artificial, inorganic material.

was made. Not even the stove, because it consists only of cleverly assembled natural stones. You have to see for yourself how organic material was used here to make the most incredible things - which we can no longer imagine being made from organic material (wood, bast, etc.), such as nails, farming and hunting tools, fishing gear, etc. - in order to be able to imagine such a farmhouse at all. But if you ask yourself what archaeological finds this farm would have left behind, the surprising result is four axe blades, a few pots, some charcoal and a few sooted natural stones. It would have to be considered a particularly fortunate coincidence if these few objects were found together on the spot and not scattered and independent of each other. What archaeologist would dare to deduce the existence of an extensive farmstead from a few broken potsherds, four axe blades, some charcoal and a few sooted stones? Hardly anyone, and since everything in a Central European forest area was certainly made of organic material in a similar way to the Finnish farmstead in the open-air museum at Helfingfors, we can never expect archaeology alone to provide the final clues; it can never provide more than the fragments of a skeleton for the prehistoric exploration of the Central European north. Only the biologist will be able to breathe life into this skeleton by integrating those prehistoric people into the natural conditions of their existence."

The arable farming was probably still hoeing

(Schwante-, "Deutschlands Urgeschichte", p. 95). Whether it was entirely in the hands of the woman, as SchwanteS assumes, is questionable. In any case, we will have to imagine the pre-Indo-European Nordic farmers as forest farmers and not as nomads.

Even then the arable land was probably fenced in by fences, while the cattle were herded together, as R. Walther Darre convincingly d e m o n s t r a t e s .

From this pre-Indo-Germanic Nordic peasantry, the actual Jndogermanic or Jndo-European peasantry developed towards the end of the period around 10000, i.e. from the common stock of the Nordic raphes, the non-migrated groups, the overwhelming majority of these raphes, adopted an original language, respectively develop an original language, which is the source of the later Germanic, Celtic, Flemish, Illyrian, Hellenic, Latin and other languages belonging to the same family, most of which have now disappeared. Common to all these languages is the reference to the rural basis of the economy.

(Schwante's "Prehistory of Germany" summarizes a number of these expressions: "The Jndogermanic peoples lived at a late stage of the Stone Age, when all groups of the people could still understand each other. Copper was already well known (faltind.: a/as, lat.: aes, germ.: air^), and since the name for the copper axe was taken over from the Orient, the tool itself and probably also the metal w e r e first obtained from there. Linguistic research therefore comes to the same conclusion as prehistoric research. The word kamarr in Old Norse means "Hammers" and "rock". Related to this is the ancient Indian

acma, the Lithuanian akum and the Old Slavic kamy, which means stone. "Hammer" originally meant the stone hammer. The Old High German word saks sSchwert^I is related to the Latin §axum I^SteirH, so the §aks may originally have been a Steinmeffer.

The weapons of the Jndogermani were the battle meffer, the axe, the copper battle axe, the bow and arrow and the spear.

Domesticated animals included dogs, cattle, sheep and probably also goats. The fact that wealth was assessed according to the number of domestic animals can be s e e n from the fact that among some peoples the word for "livestock*" also meant "money*":

Cattle: Latin: pecu, Old Indian: paxus, Gothic: kalku -

Money: Latin: pecurüa, Gothic: kailiu, Anglo-Saxon: keolr.")

Today we can already determine with a fair degree of accuracy from the linguistic correlations what kind of culture we had among the Indo-European farmers (i.e. in the pre-Germanic period of our people, when we still lived together with the linguistically related peoples). Professor Neckel in his excellent work "Deutsche Ur- und VorgeschichtSwiffenschaft der Gegenwart" (Junker Sc Dünnhaupt, Berlin) shows us by the correspondence of the expressions which farming implements we may assume to have existed in the Indo-Germanic period. The plow was already present, hence the term "furrow" was also present, and the plowshare was also present, thus obviously already an advance over the hook plow, which was merely hewn from wood. Excavations have also yielded numerous stone plowshares. Common to the Indo-European period, and much more easily even to the pre-Indo-European period, is the

Harrow for loosening and leveling the plowed soil, probably first a wickerwork with sharp wooden points cut downwards and stones laid on top. Neckel assumes that of the three names given to the sickle, two names that occur together in Greek, Latin and the Baltic languages, which are very ancient, must have denoted two different forms of sickle. Where there is a sickle, there is also the concept of mowing, so it is not surprising that the same root word for mowing is present in most Indo-European languages. Threshing was probably done in two ways: by beating out the grains with a club and by kicking out the grains or kicking them out by the cattle. The possession of the grain whorls is common, as are the terms for chaff and grain. The mill is documented as a stone mill by excavations and finds as well as by linguistics, and the legend of the heavy stone mill that the giant daughters once had to turn in the court of the Danish King Frodi also testifies to the use of millstones in very ancient times. This also implies the existence of flour and bread, which Neckel also proves linguistically.

There were quite a few types of grain. The Wheat is known in at least four forms: common wheat (*triticum vulgare*), emmer (*triticum dicoccum*), single grain (*triticum monococcum*) and spelt wheat (*triticum compactum*). Buckwheat is old and native, as are millet (*panicum miliaceum*) and foxtail millet (*setaria italica*), oats (*avena sativa*) is frequently present, as is barley, probably even in two varieties.

Rye came much later, in the early Iron Age, and then became the grain of the East German culture.

This possession of Indo-European peasant culture
We can assume that the cereal grain of the Indo-European period was the basis for all Indo-European peoples; it will have been common to them, with more or less pronounced exceptions, whereby one tribe or group may have preferred this type of grain according to its landscape, the other that type.

When it comes to domestic animals, we have to use the pig first and foremost. The pig is in fact the leading animal of the Indo-Germanic peoples, indeed of the peoples of the Norse rapses in general. R. Walther Darr6 has convincingly shown the importance of the pig as a distinctly peasant animal.

What they certainly have in common is cattle, although the only question is how early they appear. The veneration that cattle enjoy (the sacred cow of the Nordic Sanskrit Indians, the epithet "cow-eyed" as an honorific name of Greek goddesses, cattle in front of chariots and plows on the Swedish rock paintings, the bull as the preferred sacrificial animal of the early Romans alongside the pig and the sheep in the Suovetaurilium, the sacrifice of pig, sheep and cattle, the parade of sacred chariots drawn by cattle among the North Germanic tribes), proves the great age of this possession. The yoke is found linguistically in all Indo-European languages.

The horse is also attested in northern Europe, does not originate from the steppe, but was first used for pulling carts and then for riding at the latest at the end of the Stone Age.

We have encountered numerous dogs during the excavation of Frisian

Terpen and pre-Germanic and Germanic settlements, especially in the Netherlands and Friesland. These were probably herding and guard dogs that were not eaten, so that we find numerous dog skeletons at individual sites, while the sheep and perhaps cattle that they guarded were eaten and their bones broken up for marrow. As R. Walther Darrä rightly points out, one cannot conclude from the presence of only dog bones that the dog was the only animal of this population - it was probably only the only domestic animal, while the cattle have not been preserved and their bones were used for cooking.

It is difficult to say what the situation was with poultry; the Romans, who used the rooster *β a l l u s*, the chicken *Una*, probably learned about this animal from the Gauls, i.e. adopted it later from the north. The West German word *Gickel* could be related to it, while the Slavic expressions (*kuriLL* for chicken and *pjeructi* in Russian, *kura* -- chicken and *košur* > *kokoä*, *pierucli* in Polish) stand completely on their own.

Nevertheless, we can assume that certain types of poultry were already common among Indo-European primitive peoples, such as the goose (lat.: *anser*, ruff.: *šuš*, pol.: corresponding in other languages). Whether the duck already existed as a domestic duck remains to be seen.

One thing is certain - we have to assume that the Indo-Germanic people had a thoroughly peasant wood culture, which already knew agriculture, which it passed on to the peoples who later developed from it, and which was far too rich for us to assume any traits of "nomad tum". Not only the ancient Germanic tribes

were not nomads, but the same can generally be assumed for the peoples of the Nordic Rhaetians, i.e. the C e l t s , Latins, early Hellenes and Slavs.

(Note: The book by Claus Ekkehart "Deutsche Bauerngeschichte" ^Arno Reißweber Verlag, Gotha and Leipzig, which amusingly prints the Reichserbhofgesetz at the end, but writes on the very first page: "For lack of grazing land and following the nomadic drive, our present-day ancestors moved from the north country clan-wise into these vast forests and wastelands in order to create a new livelihood for themselves here. Some of them first s e t t l e d in the lowlands of the Vistula and Oder around 500 B.C., later also on the Elbe. However, this area had already been partially occupied by the Celts before the Germanic tribes arrived. The Germanic tribes raided their villages and took up r e s i d e n c e here, while the Celts were forced to give way to the powerful pressure and retreat to the west and south.

Of course, we must not believe that our ancestors w o u l d have taken possession of the Celtic villages in order to settle down. Only rarely would this have been the case. The rule was that they moved around the country as nomads, seeking out the best pasture and forest plots in order to continue on their way after exploiting them. So the dwellings must have been very p r i m i t i v e and inadequate. They may have l i v e d i n m a k e s h i f t tents or even earth caves. The advance of the Romans and the construction of the border wall ^LLmeiH between the Danube bend and the Middle Rhine gradually forced the Germanic tribes to settle down.")

The Indo-European Land law

From the surviving legal forms, it is still possible today to describe Indo-European land law, the basic features of which probably predate the development of Indo-European languages in the whole of the Nordic Rhaetia. Indo-European land law is closely related to Indo-European family law and the earliest religious ideas of the entire Nordic raphic world.

It is still definitely "kas" (religious law) not "jus" (secular law). Research into symbols and comparative religious history shows us with surprising clarity that at the beginning of the Nordic cultures there was a view of the world in which the radiant sky of light (aeus lat., §L<5e, rkeos greek, tlu germ.) played a decisive role. The tradition of early and very early historical symbols, the swastikas, solar spirals, trees of life, solar wheels, etc., which has only become recognizable today, all indicate that an observation of the order in the sky took place in our latitudes or in latitudes even further north, which gave the Norse Raphael an insight into the laws of the course of the world. Ancient literature has already d r a w n attention to these things. Lefmann, "Geschichte des alten Indiens", Berlin 1890, describes this for the ancient Aryan Indians: "A deep, powerful religious feeling ran through the Aryan tribal community; it sanctified all relationships of life, family and property and established certain norms early on, moral rules and legal c o n c e p t s , rules and statutes. The moon and the stars, it was seen, followed fixed, unalterably regulated change; they were

Keeper and guardian of order. Violating order, violating a firm moral order, was a sin, was evil for the individual before gods and men, causing harm and shame, but bringing war and feud to the whole." This tradition still lives on in the word *ra* (Sanskrit), *rius* (Latin) ---- law and religious practice, which is preserved in German (*Recht* and "right"; Slav. *pra^o* ---- law and ---- right). The order of the world, the great orbit of the sun's light in the day and in the year, which takes place unalterably, is perceived as the strongest expression of inspired divine order. The great parable of eternity is experienced in daily life, just as the light rises in the morning, stands at its height at midday, sinks in the evening and is reborn in the early red, so the same appears in the year in the migration of sunlight through spring and early summer to the summer solstice, the high point of the year, and from there through late summer and winter to the winter solstice, in which the dead light is reborn. Three seasons are therefore distinguished in the year, winter, spring and summer, the god of the year (Slav.: *IriZla^v*) is often three-headed, and divine life passes through three stages. In human life, spring is repeated in childhood, summer in manhood, winter in old age, which will be followed by rebirth or new birth as surely as the germinating seed in spring is followed by the waving grain in summer and the bare winter earth by new birth in the same way*.

All later myths of the gods are undoubted per-

* In German, the word *Herbst* originally only means harvest time.

sonifications of God's wind and God's weather, multiple personifications of the annual cycle, are therefore also clothed with the symbols of their seasons and position, such as 1*Iror (Germ., ?erkunas altpreuß. und lit, ?erun Slav.) with the hammer or the club as the year-splitter in the winter solstice, as we find it already in its original form on the Swedish rock paintings. The man-rune, the horned head, the horn in general denotes the rising god of the year, the god of spring (who only later had to lend his horns to the Christian devil - just as Michelangelo's Moses, who beats the water out of the rock, is still provided with horns). The horn is thus associated with the bull, which is not a primitive fertility symbol, but again represents the symbolized man-rune, the sign of the horn, the ascendant, just as it is associated with Zeus, who as a bull steals Europe; the horn a p p e a r s with the spring goddess Ceres, is associated with the goddess of youth Iduna of the Germanic tribes, appears with the Slavic god Swarosch, who is devoted to the summer sun, and is associated with the goddess of youth Iduna of the Germanic tribes.

"Holder of the horn", is not a mere horn of plenty, but a symbolization of the new rising life. The spear, the man with the downwardly lowered arms, the Tyr rune connects fich with all the god figures of the dying summer season, is also found exactly at this point in the runic alphabet and appears as a spear in the hands of pre-winter solstice god figures, such as Odin, who "hangs wounded by the spear for nine nights on the world tree"; is the sign of Tyr like Mars and Ares, pre-winter solstice symbol of the descending life and the necessary death. In the winter solstice, the sign of the reborn light, the outward-facing swastika, like the downward-facing swastika, stands as a symbol of descending life and necessary death.

The winter solstice stands in the summer solstice. This is also where we find the child who is born anew, who already lives in the mountain at the summer solstice and then comes to light at the winter solstice, accompanied by the tree of life and the Yule fire, originally a log of wood that is lit on the night of the winter solstice and as such serves as a symbol of the year.

"Badnjak" still exists among Croats and Serbs today.

(Note: The fact that the child in the cradle in the winter solstice is already pre-Christian and was already known as a child in the mountain in the summer solstice is shown by Prof. vr. Sepp, "Die Religion der alten Deutschen", Munich 1890, on the basis of legend research: "In midsummer at St. John's Day, a golden cradle appears at noon in the hill at Mollenstorferfelde near Penzlin. On the Grapenwerder near the town, a farmer and others went to excavate it, and it was already visible while they were digging, when the fright at the appearance of the Lurjahn caused one of them to cry out: 'O je mi nich!' and the earth closed over it. In the Weiberberge near Malchow there is even a golden child in a golden cradle. In the Sonnenberge near Schwießel, the *Unterirdischen* live in a golden cradle. The Kegelberg, The "high nun" near Güstrow is supported by four mighty pillars and holds the golden cradle of a Wenden prince, which is guarded day and night by the little earthmen. The forest woman gives a golden cradle to the peasant woman who has taken care of her child.

Near Ruchow lies the golden cradle under a mound of trees; in the Bollberge on the Sude, where a robber baron's castle once stood, peasants were about to lift it when there was a sound and a magpie, the devil's trickery, broke the silence. The Count of WilmStorf near Daffow be-

a golden cradle sat there and carried it off with other treasures across the lake; but it sank and is still visible today in the Wafferloch in good weather. Likewise in the Tres-sower See near Wismar; in ancient times a robber lived there on the Kellerberg, he also owned a golden cradle among other treasures; but when he wanted to carry it away, he sank with the boat. The Wischberg, a quarter of a mile from Wismar, an old landmark for skippers, c o n t a i n s the golden cradle of a princess.

In the Goldberg on the Zahren-Storfer Feldmarke stands a golden cradle; once three treasure diggers wanted to lift it and one of them shouted for joy, so it sank ten fathoms deep. In the Glücksberge near Vellahn, a castle with immeasurable treasures has sunk; when digging for it, a cradle of pure gold lies on top, the evil one prevents it from being lifted. From the sunken castle in Lake Teterow, a little child in a golden cradle is seen s l e e p i n g in a chamber on St. John's Day; at one o'clock in the afternoon, the opening in the ground closes.

The black lake near Großesfln holds the cradle, bed and coffin of gold, which can even be seen on the surface on moonlit nights.

In flood legends, it is the child in the cradle who is miraculously saved, and when the certain little tree has grown so large that a cradle is made from the wood, salvation will come.")

This world is therefore, according to the common view of the Nordic rappes in all their branches, tribes and peoples, an ordered world that carries its law of "die and become" in itself, into which man is placed in order to beautify and improve it.

(Note: In Zarathustra, who restores the Old Norse view among the Aryan Persians, it is still said in

the oldest pieces of the Zendavesta: "Justice is known only to the man who fences off the nearest territory with power. He who sincerely invokes the truth has the best spirit. He who brings this real life to the greatest prosperity will be rewarded with the life of body and soul. Those who do good will have goodness, those who do nothing will have nothingness. So let us act as upholders of this life!")

This task of ordering and elevating the world is the basis of a large part of the religious attitude of the northern races, especially the Indo-European peoples. Almost everywhere they distinguish this ordered, God-inspired world from the disordered, confused outside world. Among the Greeks, the word *cosmos* means both "world" and "adornment", "order"; "*ko8mein*" means "to adorn" as well as "to order". For the Germanic tribes, as the Danish researcher Grönbech very correctly states, Midgard as the "inhabited earth with its people and divine powers" stands opposite Utgard as a "closed circle of life", just as for the Greeks the *cosmos* stands opposite chaos. Utgard is the world of unformed matter, of giants and demons who want to destroy the orderly peasant world.

Slavic etymology is still very productive for these findings today. In Russian, the word means "me" still today: 1. world, 2. peace, 3. village community (originally clan community, only later extended to the 14th century, the system of annual land redistribution in the village). In Polish, the word for world "*i^Lar*" is closely related to "*s^iarlo*"----- light; the world is thus conceived as a world of light as opposed to the "*pieklo*", the hell, in which it is dark and gloomy.

In betting, man and deity stand together, the god is the "kullrrui", the faithful one of man, Thor, for example, protects the builder's earth from damaging giants with a hammer, just as he blesses marriage with a hammer and consecrates a house with a hammer (to this day, the three hammer blows of a foundation stone!).

The cultivation and preservation of the valuable heritage, which is under divine protection, therefore dominate Nordic moral, marriage and land law. The farm is a small Midgard, which is regarded as "Odal" or "Allod", as given by God, just as it was later often called "Sonnenlehn" in its last remnants in the Middle Ages, as Hermann Gauch ("Die germanische Odal- oder Allodverfassung") points out: "The old Germanic idea of the sun fief was still preserved in the few estates that they had obtained completely freely and independently in the Middle Ages and were called sun fiefs, also God's fiefs, whose possession was assumed by a symbolic reception from God and from the sun. These estates were, like some, heavenly fiefs, not earthly ones, i.e. in effect allodial estates that did not require any service." (Grimm, "Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer", 1, 278.) "The Roman historian Tacitus records in his annals that the Germanic leader Bojokalus, looking up at the sun and invoking the stars, asked whether they wanted to shine on the land for free when the Romans took the land they had disputed - so the land, namely Allod and Allmende, is the land received in fief from the sun, a view that could originally connect the name part Al, All with the term sun and deity." This is indeed the background to Indo-European land law and thus also to the German-

already the law of the land. The family estate carries a piece of the sanctification of the world. Probably even in the earliest times the dead of the family were buried under the hearth, later the ancestral images (among the Romans Penates or Lares) stood by the hearth; the hearth is sacred, when a farm is abandoned, the hearth is ceremonially extinguished, when a new farm is founded, fire is taken from the eternal fire of the people (so among the Romans) and lit on the hearth. The same is done among the German. Ancient sacred symbols adorn the entrance to houses and courtyards, such as swan images in Friesland, the sign of a winter solstice bird, crossed horse heads in Lower Saxony, the Man rune or the Donar broom among the Alemanni, but also within the Slavic group among Ukrainians and Wends; the crowned serpent, the old earth serpent, which guards the ball of the sun, the young light, in the depths, in the water, the dragon often in Thuringia, the stork (Adebar or Odebar), the life bearer (from Od ---- life and bören - Low German - bear) sun circles, sun spirals and Hagal runes. The best collection of these house decorations was compiled by Karl Theodor Weigel in "Lebendige Vorzeit rechts und links der Landstrasse" (Alfred Metzner Verlag, Berlin).

This farm is inalienable and indivisible. Its very name indicates that it is clan property. The same can be found in old, older forms of Indo-Germanic rights. R. Walther Darré points out that the term *kamilia* and *Sippenhof* still coincide in Roman twelve-table law; in the case of inheritance in the absence of a son, it is still expressly stated "*proximus aŕnaru8 kamiliam tiabew*", "the nearest male relative shall have the *Sippenhof*". Jhering, the great jurist, explains this on the basis of ancient Roman law: "Fester Wohnfitz,

Settling down in a particular place is the beginning of all culture, it requires rest, duration, for something to become and endure." The German language expresses this eloquently with the words: custom, statute, law (from *fitzen*, to set), habit (from *wohnen*). The Latin language also borrows the basic concept of the oldest private law from the idea of dwelling: it is that of *kamilia*. *kamilia* is linguistically the dwelling place (from Sanskrit: *älia* - to set, *clliaman* --- dwelling place, thus *Wohnfitz*, then also *kamulus*---the housemate, servant. G. Curtius, "Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie"), i.e. house, but not the house in the natural sense (*öomus*, *aeäes*), but in the economic and legal sense: the basis of the entire economic and private existence, the house with everything that is in it and belongs to it: Wife, children, slaves, arable land, in short the house, and indeed, as we shall see below, the house of the farmer, *kamilia* is a legal concept, on which almost all ancient private law is based, only an insignificant part falls under another concept: the *pecunia*. The *kamilia* is the fixed, permanent, lasting; the *pecunia* the temporary, changing, fleeting. The *kanülia* should therefore last, but it can only do so if a woman binds the man to the house and shares the care of the household with him. With the *fran*, the *kanülia* extends from things to persons, first to them, then to the children they bear to the man and their children, and finally to the circle of agnates bound by the commonality of descent from the same man. This is the widest extension of the concept of family; the extension of agnation beyond this circle is no longer covered by the concept. Nor does it extend to the

Relatives through 'cognates'." - According to kamilia, the language designates the one to whom it belongs as parerkarni1ia8 (from Sanskrit: pa --- nourish, protect, keep).

Marriage is therefore also part of the order of the clan farm. Strict monogamy is a common feature among all Nordic peasant peoples. It arises from the economic situation of the farmer, who can have several maids but only one housewife (today still: ku\$rru --- HauStreue), if the farm economy is not to deteriorate, but it also arises from the religious view. The old patrician marriage among the families of the peasant fathers who once founded Rome was entered into in a sacred form. It differs fundamentally from the mere community of plebeian marriage. Again, Jhering says of the Romans (quoted in R. Walther Darre, "Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen race", p. 394): "Ancient law exhibits a quite strange contrast with regard to the legal position of the man in relation to the woman; it recognizes two forms of marriage: one in which the woman comes into the man's manus (----- power of the pater kamiliis over the woman) by entering into marriage, by conkarreatio; another in which, if this is intended, a special act is required: the coemrio. The manu8 is the same in both cases, so the difference only concerns how it is created. But this difference is a highly significant one; it does not involve a mere difference of form, but rather visualizes two fundamentally different, contradictory conceptions of the marital relationship; one: the woman must be in the manu8 - the other: she can be independent. Both views cannot possibly be based on one and the same

If, however, they are found together in Rome in historical times among one and the same people, we are compelled to look for a **d i f f e r e n t** origin of the two. The assumption of a temporal difference is not sufficient. If one had replaced the other in time, it would be difficult to see why, after the emergence of marriage without manus, the so-called free marriage, the **coemrio** should have been used to add the manus. The only explanation that remains is the contrast between the patricians and the plebeians, and I agree with this view expressed by others: the **confarreated** marriage is the patrician one. The opposite marriage, in which the manus can be added by **coemrio** or omitted depending on the agreement, is the plebeian marriage." The same applies in a similar form to the Germanic tribes. The Germanic marriage is a marriage between freeborns, in which the woman receives a spear and shield or shield and horse as a sign of equality. It is very much part of the overall Odal law. "The Germanic concept of property cannot be separated from the Germanic idea of the family as a succession of the sexes. This was connected with the Germanic concept of God, as well as the Germanic world view in general." (R. Walther Darrö, "New nobility of blood and soil").

When choosing a wife, the best possible race was taken into consideration; this tradition of paying attention to race and taking pride in one's own race is clearly expressed in the conviction of the descent of noble families from the gods. "The trait of Germanism is directed towards the image of the **EdelingS**, like that of Helenism towards the "**euşeneş*** or the "**geanaios***, the "**Well-born*** of Italianism on the "**^enerosus***

- all of these word stems emphasize the hereditary material that has been fixed by selective procreation; to the word stem: *Bißne*, *şenno*, to which "*Koni**, "the lineage*", belongs (king, the one from the lineage, -the most capable and noble)." (HanS F. K. Günther.)

This emphasis on good descent is combined with the elimination of inferior children. Weak and ill-educated children are abandoned after birth (Jako- Grimm, " *Deutsche Rechtsaltertümer*", vol. I , 1899, p. 629: "It was considered wrong to raise deformed, c r i p p l e d , weak children or those who could not lead a life free of reproach"). The same usage is also found among other Nordic peoples. Christoforus Hartknoch in his old book "*Das Alte Preußen. Preußischer Histo rien erster Teil. 1684*" reports on the ancient Prussians' use of the abandonment of crippled children. He first notes the external, predominantly Nordic appearance of this population belonging to the Baltic branch of the Indo-Germanic group, mixed with Germanic Goths, and says in the third chapter: Of the constitution of the body of the ancient Prussians: "First of all, Adamus Bremenfis says that the Prussians were "*eoerulei konünes**, that is: "people who have blue eyes*."

"Afterwards Adamus Bremenfis and with him Helmol- says duS that the Prussians were "*kaeie rubea**, that is: "red under the face*. Reported scribes ascribe this redness with explicit words to the face, indicating that they were otherwise white of body. Just as the Nordic peoples were all white of body, the same must be said of the ancient Prussians."

"What color the hair of the old Prussians was, Adamus does not remember, nor do I know.

that one of our scribes should have remarked the same. But if we believe Vitruvius, we must say that the Prussians had partly yellow and partly red hair, for the words of Vitruvius are these: "Towards midnight the people are strong of body, white of color, have plain yellow hair and blue eyes." Hartknoch testifies in his eleventh chapter: "That the first inhabitants of the land of Prussia came together lawfully and lived as husband and wife in the very earliest times is beyond all doubt." It was also "nothing new for them to kill a child", i.e. they practiced the abandonment of crippled children in the same way as the Spartans, early Romans and Germanic tribes. We are also told of the medieval Scots of Celtic origin that they made "falling sick, insane and raving mad" infertile, also for breeding reasons.

Marriage itself is sacred; in Germanic, the word *L* means not only marriage, but divine right in general, and corresponds perfectly to the idea of the Roman *kas*.

In addition to the farm, movable property that does not belong to the cultivation of the farm, especially livestock, is free personal property. This is where the Latin term for money *pecunia* comes from *pecus* cattle, In contrast to *odal* or *allod*, in Germanic this free and unattached property is called the "*Feod*"----*Viehbesitz* (got.: *kaiku*----*Vieh*); the *Sla* wen obviously have early metal age memories, because the word *Rubel* comes from *rubirj* from *schlagen*, apparently refers to a chipped piece, as in the Bronze Age from bronze or gold clasps or-pieces were broken off for payment purposes. From here, the word came to mean a coin.

Thirdly, in addition to the odal and the feod, we have the allmende (ašer publicus in Roman times). This refers to the common ownership of land that is not tilled. Gauch says very correctly (op. cit., p. 9): "The common mark or allmende is also called Meenmark, Meente, Hammark, Mirika (on the Lower Rhine), offene Mark, Allgemeine, Almenning (in the north), Almen, Almad, Almut, Allmunt, also die Ganerbe, die Gewalt same." According to the Germanic legal term, it consisted of "Forest, water, pasture, road and footbridge". (Maurer, "Einleitung zur Geschichte der Mark-, Hof-, Dorf- und Staatsverfassung und der öffentlichen Gewalt", p. 200.) It also included mineral resources such as quarries and moors, according to the Germanic law: "Everything that lies deeper than the plow digs." In one form or another, all the peoples of the Norse empire had some form of this allotment. Its most important component was essentially the forest and its use. We will see the full development of this legal institution later among the Germanic peoples. It is probable that the existence of boundary markers, large forests that separated the peoples in a protective manner, through which in many cases only the diet paths or raceways passed, on which armies and wandering peasant trains, perhaps also the first forms of trade, moved, also belonged to the Indo-European period.

The right of inheritance, in which the farm came undivided into the hands of one son, must have meant that the other sons either settled under the leadership of the eldest, the heir to the farm (Slav: srarona), if the farm was large enough, and in this way a kind of multi-family farm was created, which lived under the leadership of the eldest of the clan, the heir to the farm (Latin: Kereš---heir also means owner). Such clan or stomach farms have developed as

Ganerbschaften in southern Germany lasted until modern times; Among the Romans they were destroyed early, among the Hellenes there is hardly any evidence of them, just as little as among the Celts, among the Poles they were destroyed around the year 1MO with the rise of aristocratic rule and the destruction of peasant law, They were called Oriadrina--- Grandfather's estate, among the Serbs they live on today, among the Bulgarians they lived on until 1900 as Zadruga - Sippenhof (from 6ruF - the friend, the tribe). But once this possibility of settling families within the framework of the Sippenhof was exhausted. Then new settlement takes place, in the forest a part of the land of the common march is released for settlement, "captured", among the Germanic tribes "kikanc". But here, too, the nature and extent of the people's land soon set a limit. The existing farms are dependent on the yield from the common land, the border forest is not to be weakened too much, the development of swamp and high forest is all too laborious. So unmarried second, third, fourth and fifth sons, everything that is freeborn and should have a farm, accumulate on the clan farms. They try to eke out a living on the farm first, forming the warlike young men of the people and developing a system of comradeship, or rather a system of allegiance. Their numbers grew and grew, they could not marry because they could not found a farm, their brotherhoods and fighting associations, among whom strong leaders soon enough emerged during the selection process, the result of which they found, were perceived by the local farmers, the fathers of the families, as a threat to the old freedoms of the people. The warrior dictatorship threatened to emerge from the masses of younger brothers.

there is severe social tension. The country is relatively overpopulated. The idea of emigration sets in. The farms give the younger brothers livestock and equipment, the departing ones marry their girls, girls of the same origin, free men with free men, and set off in search of land. It is the *ver sacrum* of the ancient Latins, it is the peasant trek of the Germanic tribes - the young men set out under self-chosen leaders to open up new land somewhere in the world. It is a slow and difficult migration, behind which the call for land is everywhere. Like their older brothers, these young farmers who are migrating want to find land and a home, but they do so slowly - quite unlike a migrating tribe of shepherds, for example, they set off into the distance with their young wives, often already with children, in carts and wagons. Through negotiations and a *m i c a b l e* compensation, they manage to pass through friendly tribes; when attacked, they push together the wagon castles behind which they defend themselves, like the Cimbri at Noreja in 113 BC against the Roman consul Gnaeus Papirius Carbo, like the Teutons at their downfall at Aquae Sextiae in southern Gaul and the C i m b r i at Verecellae. - This tradition remains through the millennia, even the descendants of the Cimbri, the peasants of Himmerland in North Jutland, entrench themselves in the Jutish peasant uprising of 1441,1536 in the wagon castle like the Czech peasants in the wagon castles of the Hussites. The journey is extremely slow, as one cannot live on cattle alone. So t h e y had to stop again and again and build some grain. R. Walther Darrä has described this very well and compared the migration of Germanic peasants with the traditional forms of the Roman *sacrum*.

If we now consider the times that must have seemed to a peasant people in northern Central Europe, especially in Sweden, to be the most suitable time for migration, the following consideration arises. There is no actual winter. It is difficult to move forward with a peasant trek in winter with ice and snow. As long as the mercenary armies of German history, for example, carried their troops with them, winter campaigns were almost always canceled and winter camps were set up. It was only the more recent history of war and the conversion of the professional army to a national army without accompanying troops that made winter campaigns possible. However, many a front-line soldier will still be able to visualize the difficulties of such a trek in winter with wagons and carts - especially when the solid country road fails. In addition, a winter hike places much greater demands on the strength of man and beast, and therefore presents completely different food and drink difficulties than a hike in warmer seasons. - For Sweden, the actual winter can now be postponed to the months of September to February (inclusive); these months are therefore not suitable for a farmer's trek. However, we had also considered that such a farmer's trek would be forced to make a stop along the way to sow and harvest. For Sweden, the harvest falls at the end of August. Thus, in the imagination of a Swedish farmer, such a train must end its journey in time for the sown grain to ripen by the end of August. There is no Central European type of grain that takes less than three months to grow. So if you want to harvest at the end of August, you have to be ready by the end of August at the latest.

have sown in June. Since, according to this reasoning, the months of June to August must be used for farming, but winter is to be reckoned from the end of September to February (inclusive), only the months of March to May remain for the actual migration. This gives us the exact migration period for the ver sacrum."

Let us summarize: Indo-European land law rests on the concept of the odalshofe, the inalienable, indivisible farm, which shares with a number of other farms in a commons, a village or large-scale property. In contrast, the legal significance of the mobile property, the keoä, recedes completely. In the case of overpopulation, when settlement opportunities in the surrounding area do not arise, emigration to found new farms occurs in the form of the emigration of young farmers' sons without inheritance rights, who re-establish the old rights and the old way of life on newly acquired land. Something different and considerably rarer is the forced migration of entire peoples due to storm surges, climatic catastrophes or enemies, who, once they have arrived on new land, settle again in the form of the Odalshofe. The idea of the Odalshofe is closely linked to monogamy and the interbreeding of the family. All of this again results from the basic religious attitude, the concept of an immanent (not transcendent) divine order. Günther summarizes this as follows: "Indo-European piety sees in this world the great coherence of a divine order: an order that appears among the Indians as Rita, over whom Waruna rules, among the Hellenes as Kosmos, among the Italics as rario, among the Germanic peoples as Midgard.

The "finite order* of the world, here man appears placed in a great context of the world order, in the relationship of a trusting friend to his God and fighting with this God in an e t h e r e a l task against all opposing divine powers, recognizing the earth as the field of his nurturing activity of the agricultural kind, plant, animal and human, placed in the finite order that runs through human life as an "order of procreations* to watch over the God-given race in the selected saplings: in such a broad context indo-Germanic essence resonates.

Midgard, the world of finnish order, the field of all man's cherishing activity, consisting of the constant struggle of man on God's side against the powers against Utgard; Midgard is the epitome of the interaction of all divine laws with all human honor.

The Germen, like all Jndo-Germanic peoples, saw their lineage, their clans, as connected to this "finnful order". Hence the veneration of ancestors, hence the sacred hearth fire, the concept of Hestia, the sacred hearth fire, which symbolizes the continuity of the sexes; the world order corresponded to a divine order of procreation: from this order of procreation all the Indo-European laws for the preservation of the species, for the high breeding of the clans, for the purification of the clans from bad c o n d i t i o n s , for the preservation of the racial barriers against the unfree or against foreign subjugated p e o p l e s can be explained."

The Germanic period

There is no doubt that we find almost the same, only somewhat more highly developed farming economy as in the Indo-European period among the Germanic peoples of the time of Caesar and Tacitus. The major legal foundations of the *Odalshof* have not changed, but we may assume that considerably larger parts of the old common land were taken into cultivation. The cultivation of grain is attested by Caesar among the Germanic peoples; thus Caesar destroys the grain fields of the Sugambrians (*de Bello Gallico*, VI, 19), obtains grain from the Ubians (*op. cit.*, VI, 10), attests to agriculture in general among the Germanic peoples known to him, even if he also points out that the Germanic peoples did not make excessive use of agriculture.

Caesar's report on the Suebi ("*de bello Gallico*" IV and VI) was apparently wrongly extended to all Germanic peoples, stating that the Suebi had no private ownership of land and that no one was allowed to live on a piece of land for more than a year and to settle and cultivate it. This contradicts so clearly everything we know about the settled Indo-European peoples that Caesar's passage initially seems completely incomprehensible. It has therefore rightly been called *R. Walther Darré* ("*Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rasse*", p. 122 ff.) and convincingly demonstrated that this was a migrating tribe in which the leaders distributed the land at each resting place in the newly occupied summer stand; "one might even say that this was done to avoid disputes".

had to be". On the other hand, the division of money, which is repeatedly attested to us, is something completely different and quite unique. Tacitus ("Germania", 26) writes: "Conducting money transactions and charging interest on interest is unknown among the Germanic tribes. That is why they are more immune to it than if it were forbidden by law.

Cultivable land is taken from the entire village in an amount corresponding to the number of farmers in the village. The total land is then divided among the farmers according to rank and dignity. The possibility of such a division arises easily from the enormous extent of the arable land. They change the plowed land year after year, and there is still arable land left over. For they do not compete with the fertility and expansion of the soil through work, for example by planting orchards, demarcating meadows or irrigating gardens. The soil must only bear seed. That is why they do not divide the year into as many sections as we do, they only have a concept and name for winter, spring and summer, unknown to them are the name of autumn, as well as its gifts."

In practical terms, this means that in addition to the existing land belonging to the farmstead, the growth of the family resulted in the creation of an area of arable land, which was redistributed each year in such a way that it was divided into several fields and a section was allocated to each farm in each field. We will have to assume that this farming system only applied to villages, as Tacitus (chapters 12, 16 and 16) also attests to Germanic villages. In addition, in the mountains, in the cleared land, but also where it was due to the special character of the tribe, as with large parts of the Saxons, we have the individual farm, where a Gewinn economy does not appear.

Almost everywhere, the farming method is three-field farming. This three-field farming can be found in the fields of the villages as well as on the individual farms. In the village association, the arable land was cultivated on the three fields, which comprised the entire arable land of all the hooves (not counting the nearby, more horticulturally used chopping land of the farmstead), in such a way that each field had to be cultivated for two consecutive years and rested in the third year.

"If, as in fact happened without exception and everywhere, a winter crop was always alternated with a summer crop on the fields, so that one crop was sown in the spring and the other in the fall, and if the winter crop was planted after the rest year, an appropriate distribution of all field work was achieved, which made it possible to devote care to the cultivation of fallow land and the eradication of weeds." (R. Walther Darre, op. cit.) In this way, a firmly established order of village cooperation emerged, a field compulsion in which everyone had to fulfill their task of cultivating two thirds of the ploughed land in a precisely prescribed manner. In order to achieve a uniform sowing time and a uniform harvest time, so that the other farmers' shares of the land were not damaged by teams and people sowing too late, so that conversely the village cattle grazing the stubble did not have to wait during the harvest simply because a single farmer had not yet brought in his harvest, This forced land use also gave rise to the need to set a uniform start date for sowing and harvesting, as well as to neighborly help, such as the village youth working together to harvest the fields of widows or the sick so that they would not fall behind, a mutual help that was also linked to the religious

The belief that it was in the divine order that the dear grain should not "stand outside" over time, or that the earth should not have to wait for its sowing over time.

Here again, the share of the village land is tied to the clan farm, as is still very evident in Scandinavian law. If a Germanic tribe or a migration of young farmers becomes settled again after having set out on a journey for lack of land, it re-establishes this same system of inheritance, indivisible clan farms with division of the arable land, the farms' share of the market, forest, haymaking, acorn mast and master. When the Anglo-Saxons migrated to England in 445 AD, we have evidence that they abolished the old Celtic form of settlement based on the mother lordship everywhere and brought their system of village organization with three-field farming, common land and the village court to England.

We know the same thing everywhere from the Germanic peoples who broke victoriously into the Roman Empire during the Migration Period. They cede a third or two thirds of the defeated Roman population, especially of the large estates run by slaves or cultivated by slave colonists, first settle in the Roman settlements and try to transfer their village system as quickly as possible and thus their organization, which was both free-ranging and cooperative through the three-field economy. Some of these peoples were unable to cope with this, such as the Ostrogoths in Italy, the Gepids and Heruli in the peoples of the Pannonian Plain, today's Hungary, and the Vandals in Africa. In the transition from the army camp of the migratory tribe to the rural settlement, the

worn out. Those tribes, on the other hand, who expand from their settlement area and develop farming land by pushing away the Roman colonies, such as the Alemanni and Franks on the upper and lower Rhine, immediately rebuild their settlement form in the conquered area.

(Note: R. Walther Darre very correctly emphasizes that the situation is completely different for only one tribe. "Only the Burgundians did not take root anywhere, which was also very disastrous for them. They are the only tribe to have established a state on the Rhine that was no longer connected to the land and valued the sound of the horn, the sound of the cup and the clang of the sword more highly than the hard work of the settler. However, it almost looks as if fate had thus fallen so far out of line with the other Germanic tribes that the other tribes were astonished by this state of affairs. In any case, it is remarkable that this tribe, its kingdom and its downfall were dealt with in such detail that the history of the Burgundians was able to survive in legends and heroic songs until modern times." R. Walther Darre rightly parallels the Burgundians, who came from Bornholm as seafarers, with the Normans, who also did not establish peasant states, but formed a ruling class with a strong disregard for peasant labor. - The nobility of Greater Poland, the old Burgundian descent, which in its family legends often boasts of Burgundian descent, may also have been influenced by this disposition, which explains its history).

Insofar as the Germanic peoples were not destroyed by enemies and the climate in the Roman Empire, the

They remain peasants, tied to the Odal farm and the village community with the division of land and three-field farming with compulsory plots, or the individual farm with three-field farming.

The division into estates also remained. From the ranks of the yeomen, individual peasants of inferior, especially noble, descent emerged as nobles, from whom leaders were appointed in times of war and emergency. As these cases of war did not cease among the emigrated peoples, a monarchy developed, although it still had the character of a people's kingship. Among both Goths and Vandals, the king was chosen by the army assembly of the freemen, raised to the throne - and could also be deposed by them. By custom, not by law, the kingship remained in the hands of a dynasty, or at least a clan, descended from the gods, or at least from particularly great gods. In the turbulent period during and after the migration of peoples, kingship also spread to the Lennergermanic tribes. Only among the Saxons did a kingless form of government of a very peculiar kind survive, in which the nobility, freemen and lites, semi-free people, who in themselves had legal capacity but were obliged to render certain services and duties to a lord, each governed the country in thirds through delegates (due to the size of the Saxon tribal territory, the assembly of all the free people of the entire nation was no longer necessary).

But even under royal rule, the old estates, whose separation was based on racial principles, were sharply differentiated from one another: the freemen, the lites and the serfs. There is no marriage between them

community. The freemen are the members of the old folk families and those admitted to the status of freemen. The common freemen or yeomen formed the core of the people, had a right to the allocation of land, formed the core of the army and received full military pay. The aristocratic families stood out from them only through prestige, not through privileges. The Lites, also known as Laten, Lasst or Barschalke, are a hereditary, semi-free class, which includes members of peoples who have voluntarily submitted to war; they have legal capacity, also go to war, but have to render their lord certain services and duties and receive half the military pay. They find those serfs whom Tacitus erroneously calls *8ervi*, but who are not slaves at all, but people who farm on freehold land.

The servants do not form a class, they find themselves unfree, are the property of their master, are either employed by him in the household or employed on his land, are essentially descendants of subjugated peoples, often racially separated and subordinate to the command of their master. They are considerably better off than Roman slaves, have the possibility of owning a certain amount of property, can also buy and sell personally within this framework, but have no real will. The peasant's rule over them is also a relationship of duty and protection; the yeoman is liable for his servants who are under his control.

Collapse of Germanic peasant law

Germanic peasant law received its first serious blow with the establishment of absolute kingship. Apart from those Germanic peoples who perished in the Roman Empire, a completely new form of state developed in the strongest remaining Germanic empire on the European mainland, the Frankish Empire. The old Germanic king had been a people's king, legally bound by the law handed down in the people's community. The Germanic state was not an impersonal apparatus of coercion based solely on command and obedience, but a personal association of loyalty based on the reciprocity of rights and duties. The Germanic kings and princes were not absolute rulers, but personally responsible leaders and trustees of the people. In contrast to the unrestricted and divinely revered position of the Roman emperor, the Germanic king was limited by the law of the people. This changed with the Frankish kings. When Clovis defeated the last Roman governor in Gaul, Syagrius, he came into possession of the huge Roman imperial domains and at the same time took over the Roman administrative apparatus. As the empire expanded, it became increasingly impossible to hold the old popular assemblies of the freemen, but the king had at his disposal a class of the old Roman officials and his followers, some of whom were not free, who were solely devoted to him. Kingship thus asserts itself in purely practical terms over the old freedom of the people. It also asserted itself spiritually. In 496 Clovis takes over the

Christianity. At this moment, since he adopted Catholic, not Arian Christianity, he became the natural protector of the Catholic Church that prevailed among the Roman population (while all other Germanic princes, either pagans or Arians, stood in opposition to the Church of the subjugated Romans). Under Clovis and his successors, a complete Christianization of the Frankish Empire was carried out. For the Germanic yeoman, this meant that the barrier between free and unfree was lifted and marriage between the two was not only made possible, but even encouraged*.

The religious basis of the OdalS right, for which there is no evidence in Christianity, also collapses. The conviction of the manic peasant families that they descended from the gods collapses - on the contrary, this descent or their existence is considered suspicious and questionable, whereas descent from a servant's estate, from the poor and humiliated, is considered pleasing to God. The old religion also marks the end of the old law, for this law is most closely connected with the pagan faith; in its place, in the place of the law that comes from within from the soul of the ruffians and popular tradition, comes the law that is established from without. The collections of laws of the Frankish kings (lex ripuraria, lex salica etc.) still contain large parts of the law of the people, but are issued by order of the king and take their validity from the will of the king. With the Christiani

* St. Paul, Gal. Z, 28: "Here is neither Greek nor Jew, here is neither slave nor free." Rev. Ioh. 5, 9: "You have redeemed us, O God, by your blood from every tribe, language, nation and people."

The freedom of the peasantry also came to an end. Under the Merovingians, the church became a state church, bishops and abbots enjoyed the protection and status of royal officials, and to maintain the church with its large apparatus, the tithe was created, which was levied on all farms. Anyone unable to pay the tithe would have the wiffa placed in front of their house and their farm auctioned off. This makes it possible to seize the clan farm because of a newly created obligation of an individual in the clan. The church also creates for itself the legal privilege of "pars pro arūma". When the old farmer lies on his deathbed, the church requires him to do something to redeem his soul from purgatory. To this end, it grants the farmer the privilege of transferring the farm to the church to redeem his soul. The church then gives it as a fief to the heirs in return for an annual annuity. Draconic punishments against relapsing into pagan customs and traditions made it possible for the peasants to become permanently dependent on the church. The greats of the empire, the counts and lords appointed by the king, founded - in abuse of the ancient Germanic system of temples, in which the yeoman was at the same time his own priest of the gods - ecclesiastical castles, in the profits of which they participated economically. In many cases, unfree clerics in these proprietary churches of the manorial lordships fought against the old yeomanry at the same time as they fought against the monarchy, which had hitherto been overruled by them. Royal power, royal officials and the church thus crushed peasant freedom. The royal retainers (amrusriones) were subject to the same threefold defense as the free peasants, and the king, who ruled by the grace of God, not only enforced the law and

The king is not only responsible for legislation and supreme jurisdiction, but also for the marches and wastelands as well as the supreme domains and desolate lands. The king did not give the land to free peasants, but to his greats and vassals. These in turn ceded the land to peasants, who were obliged to provide services in return. The beginnings of vassalage develop, and instead of the old popular nobility, a service nobility emerges consisting of royal retainers (some of free, some of unfree origin), Roman officials and church dignitaries, who were still married at the time.

Their joint pressure leads to the rapid disappearance of the old yeomanry, whose farms are subject to royal and church tithes, who are deliberately torn away from their manir tradition ("But if ye be Christ's, then are ye also Abraham's seed"). The unfree, on the other hand, rise up and are affirmed. (Rom. 12:16: "Do not strive for high things, but keep yourselves down to the lowly"). Spiritual striving for freedom, striving for greatness and power, appealing to noble descent and placing value on noble descendants were consciously fought against and belittled. The state that emerged in this way was, despite the fact that it made the Germanic idea of allegiance subservient to itself and transferred from personal loyalty to the people's king to an absolute king by the grace of God, a profoundly un-Germanic state in which the Nordic Raffee element with its peasant foundations, its sanctification of the place and its idea of breeding was consciously fought against and bent.

The Carolingian Empire was anti-Germanic in its political ties to late Roman absolutism, its spiritual and religious ties to Christian doctrine with

their basic Jewish roots, the negation of hereditary value, peasant freedom, hereditary court and people's rights. The Frankish empire of the Merovingians and later Carolingians is the first great victory of Uthgard over Mitgard.

In 490 AD, Clovis made the Thuringians subject to tribute. In 496 he defeated the Alemanni, in 507 he threw the Visigoths back behind the Garonne, and in 531 he occupied the Frankish kingdom and southern Thuringia. In 751, Pippin was anointed King of the Franks by the bishops. In 754, this anointment was repeated by Pope Stephen II at St-Denis and Pippin was awarded the title of Patrician of Rome. Between 772 and 804, in a bloody thirty-two-year war, the mainland tribe of the Saxons was subjugated by Charles and deprived of their ancient freedom. The resistance that was put up by the yeomanry under Wittekind until 785, then under other leaders until 804, was the death throes of peasant freedom, the old law and the old faith against Charles and against the Frankish absolute ecclesiastical and Romanized monarchy. Wittekind has rightly been recognized in our day as the last great pioneer of the Frankish spirit against foreign rule; the unknown peasant warriors who continued the struggle twenty years after Wittekind's departure (Frankish sources report that he was baptized at Attigny in Champagne) deserve that name even more. It should be noted that at least some of the Saxon high nobility, in order to reap the benefits of vassalage and the favors of the Frankish greats by the king and the church, were on the Frankish side from the beginning, or joined it. The battle was thus fought solely by the yeomen and some of their lites. The

The unification of all the mainland Germanic tribes in the Carolingian Empire did not create a German Empire, but a universalist Roman Empire, as explicitly underlined by the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 AD.

(Note: This has often been doubted, but is probably true; we also see the princes' conversion to Christianity at a later date, in order to improve their position.

"by the grace of God" over their "subjects", again during the conversion of the Wends. Here, too, the princes became the bearers of the mission, even calling the cross armies into the country themselves in order to eliminate the co-determination of their people if they were not eliminated in time by a priestly-ethnic uprising, as with the Liutices and the Rans on Rügen. The same thing happened with the Prussians in East Prussia, albeit not as drastically, because the Teutonic Knights did not want to and could not give the princes the advantages of the occidental principality).

The state is firmly centralized. The old imperial assemblies disappear more and more, general conscription recedes, vassalage becomes the basis of military service, the great secular and ecclesiastical vassals go into the field. Even the unfree could become vassals. The duty of the peasants to participate in the administration of justice is restricted and reduced to three general court assemblies per year. Aldermen are appointed and the counts are given wide jurisdiction. Law-making emanated from the royal court, with the law of the people taking a back seat to royal law. The laws of the Carolingian period are called capitularies, which are divided into ecclesiastical (*capitula ecclesiastica*), which are associated with ecclesiastical

The king represents the state in war and peace, is the supreme commander of the army by his own right, not by appeal to the people, and is the holder of supreme jurisdiction. The king represents the state in war and peace, is supreme commander of the army by his own right, not by popular appeal, holds supreme jurisdiction, collects fines and can bring any legal matter before his throne, is supreme peacekeeper, who is responsible for punishing peace-breakers in place of the old rural community, grants a special royal peace, appoints the officials alone, is the holder of the right of coinage, customs law and crown property - and, which is extremely important, confiscates the old brands, folk walks, racecourses etc. as royal property. as royal property. He is not a Germanic king of the people, but a Roman emperor. The meaning of the imperial dignity is the realization of the Christian universal kingdom into a kingdom of God on earth, an image of the civitas Dei, the kingdom of God - which is opposed by the civitas terrena, the devil's kingdom, i.e. all non-Christian peoples and people. The king administers the land through his counts, who are endowed with rights and income from the farming villages for this purpose. The count is the military commander, holder of police power and judicial execution, later also county judge, and is also responsible for the collection of taxes and dues. Royal emissaries (missi domestici) controlled the counts' activities. The power of the margraves on the borders was extended even further.

Looking at the situation of the peasantry, the Germanic peasant in the Carolingian period only gained land in the southeast, where the Bavarian colonization

after the defeat of the Avars in 799. At the same time, the incorporation of the Carantanian (Carinthian) and Slovenian Slavs into the empire took place here almost without a fight. In the north-east, however, the land of Wagria and the district of Wihmuodi (today's Hanoverian Wendland) were ceded to the Obotrites, and peasant land was lost, as Charles enlisted the help of the pagan Obotrites in his campaigns against the Saxons, to whom he surrendered these Germanic lands. For the peasant, the Carolingian period marked the beginning of a thousand-year catastrophe. The old law of the people was lost, replaced by royal law, the old popular assembly of the freemen was destroyed or expressly forbidden, as in Saxony, and the old faith was disrupted, persecuted and driven into the wastelands. Thousands of refugees from the Saxons and peasants turned to northern Europe to the Danes, who were related to them, so that the Danish king Götrik could declare on his march against Charles: "I, the Norman, will enter Aachen with army power and make myself, the ancestor, lord of all German tribes." The Danish king, the last defender of Germanic peasant freedom in the southern Germanic region, was, however was murdered "in time", and his successor Hemming made peace. Thus the hope of liberation from outside had also fallen.

The farmer was burdened with church tithes and royal interest and forced into the Fronhof system, where he was then forced to take his old Odalshof as a fief from a Frankish great or from the church. In any case, this created a large estate to which the surrounding farmers had to pay interest. The Fronhof or Salhof formed the center of the estate.

The lord of the manor himself or his deputy (villicus or major), the "Maier", sat on this farm. The "Fronhof" ran its own farm through unfree servants, and the peasants were also obliged to make deliveries and provide services. The farmer was still personally free, the Zinsgut, his former free farm, was only obliged to provide certain services. However, as he was also subject to military service as a free man and, in addition to this, the count and the church used every means at their disposal to induce him to give up his remaining free property and he was repeatedly called up for military service, the old free peasantry gradually disappeared. The farmer gave his farm to the count or the church and took it as a fief from them. In the worst cases, forged title deeds for the monastery or the bishop helped to deprive the farmer of his own property and reduce him to a feudal farmer, especially in the case of clerics who were literate. The peasant thus began to become unfree. This happened particularly quickly in the border regions, as permanent military service led to the dependence of the peasant, who avoided the burdens of military service by handing over his estate to the margrave or other great powers, who took on the burdens of war for him.

(Note: On the other side of the border, for example among the Slavs, we find the same, Wittekind von Corvey testifies that there were no more free peasants among the Wends - in Poland, on the other hand, free peasantry lasted until the end of the 10th century).

The official positions of the Carolingian Empire quickly became hereditary. The counts, essentially from the old people's land, the Margraviate, were provided with a

The king was given landed property in the area of Saxony. This landed property of the king (beneficium) is linked to the office. The beneficium of the official, such as the count, gives a highly personal and inalienable right of use connected with the office. Initially, after the death of each office holder, the benefice reverted to the king; however, as early as the 9th century, the office and thus the benefice became hereditary. The count was transformed from a civil servant into a hereditary landlord, who was also entitled to the sovereign rights of the count's office, jurisdiction, police power, tax collection and military levies. From this sovereign power, which he conceives as a personal hereditary property, or at least a right of use, he pushes the peasants far beyond the royal tax and tithe obligation down into the lower ranks.

As early as the Carolingian period, first bishops and later secular rulers acquired the right of immunity. Immunity meant that no royal official was allowed to enter these lands, and no fiscal levies or servitude for the king could be demanded here; instead, levies and servitude fell to the sovereign. Public authority in such a district is in the hands of the sovereign, who also has jurisdiction, with the exception of the blood ban, which is in the hands of the king. A special official of the sovereign, the reeve (from *aävoearu8*), manages the administration of the sovereign rights.

From these districts, therefore, the peasant could not even appeal to the king or the royal count - he was at the mercy of the arbitrariness of the ecclesiastical or secular landlord.

Summary: The Carolingian period brought the German peasant the loss of popular freedom, popular rights, his own legislation and jurisdiction, the unencumbered and inalienable nature of the farm, political co-determination, the combination of tending the land and tilling the land, of blood and soil, as well as the devaluation of the old customary law, which was considered "pagan" and took a back seat to royal law, the devaluation of his world view, the undervaluation of women (as "Eve's daughter", "vessel of sin"). The Carolingian period imposes a burden on the peasant: Church tithes, royal taxes, hereditary taxes, feudal dues, in Saxony even the position of a son and a daughter in church service, compulsory faith as opposed to the very broad freedom of faith of the Germanic period, royal command, count's command, lord's command, clerical command.

In the pre-Carolingian period, the position of the peasant was considerably better. He was indisputably personally free, his land and farm were free, he had his own legislation, jurisdiction and political co-determination, his pre-Christian religiosity was more tolerant, more poetic - and above all much cheaper and f r o m his own roots, more connected with the people than the foreign church.

The gains compared to this loss were small. The wide frontier expansion of the empire was of little use to the needy peasant; the universalist u n i f i c a t i o n o f Europe was not an advantage for the Rhine-Franconian, Bavarian and Thuringian peasant, but only a burden. The conviction that the church taught him - he always had a strong inner rejection of it - that he possessed the "only right faith", dragged him into incalculable religious battles with the non-Christians.

The Vikings now began wars of extermination for the old gods against Christ, announcing their campaigns with the words "Thor has challenged the Lord Krist to the Holmgang", and to the likewise non-Christian Madjars, Mohammedans and others.

(Note: The separation between northern and southern Germanic peoples, Germans and Scandinavians, the divergence of their languages and cultures is due to the break in customs during the Carolingian period and their forced Christianization, to which the mainland Germanic peoples succumbed and against which the Scandinavian Germanic peoples resisted, as well as the centuries-long battles between Germans and Slavs, which were much more religious wars than ethnic wars).

The Carolingian Empire, disunited, not rooted in blood and soil, was no longer able to hold its own even after the death of Charlemagne's towering conquering personality; the successor states succumbed to attacks from all sides or fell into helpless decay. The successor states succumbed to attacks from all sides or fell into helpless decay; the West Frankish Empire was unable to prevent the Arabs from establishing themselves in southern France, Charles the Bald was defeated by the wild Celtic Bretons at Ballon, the Normans plundered the coasts of the West and East Franks, the Hungarians (not Mongols, but a Turkish-Finnish cavalry people) advanced up the Danube as far as eastern and central France, even as far as Cologne, and the Wenden troubled the eastern border.

The empire of Henry I and the German peasant

The confused years following the death of Charlemagne led to another peasant uprising in the Saxon lands around 840, the so-called Stellinga Uprising, which, carried by the son generation of Charlemagne's Saxon wars, is to a certain extent their last echo. It began in typical fashion with a general assault on the feudal courts and castles as well as the destruction of monasteries and churches, at least in the northern and eastern parts of Saxony - the old peasant freedom and the old faith once again put up a fight. In the end it was cruelly suppressed.

The continued invasions of the Hungarians and the internal dissolution of the empire left southern and central Germany in particular at the mercy of almost complete anarchy, the tribal duchies rose again, and King Conrad I (911 to 918) found himself unable to maintain imperial power during this period of dissolution. The ability to defend itself fell into almost complete disrepair, and the entire Bavarian army was routed by the Hungarians at Bratislava.

The Saxon Duke Henry I, the Finkler or Vogelsteller, who was elected German king after the death of Conrad I, was obliged to force every ninth man to move from the countryside to the newly built castles in order to create a standing army and restore the defense capability of the countryside. The villages were obliged to maintain these castles and their garrisons; how little inclination there was to move into towns and walled squares - which the Germanic tribes of Roman times had already referred to as "stone graves" - within the

The fact that the king often granted remissions of punishment on condition that the peasant population of the time in the German Empire moved to these castles shows how important this was. These were not yet urban communities with self-government, but merely fixed places around which settlers settled under their protection.

In many areas, however, the Carolingian peasant settlement had almost perished, for example the Pannonian Marches had been completely flooded by the Hungarians and largely destroyed, and the horrors of the Avar period had also returned to Austria and the Alpine countries. Only King Henry's victory over the Hungarians at Rietheburg in 933 and finally Otto the Great's victory at K hlenthal in 956 (not "on the Lechfelde", as is often erroneously assumed), averted the Hungarian danger.

The old feudal system of the Carolingian period collapsed in the storms of these struggles, almost everywhere the village self-administration of the peasants reasserted itself, the feudal duties became fixed and precisely defined levies, in many areas the power of the lords was even strongly pushed back, so that we can observe a temporary strengthening of peasant liberties in this period. The development of peasant colonization rights went hand in hand with this. In Austria and the Alpine countries, a peasantry emerged which, composed of free farmers, was only obliged to perform certain military services and to pay fixed taxes. In the colonization villages, however, the Schulthei , Schulze Lokator - in short, the entrepreneur who founded the village - was given a larger farm to which the powers of the authorities remained attached. Likewise, with the seat of the earl, the authority

Over the course of hundreds of years, this led the owners to regard the rights of lordship originally transferred to them purely by the state as their private claim to the land. In addition to the settlement of free peasants in the Ostmark, today's Austria (near Melk, Pöchlarn, in the Krems and Kamp valleys), we also find settlements established by landlords, in which not a group of free peasants under a schoolmaster founded a village, but where the secular or clerical lord called peasants to his estate and assigned them land to cultivate in return for certain taxes. Finally, settlements are found to a very considerable extent in the Bannwald, in the huge forests declared royal, which the peasant began to clear on royal land. Here the peasant was completely free, subject only to the jurisdiction, police power and military duty of the royal count; only much later, when these royal counts became landlords, did this become a basic dependency of the peasant.

In the Bavarian and Bohemian Forests, between very small groups of Slavs who had penetrated here in the The monasteries of Pfaffenmünster, Niederaltaich, Sankt Emmeran and others had cleared the forest here with their serfs. This entire monastery settlement, situated at the gateway to the Hungarian invasions, was largely destroyed by the Hungarians. In the time of the Saxon emperors, the development of the land by the great count families, the Bogener in the Regental, the Vormbacher in the Schweinachtal, the Witigonen, HaunSberger and others, especially the mighty Kuenringe, then developed the German settlement here alongside and on the site of the monastic settlement.

They were driven forward again, deep into the Bohemian Forest, across to Bohemia, clearing the Preseka, the wady border forest between Bohemia and Bavaria. In many cases, the Bohemian princes of the Przemyslid dynasty brought German peasants to Bohemia themselves, such as the so-called Chods in the area of Taus, Tachau and Pfraumberg as border guards - most of the German settlement in Bohemia, however, took place on monastery land and the land of the high nobility. Remnants of the Marcomannic tribes who lived here were also absorbed. Very often the settlement in Bohemia took place in such a way that German knightly families, who received Löwenberg, Rosenberg, Sternberg, Wartenberg, Waldstein (Wallenstein, the general of the Thirty Years' War, came from the latter family), Od- and Waldland, which fled with German peasants under German law. All these peasants were free, had to pay their fixed dues, but had their own right of inheritance, village court for the lower court jurisdiction and could not be deprived of their land by the lords. However, in the union of fundamental and official powers in the hands of the lords, especially the counts, there was the possibility of lack of freedom. The Czech historian Palacky testifies to how strongly this German good peasant law affected the Czech population of Bohemia, stating that within a century almost all Bohemian villages, including the Czech ones, had been o r g a n i z e d according to German law.

(Note: It was only in the course of the later centuries, when the lords of the manor seized first the spiritual, then the secular, and also the lower jurisdiction, that peasant freedom declined. The Hussite Wars temporarily destroyed the power of the sovereigns, the German villages were the most devastated, and the peasants were deprived of their inheritance.

They lost the right of kinsmen, freedom of movement, and finally also the limitation of taxes; they were reduced to serfs, which was confirmed by a decision of the Bohemian Diet of 1487).

Settlement in the Wendish region from the Erzgebirge to the upper Havel was considerably different. The subjugation of the Wendish peoples to German rule, as carried out by Otto I. (936-973), could not be maintained; the northern Wends in northern Brandenburg, Pomerania, Mecklenburg and Wagria broke away completely in the great Wendish uprising of 983. They destroyed the dioceses of Havelberg, Brandenburg and Zeitz as well as the German villages they had established. However, the southern Wends, the Sorbs in Saxony, the Meissen region, the Saale region, the province of Saxony, southern Brandenburg and the Laufitz remained under imperial rule. Imperial rule was exercised here by closely-spaced castles, whose keepers and bailiffs also exercised landlordship over the Christianized Wends who remained in the country, who practically became serfs. The succeeding German peasants were soon in danger of being pushed down into the inferior rights of these serfs. This colonization land was the source of one of the later sources of peasant bondage.

A completely new moment in the history of the peasantry appeared with the development of the towns. The market right of the cities concentrated the exchange of goods in the cities throughout the empire, and in many cases the rapidly growing cities acquired land ownership over the villages and now endeavored to prevent the development or continuation of peasant crafts in order to strengthen their trade. Even under the Salian emperors, many

The more often the Roman campaigns of the German kings expanded. The further the borders of the empire expanded, the more frequent the Roman campaigns of the German kings - necessary to control the head of the German imperial bishops and archbishops, on whose shoulders a large part of the empire's power lay, the pope in Rome - became, the more the transit trade developed, the more a monetary economy developed in place of the old domestic economy. Interest began to find its way into the German countryside. Tacitus had still reported that the Germanic tribes were unfamiliar with interest. Interest contradicted the old economy of the Middle Ages, which was geared to covering the debt; it forced the debtor to produce beyond his natural needs in order to repay interest and capital, and at the same time caused competition to develop. The old principle that everyone should work to earn their

The idea of earning "honest bread" was broken by him. The interest, which was due in the same amount in both good and bad years, did not take into account the changing yield of the land for the urban farmer and the peasant. This quickly gave rise to a strong dissent against interest. This dissent stemmed from the sense of economic ethics that the peoples of northern Europe had developed for centuries; the interest-bearing creditor was seen as a man who sucked the labor of others without working. Under the pressure of this popular sentiment, the church banned the taking of interest as "usura" - it always understood this term to mean both interest and usury. As a church, it forbade the taking of interest from a pastoral point of view - not to protect the debtor, but to protect the creditor. The creditor should not sin by taking interest from his poor brother

and deprive him of his eternal salvation. This ecclesiastical ban on interest could undoubtedly have been a blessing for Europe at the time - unfortunately, there was a hole in it. While the Christian church fought with merciless intolerance against all, even the most insignificant remnants of the old non-Christian folk religion and, insofar as it could not reinterpret them in Christian terms, eradicated them, it had preserved Judaism as the "holy people of the patriarchs", which was only to be converted in the last days of the world. It therefore had nothing to do with the salvation of the Jews; its ban on interest did not apply to them. It thus became an interest monopoly for the Jewish communities; while all other sections of the population were forbidden to take interest, only the Jews were allowed to do so. It was not, as has often been claimed by the Jews, that they were driven into the money trade by forcing them out of all other trades, but conversely, by driving all other competitors out of the money trade, they kept it all to themselves and withdrew more and more from it.

(Note: It is quite amusing to note how eagerly the Adenians have been to use this "privilegium oäiosum", this "When the inhabitants of the southern French city of Cahors, the "Kawerzen", also began to develop the money-lending business, the Jewish communities lodged a lively protest with the permanent bishops against the fact that these Christians wanted to deprive themselves of their eternal salvation. As a result, the Kawerzen were banned from dealing in money and the Jews were rid of a competitor).

The greed of the princes and lords undoubtedly encouraged this development, as did the high taxes they levied on the Jewish communities to protect the Jews,

the Jews were still particularly keen to take the path of usury. The princes were then also very resolute in their opposition to the persecutions of the Jews in the 11th and 18th centuries.

In the 12th century, they r e s i s t e d t h e emerging efforts of the city monarchs and impoverished knightshoods to eliminate the Jewish money trade. On the contrary, they quickly and bloodily suppressed these persecutions in order to m a i n t a i n their high income from the Jewish protection money, and often tried to get Jews into their territories in o r d e r t o enjoy the benefits of the Jewish protection money.

In these cases, too, it was primarily the farmer who suffered, who was driven into debt the greater the demands made on him by the spiritual and secular lords.

There was also a much too little known side effect of this Jewish usury privilege. In most cases, loans w e r e not granted in exchange for mortgages or annuities, as there were no land registers and the pledging of land in the form of a land charge had not yet become common practice, but rather through the transfer of movable pledges (jewelry, appliances, clothing, etc.). The lender had to be concerned that these pledges could not be taken from him again, not even on the grounds that they had been stolen from a third party. The Jewish communities, however, went f u r t h e r . In 1090 they bought

- The Jewish communities of Worms and Mainz were granted the privilege by the unfortunate Henry IV that the o w n e r could not reclaim a stolen item from the Jewish moneylender if the latter swore on the Talmud that he had received the pledged item as collateral. If the owner then wanted the goods back, he had to

He had to pay the sum which the Jew described as a loan given on these goods. This privilege was sold everywhere by the princes to the Jewish communities, sometimes for very large sums of money. The Swabian Mirror (Senckenberg's edition) comments on this in its old-fashioned German: "Nu habent inen di künege ver kaufet wider recht, daz fl mugent leien uff raubig und uff dibig guet." In many regions, the Jews were granted the privilege that their business records kept in Hebrew had probative value in court - no German could read them. In a complaint by the Lesser Polish nobility

- This Jewish privilege had also come there - from the 12th century it is said that the royal castle judges looked at the Jewish account books "like cats at the calendar". However, where the account books were not available, the oath that the Jewish lender had to swear on the Talmud was sufficient. However, the Talmud (Morell 6eak rzz, 14 tiaßak) stipulates: "In monetary cases, perjury is only permitted if it cannot be proven as such by anyone." In an emergency, other Jewish witnesses helped. Again, the Talmud (Okv8(jren-ka-rm8drpar i8z, 7 "If a Jew makes a deal with a non-Jew and another Jew helps him to mislead the non-Jew to his detriment with regard to measure, weight or number, both Jews share in the profit, regardless of whether the second helped the first for payment or free of charge." In this way, the pawnbroker could easily swear every stolen item into his pocket. This licensed dealing in stolen goods, which was again essentially at the expense of the working population, the craftsmen and farmers, and represented a permanent drain on their labor, is also reported in the

lamented early. The preacher of the cross Peter de Cluny says: "What I say is known to all. For it is not by honest farming, not by lawful military service, not by any useful trade that they make their barns full of grain, their cellars full of wine, their bags full of money, their chests full of gold and silver, but rather by what they deceitfully deprive the people of, by what they secretly buy from thieves, knowing how to obtain the most precious things for the lowest price." Much later still, Schenk Erasmus of Rotterdam (1487) said: "This is robbing and torturing the poor man by the Jews, so that he can no longer suffer and God have mercy. The Jews' usurers take hold of even the smallest village, and if they borrow five guilders, they take six times the pledge and take interest from the interest and from this interest again, so that the poor man is robbed of everything he has."

In the period of the Salian emperors and even more so under the Hohenstaufen strengthened the power of the princes in the German lands, the smaller and medium-sized princes, who everywhere asserted the hereditary nature of their landed property and their offices and increasingly eliminated the interference of the central power. The more imperial offices and state offices coincided with large estates, the more the old state rights were privatized. The administration of justice, which was originally exercised in the name of the realm and whose fines served only to maintain the count's or prince's judge, was regarded as part of the prince's or count's property, was bought, sold, mortgaged and used as a source of income. The original obligation to accommodate royal envoys and to undertake transportation and work for the common good became

step by step, the originally free peasant was pushed down into a position similar to that of a semi-free peasant. Above all, he was largely denied the right to withdraw and was tied to the land. In addition, the right of the "ineligible" is extended - the principle originally conceived by the northern Odal peasants as a protection against rape, that the child follows the poorer hand, is interpreted by the lords of the manor to mean that the children of peasant marriages inherit the right of the part with inferior rights, i.e. the daughter of a bonded peasant and the son of a free peasant both become bonded through their marriage, or at least the children of the marriage are regarded as bonded according to the principle: "If you become my hen, you become my cock." In this way, the old yeomanry is being pushed back everywhere, the power of the manorial lordships, which has developed into sovereignty over the land, takes away the political rights of the yeomanry, and the reduction to semi-freedom and lack of freedom begins everywhere. It was most severe in the ecclesiastical territories, because here the monasteries and bishops had the ecclesiastical weapons of interdict, excommunication and the imposition of church fines at their disposal to break peasant resistance.

Only individual free peasant communities were able to hold their own, and as early as the middle of the 13th century the mountain farmers of the old Swiss forest villages began to defend themselves against the efforts of the imperial bailiffs to force them into subservience and deprive them of their jurisdiction. Uri obtained a charter in 1231, Schwyz in 1240, but the pressure from the bailiffs became ever more intense and led to the alliance of the old villages of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden in 1291 to preserve their freedom.

This did not mean a secession from the empire, but merely the elimination of the intermediate authorities. Peasant freedom is also preserved in Tyrol, on the Leutkirch Heath, in the Allgäu, in the entire Frisian tribal area, where a landed hereditary does not arise at all, and also among the Stedinger people at the mouth of the Weser. The Stedinger, as yeomen of essentially Westphalian and Lower Saxon origin, were harassed in their freedom by the Archbishop of Bremen and the Counts of Oldenburg; although they provided troops to the Imperial army and even took part in a crusade, they were accused by the land- and money-greedy Archbishop of Bremen of secretly practising heresy and the cross was preached against them throughout the Empire. Despite heroic resistance, the Stedinger peasant army was defeated at the Battle of Altenesch in 1234; the land was murdered and redistributed by the army of the cross. Peasant freedom is granted among the Frisians of Jeverland, Rüstringen, the land of Wursten, Haveln, and also in the Lower Saxon peasant state of Dithmarschen in West Holstein, which only recognizes a loose dependence on Bremen.

Earlier than in the German Empire, struggles between the peasantry and ecclesiastical and secular feudalism occurred in Western Europe as a result of the earlier development of a territorial principality. The earliest serious peasant war began in Flanders in 1323, where jurisdiction was seized by the lords and arbitrarily abused to suppress peasant inheritance rights and peasant self-government. The Flemish peasants stood up, stormed the castles, forced the sovereign Count Louis of Nevers to abdicate, executed his councillors, closed the churches when the Church imposed an interdict on the country, and wanted "zonder

de papen zalig". The urban burghers joined in, and for five years a thoroughly orderly Germanic self-government prevailed in the country. Church and lords called the French into the country to help them, and in the Battle of Cassel in Flanders in 1328, the Flemish troops, the "Blauwvoeten", were destroyed by the French. From that time onwards, however, the fight against Herrentum and Welschum became the basic melody of the recurring uprisings of the Flemish mobs and still echoes today in the Flemish battle cry:

"Vliegt de Blauwvoet - storm op zee."

Peasant unrest also began relatively early in France, where the remnants of Germanic, Frankish peasantry began to defend themselves against the power of the high nobility and the clergy. At the same time as the Flemish unrest, the unrest of the pastoureaux, half religious, half economically motivated peasant uprisings, began in the Rhone region at the beginning of the 14th century, spreading throughout central France. An open peasant war broke out in the "French" Jacquerie of 1356, the aim of which was openly to "restore the old law" and which turned not against the king but against the intermediate authorities, the clergy and the nobility, and which also found the support of the petty bourgeois mafias of Paris (First Great French Revolution). For almost a year, Paris was in the hands of the Parisian guilds under the Prevaut des Marchands Etienne Marcel, who had the royal councils crushed before the eyes of the heir to the throne and resolutely sequestered the property of the great families and the high clergy in Paris, maintaining his power until his assassination. The second Parisian uprising under the executioner Caboches, in which the petty bourgeoisie and radicals

The fact that theology students from the Sorbonne led a ruthless popular dictatorship in Paris during the reign of Charles the Mad (1380-1422) again triggered peasant unrest in France, which only died down completely with the final disturbance after the end of the Hundred Years' War against England in 1439.

The English peasant revolution of 1381 under Wat Tyler was even more violent than in France. It too was by no means a mob uprising, but a completely orderly uprising of the old Anglo-Saxon peasantry, which had been oppressed into dependency since the Norman Conquest in 1066. The uprising was supported by the wealthy peasantry of the county of Kent, who were in danger of being completely deprived of their liberties. The uprising was directed against the peasant's overly close ties to the tillage, the removal of the old commons, the deprivation of peasant jurisdiction and the abolition of peasant liberties. The push is directed against the oppressive power of the high clergy.

The situation in Denmark was very similar, and here too the pressure from the ruling class against the peasantry intensified. Under King Waldemar Erikson (1326-1330), the first organized uprisings of the Danish peasantry took place due to excessive taxation and a breach of the old rights. The uprising on the islands quickly succumbs. On September 14, 1328, the Zealandic peasant army is annihilated by Count Gerd at ThorSlund on Zealand, a shrine to the former peasant god Thor. In Jutland, the uprising was much stronger, with Bishop Jacob of Ripen and the small Jutland nobility joining in.

The peasant armies fighting for ancient rights still seek battlefields reminiscent of the old peasant-friendly faith - defeated and blown to pieces on Hjesterberg, the "Horse Mountain", an old Wodan sanctuary.

In 1441 there is another fire in Jutland. The yeomen of Vendsyffel, the old Vandal homeland at the northern tip of Jutland, of Himmerland, the old Kimbernland, of Salling and Thyland rise up again, elect Henrik Tageson from the Reventlow family as king of the peasants, storm Aalborg and face the king in a wagon fort near JörgenSbjerg. The old Danish folk song still tells of the battle today:

"The Vendelbauer stood firm, he
didn't want to flee,
He built himself a wagon fort there and
laid down his life in it."

This uprising of builders also succumbed to the greater power of the royal army.

In Germany, on the other hand, these times were relatively calm; there is hardly any talk of any serious unrest in the 1st and 14th centuries. There is a p e r f e c t l y understandable reason for this - the German peasant had an opportunity in the colonization of the East to evade the pressure of the ever-increasingly strong master power on free or almost free land. At most in those areas in which either the master power was already so strong that fie

- I n p l a c e s w h e r e the waves of the colonization movement did not reach, there was major unrest. In addition, the d e v e l o p m e n t o f landlordism into territorial rule was much slower in the German Empire than in the West

Europe. Only two fundamentally new events triggered major peasant unrest in Germany - the stagnation of eastern colonization and the religious reform movement, above all the defeat of the armies of knights against the peasant armies of the Hussites.

The German colonization of the East

Otto the Great's conquests in the Wendish territories had only been partially maintained. The great Wendish uprising of 983 had completely destroyed the German power north of the Havel to the Baltic Sea. It had been a pagan-national uprising in which the old princely houses within the Wendish peoples also largely fell and were pushed aside by the priesthood. The name of the Spleens disappears, apparently a princely allegiance name, and is replaced by the alliance of the Liutizen (literally simply "people belonging to the people") with the center of the old sanctuary of Retra, the "three-horned" city.

Only further south were the Germans able to maintain their position in these times; the castles with their fortifications were sufficient to maintain the German position of power. It was here, in southern Brandenburg, the Laufitz and the Mark Meissen, that the warlike *clashes* between Henry II (1002- 1024) and the already Christian Polish king Boleslaw Chrobry (992 to 1025) took place, which then led to a *temporarily* fixed border in the Peace of Bautzen.

Henry I (919-936) had still tried very skillfully to persuade the Wendish princes to join the empire, and had not at all been fundamentally opposed by them.

They found an inclination towards Christianity, however, on the condition that they did not want to accept the Christian faith. Under Otto the Great, however, the attempt at forced Christianization was made again, the result of which was the Wendish revolt of 982. Wedged between Christian Germany and Christian Poland, this Wendish land, which still clinging to its old gods, was hardly politically viable in the long term. The only question was who would take possession of it first. Henry III (1039 - 1056) pushed the Polish power back behind the Neisse, made himself subject to tribute to the Liutizen League and succeeded in getting the princes of the Obotrites in Mecklenburg to adopt the Christian faith, even though their people rejected it. (Something similar to Charlemagne's "Saxon conversion" is repeated here - the upper classes, who want to enjoy the advantages of feudality, are prepared to join the Christian West, while the masses still refuse). In 1056, there was a second Wendish uprising, again led by the priesthood of the original god of spring, later the god of war, Radegast, in which the imperial army was crushed at Pritzlawa, Brandenburg fell into the hands of the Wends, the Christian faith was again eradicated in the Obotrite land of Mecklenburg ten years later, the bishopric of Ratzeburg was stormed and the Wendish bishop of Mecklenburg was even personally sacrificed in the national shrine of the Wends in Retra.

Under Henry IV (1056-1106), during his difficult battles with the pope and his many disputes with the Saxon tribe, Wendentum was completely on top, gaining possession of considerable stretches of land.

in Holstein and made the Saxon district of the North Albingen subject to tribute.

Here, the conversion zeal of the church and the hatred of the Wendish priests that arose against it had created a pronounced battlefield. Relations between Germans and Slavs in the Middle Ages are seen in the wrong light if they are viewed solely from the perspective of these battles. There was no national hatred between the two racially and linguistically closely related large tribes of the same origin; after the battles of Henry II, there were as few serious clashes between the empire and its feudal state of Poland as there were between the Wends and Germans in the area south of the Havel. The struggle between the Germans on the one hand and the northern Wends on the other was much more a religious struggle than a struggle between nationalities. Every time the religious fanaticism of one side grew stronger, the fire of this struggle flared up again. Lothar of Supplinburg, who came to the throne as German Emperor Lothar II (1125-1137), as a man of the papal party and Duke of Saxony, successfully extended ecclesiastical power into the Wendish territory; again it was Wendish princes who attempted to Christianize their people with his help, such as the Obotrite Henry in the Billunger Mark in western Mecklenburg, Pribislav in Brandenburg and a Wendish prince Widekind in Havelberg. At the same time, however, the great rulers of German colonization in the east also appear, the Schaumburg counts with Adolf I (1110) in Holstein, the Wettins with Margrave Konrad in Meissen in 1123 and the Ascanian Albrecht the Bear in Salzwedel in 1134.

In 1135 the Polish king has to swear an oath of fealty to the Empire for Pomerania; this is very remarkable,

that the Christianization of Pomerania was carried out on Polish orders, but by a German bishop, Otto von Bamberg, without resistance. Now the still pagan Wendish area, northern Brandenburg, the Obotrite country and Rügen with a piece of Western Pomerania, the so-called Land of Barth, is surrounded by Christian areas. Here all missionary work remains in vain.

We also know a very remarkable statement from Otto von Bamberg; this bishop repeatedly recommended monastic life because "people had multiplied so innumerably". In contrast to England, where we have a reasonably useful reference for the population and its increase from the same period in the old land register, the DomeSday-book, we do not have similar reference points from the German Empire. But one thing is certain - we can expect a strong increase in population in every period. What was not the case at the time of Otto the Great is now happening - the land is becoming too small for the German peasant. This happens from west to east. Flanders seems to have been the first area to experience land shortages. The Stedingen farmers had already been largely Flemish settlers, and their migration eastwards along the old "Ox Road" must have begun relatively early. Around 1106 we find that Dutch peasants were employed by Archbishop Frederick of Bremen for the survey of moorland on the Lower Weser, and the migration of the Fläminger or Fläminger peasants then attracted a large number of Rhenish and Westphalian peasants. They were looking for land, and free land at that. At home, the old peasant freedom was already in decline. An Alsatian legal source still says: "We free peasants find the princes comrades"; in the Sachsenspiegel of the

Knight Eike von Repgdw was still explicitly stated:

"Borsten, vrie Herren, seepenbare lüde, de fin glik in bruk und in wergelde", in the Saxon Mirror the peasants also raise the fifth shield (the first was raised by the king, the second and third by the clergy and secular princes, the fourth by the barons). In the course of time, however, the yeomen were pushed down politically; they no longer appeared at the imperial diets; they no longer attained full imperial status - above all, however, the secular and ecclesiastical lords succeeded, in addition to the tithes and levies to which they had previously been entitled, in acquiring public law powers, police sovereignty, jurisdiction, first in head and hand, then also in skin and hair, i.e. the jurisdiction of the lower courts. i.e. the lower jurisdiction, which until then had been a matter of peasant self-government. The whole period is not very peasant-friendly - the rising feudal nobility and the wealthy bourgeoisie of the cities look down on the "stupid peasant". The increasing overpopulation - at least a relative overpopulation for the time -, the hopelessness for the younger sons to get land, their reluctance to work on the farms as unfree or semi-free serfs, created the pressure of the German peasant to the east. What broke out in France in the Jaequerie, indeed already in the bloody peasant riots of the Pastoureaux, spread eastwards in the German Empire, across the imperial border. Eastern colonization thus postponed the social struggle for more than 250 years. The emigrant song of the Low German peasants still echoes the desire to escape the backward conditions in the old homeland:

"Nar Oostland willen wij varen
nar Oostland willen wij mee
wol over de greune Heide
tHere's a better way."

The political will to power of the great Saxon Duke Henry the Lion took up this idea. During the reign of Conrad III (1138-1152), the war of annihilation against the rest of the pagan Wends began. The great Wendish crusade of 1147 was characterized by the ecclesiastical struggle against the last non-Christian tribe in Central Europe. From the perspective of presenting the *civitas dei*, the divine state on earth, the church, against the *cliviras* *Oiaboli*, the devil's state, paganism, convinced that every dead pagan brought them one step closer to paradise, the crusading army devastated western Mecklenburg, made up of German, Danish and Polish crusaders.

Much more effective and significant was the factual advance of the German peasants themselves, which took place with less violence, indeed completely peacefully in entire regions. As early as 1143, Count Adolf II of Schaumburg in Holstein had called colonists into the country after taking over the land of Wagria in East Holstein, which had been almost depopulated in the fighting. Pastor Helmold von Bosau reports in his "*Olrromca slavorum*": "But because the land (of eastern Holstein) was desolate, he sent messengers to all countries, to Flanders and Holland, to Utrecht, Westphalia and Friesland, so that all those who felt oppressed by a lack of arable land would come with their families; they would receive very good, spacious land, rich in fruit yield, fish and meat as well as comfortable living conditions.

pasture in abundance. In response to this call, a countless crowd from various tribes set out, and they came with their families and their possessions to the land of Wagria to Count Adolf to take possession of the land he had promised them. And the Holsten were the first to receive residences in a very safe area west of Segeberg. - The Darguner Gau was settled by Westphalians, the Eutiner Holländer, the Süffel area by Frisians. The Plöner Land remained empty of people. However, he gave Oldenburg and Lütjenburg and the other coastal areas to the Slavs for settlement, who became subject to tribute." In 1156, the rest of Wagria, the area around Oldenburg, was also settled by Germans. Helmold reports again: "Thus the work of God in Wagrien increased, and the count and the bishop supported each other. Around the same time, the count also rebuilt Plön Castle and founded a (naturally German) town and market there. But the Slavs, who lived in the surrounding villages, withdrew, and Saxons came and lived there. And the Slavs gradually disappeared from the land."

In 1160, the independent Obotrite prince Niklot falls to Henry the Lion. After a few desperate attempts at uprising, the Obotrite land is subjugated to the Saxons, remaining under the rule of the old Wendish dynasty, which, however, having become completely Christian, now takes more of the colonization into its own hands. As early as 1171, Helmold writes: "The whole area of the Slavs, which begins at the Eider, where the border of the Danish kingdom is, and extends between the Baltic Sea and the Elbe through long stretches of land as far as Schwe rin, this area, which was once made barren and desolate by predatory raids, is now by God's grace the land of the Slavs."

Grace has become, as it were, a single large settlement of Saxons, in which towns and villages are being built and the number of churches and servants of Christ is increasing." The land, which had been devastated without borders during the wars, quickly filled up with German settlers, with the local princes, whether of German or Slavic descent, themselves calling this immigration into the country. Duke Heinrich Borwin I of Mecklenburg (1178- 1226) himself said in 1225: "We left the land of Parchim, a desolate and impassable land devoted to the service of evil spirits, to Christian settlers whom we invited from far and near." Here in Mecklenburg, however, it was also the only one of these areas in which the German settlement faced a bloody battle of extermination. Everywhere else, the German peasant did not come as an intruder, but was summoned by the sovereigns. This was the case in Pomerania, whose dukes were personally enfeoffed by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1181 and whose Duke Barnim the Good (1220- 1278) not only stood out as a minstrel, but also largely fiddled up the deserted Pomerania, especially the huge border forests against Poland, so that 140 villages ending in -Hagen, German colonist villages, were created on cleared land in Western Pomerania alone.

Parallel to this was the settlement in Brandenburg, where after the defeat of the Polish vassal Jazko von Köpenick - the Polish power had advanced so far at that time - an extensive settlement of German farmers began in 1157.

The German settlement in the Meissen region and in the Lausitz was completely without a fight; these very sparsely populated areas were peacefully settled by German colonists.

While the Wends had essentially taken over the sandy soil and the lighter soils, which were more easily accessible with their wood plowing, and had also always preferred the fish-rich areas of the Spreewald, the German settlement tackled the hitherto uncultivated huge forests.

In an inheritance dispute between the Polish king and his relatives, the Piast dukes of Silesia, the latter had sought and found support from Frederick Barbarossa and were reinstated in their possessions in 1163, after the Polish king Boleslaw Kedzierzawy had already sworn fealty to the empire in 1159. These Silesian Piasts, strongly influenced by German culture, brought German monks, burghers and peasants into the country, so that in a few decades Silesia was filled with a German population, which absorbed the sparsely populated Slavic population and melted away with it, with the exception of certain parts in the upper Laufitz, in the Wendei and certain parts in Upper Silesia, where a Polish population with spillovers into Central Silesia remained. There is no question of national antagonism or even enmity here, rather a long-lasting symbiosis developed. When the great Mongol invasion of 1250 once again devastated Silesia and a large part of the population in northern Upper Silesia was killed, a second smaller German colonization began when the Bishop of Neisse (incidentally from the great Holstein house of Schauenburg) once again filled the devastated area of the diocese of Neisse with Germans.

In addition to these areas, the political
nian kings, an extensive peasant settlement in Poland proper,
first settled by the German monasteries and

The German clergy, some of whom were still German, but also called upon by the country's greats and kings.

The reason was always the same - the economically more efficient German farmer was in a position to pay higher taxes. He was sought after and could therefore make demands before he came. All of these peasant settlements were therefore founded under German law, whether it was Bishop Gerung of Meissen who placed 11M "free men who came from Flanders" near Wurzen, or the monastery of Heinrichau in Silesia, which expressly stated when founding a small town: "We are founding the town under German law because we are intent on the improvement and reorganization of our country, as is proper." Just how quickly this settlement took place is shown by the fact that in 1257 Count Günzelin von Schwerin received the land of Daber, today's district of Naugard in Hinterpommern, as a fiefdom from the Pomeranian duke, with 4,000 hooves, and just five years later 800 of these hooves were settled in German. All of these German villages are occupied by personally free peasants, who are given full ownership of their land in order to "own it forever". The price for the land was paid by the settlers in the form of fixed payments in kind and interest in the form of perpetual, irredeemable annuities to the landlord. The peasant community expressly reserved jurisdiction over the village for itself through its Schulzen. Johann von Buch, the great Brandenburg electoral chancellor, who wrote the commentary on the Sachsenspiegel, the "Richtsteig Landrecht" (and "Richtsteig Lehnrecht") expressly testifies that all these peasants were to be free personally and with their property, that they were only entitled to this "hereditary right".

zinSgütern" it was not possible to sell the land without the permission of the land lender. He also testifies that even those who had been "Grundhold", i.e. subject to a duty to pay rent, in their old homeland became free men when they moved to the new land. The landlord could not increase the burdens and interest. The legal relationship between the two was thus completely clarified - the landlord, who had once given the land to the farmer in perpetuity and received a certain amount of money each year in return, and the farmer, who could enjoy the land in perpetuity in return for the payment of this interest and bequeath it as a peasant. In this way, colonization in the East created a class of free peasants whose economic prosperity and freedom lasted well beyond the Reformation period. As late as 1541, Thomas Kantzowius, the town chronicler of Wolgast, was able to write: "The peasants are well off and rich in this land (Pomerania)... that is why they consider themselves free and do not want to give in to the common nobility."

The process was somewhat different, albeit in the main features

the German settlement in Austria. This area, which until then had been relatively sparsely populated, was also flooded with new colonists in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries. Around 1200, it was already a purely German country; further south, however, only the German monastic, urban and knightly settlements in Styria and Carinthia advanced, while the peasants remained behind; the German-speaking island of Gottschee, which still exists today, always remained an isolated stronghold of German peasantry within the Slovenian Kram, which therefore never quite reached the Adriatic. Gottschee was established around 1360.

To a large extent, Bohemia will also continue the

German immigration, especially under Ottokar II (1253- 1278), was filled with German settlers in the peripheral regions. This highly talented prince from the Przemyslid dynasty, who was completely absorbed in German culture, was himself a prominent minstrel and owned Austria as well as Bohemia and Moravia, was a true peasant king. He aspired to the imperial crown, but lost his crown and his life to Rudolf of Habsburg at Dürnkrut on the Marchfeld in 1278 - in the long term a serious loss for the German Empire, and probably also for the German peasant settlement. If he had become emperor, not only would the Czechs have been won over to the empire, but Bohemia would also have become an essentially German country, and above all the Habsburgs with their unfortunate policies would never have appeared in German history. By the time Charles IV (1343-1378) once again ruled the empire from Bohemia, the eastward flow of German settlers had already ebbed away.

Early on, called by the Hungarian kings as protectors against the wild Pechenegs (a Turkish equestrian people on the lower Danube), Rhine-Franconian farmers, the so-called Transylvanian Saxons, had been called to Hungary and had settled here as free farming communities and outposts of culture.

The Teutonic Knights had conquered East Prussia in heavy and bloody battles against the local population of the Prussians, who belonged to the Indo-Germanic language tribe, from 1230 until the defeat of the last defensive district of Sudauen in 1283. By the end of the 14th century, no fewer than 1400 German villages and towns had been established here. The remaining inhabitants were for the most part settled under German law.

(Note: "When the German peasants immigrated to Prussia

verten - the first documents on the founding of German villages date back to 1282, 1284 and 1287 - they were, of course, neither well-subordinate nor serfs. Led by a locator, the settlement entrepreneur, they came into the country, summoned by the Order. The l o c a t o r , a well-to-do, enterprising man, had concluded a contract with the Order in which he undertook to found a German village on an area given to him by the Order, to occupy twenty, forty, sixty or more hooves with free German peasants, to whom the Order transferred ownership of the land in accordance with Culmian law. The peasants could sell these hooves or bequeath them to their children. The Flemish law of inheritance, which was incorporated into the Kulm land law, stipulated that all children inherited in equal shares, sons and daughters. Whoever took over the farm at the father's death, be it the eldest or the youngest, son or daughter, had to pay the siblings, but also had to take over the burdens o n the farm."

"These charges consisted of an interest rate roughly equivalent to the

ordinary rent of the time. It could not be increased arbitrarily."

fWalter zur Ungnad "Deutsche Freibauern, Kölner und Kolonisten", p. 156.^ In addition, however, these farms were also subject to the obligation to provide certain labor s e r v i c e s for the nearest Ordensburg. In addition, there were peasant estates that did not have to pay interest, but whose owners were only obliged to perform military service and to serve as aldermen. In a sense, an intermediate stage had emerged between the landed gentry and the peasant farmer).

Courland, Livonia and Estonia were no longer seized by the German peasant settlement, only seven

German colonist villages were established by the Order in the Golding district of Courland.

On the other hand, the Order was completely successful in asserting itself with German towns and peasants in Eastern Pomerania, the so-called Pomerelia, which had been won by the Order; the fact that the Order took settlers wherever it could get them is shown by the mass influx of Polish peasants into present-day Masuria before 1410 and, on the other hand, the settlement of Lithuanian yeoman farmers in the period between 1419 and 1466 in north-eastern East Prussia; both groups merged into a unity of will with the German population.

This enormous expansion of the German peasant in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries did not remain without repercussions on his social situation. The population pressure in the old heartlands of the empire became less and less, the peasant became rare and valuable, the possibility of moving eastwards, which he possessed, was a decisive weapon in his assertion against the claims to power of secular and spiritual lords. In the 12th and 13th centuries, we have periods in which there are reports of a marked opulence of peasant life. This continued well into the Reformation period.

There is a second reason for this - we wonder today where the small towns, often tiny nests in the Middle Ages, were able to build their grand cathedrals, ornate town halls and impressive walls. The reason is a very peculiar one. It seems like a fairytale legend and yet it is pure truth. Archbishop Wichmann of Magdeburg found himself in dire financial straits in the 12th century. In order to replenish his coffers, he came up with the idea of forcing his subjects to pay

At the end of the year, he had to hand over the coins in his possession. He had these coins confiscated and re-coined and re-issued with a loss in value of around 20 percent - 20 percent were his cash earnings as "Schlagschatz". The pious man was highly perplexed by what developed from this almost primitive taxation. The closer the day came at the end of the year when the pious man had the coins recast for his benefit, the more the money burned in people's hands; they could calculate month by month, day by day, that the money was worth less. So, since it could not be saved, it was spent with full hands. If we still see four and five floors on top of each other on the gabled houses in the old towns today, this dates back to that time. As people c o u l d n 't save money, they saved m o n e y and the rich people were nicknamed "whistleblowers". Above all, they were made to work. Work did not follow money, but money f o l l o w e d work. The guild masters couldn't help themselves from orders; a poor guild, such as that of the sack carriers of Dan zig, earned so much that they were able to donate the shouty, brightly painted windows of St. Mary's Church. The money raced through this medieval e c o n o m y like an electric current. The journeymen were not fighting against unemployment, but for the "blue Monday". The wealth of the working classes became so great that the Saxon dukes Ernst and Albrecht had to decree in 1482 that "the workmen and mowers should be satisfied if, in addition to their wages, they receive four meals twice a day, at noon and in the evening, soup, two meat dishes and two vegetables. They were not to be given more than cheese and bread and no other cooked food with their morning and evening bread between the grindings".

In the account book of the provost Jakob Pamperl of Klosterneuburg, who p r e s i d e d over the monastery from 1485-1509, the wage for each day laborer is set at 14 denarii a day plus board, while a pound of ox meat was only supposed to cost 2 denarii, the price for "am gemainS Par Mannschuh und am gemainS Par Frawenschuh" was set at 15 denarii each, the maker's wage for an ordinary pair of pants was set at 10 denarii, for a peasant skirt at 24 denarii.

This currency, the only one on German soil over the centuries, as primitive as it was, w h i c h favored labor against money, was fought most fiercely by the p r o f e s s i o n a l money lenders, the Jews. As early as 1500, the p r i v i l e of the "soliaus perennlus", the "eternal penny", bought by the Jews from the emperor, began to take effect in some parts of Germany, prohibiting the periodic withdrawal of the treasury. The old movable currency also had a favorable e f f e c t on the peasantry, Wern- Her der Gärtner, Neidhard von Reuenthal and other writers of the Middle Ages know many things from these centuries to report on the prosperity of the p e a s a n t r y , which, with fixed and measured payments, which were usually quite low, and favored by this currency system, had become highly prosperous with the possibility of emigration for the younger sons. At the time of the Reformation, the Alsatian Jakob Wimpheling wrote: "Through wealth, the farmers in our region and in some parts of Germany have become lavish and exuberant; I know farmers who spend so much o n the marriage of sons and daughters that you could buy a house and a farmstead with a small vineyard for it."

The setback

The prosperity of the farming communities was particularly evident among the peasants who had remained completely free, especially in the prosperous Frisian region. From the Zuidersee to Jutland, the Frisian farming communities, including Dithmarschen in Lower Saxony, remained free of any princely power, even though the Bishop of Bremen had subjugated and exterminated the Stedingen peasants in that diabolical war of extermination around 1243. From the Netherlands to Denmark there was still freedom, a rich and proud freedom, of which an English monk wrote in 1230: "For the sake of freedom they risk their lives and choose death rather than servitude." The same Frisians who did not put up with worldly lords also largely asserted their will in relation to the church; they rejected priests from outside the country, preserved the old church law and did not tolerate unmarried priests working among them. The East Frisian League, founded in 1222 in East Frisia at Aurich on the Upstalsboom, declared in its new statutes in 1323:

"If any spiritual or secular prince gives us peace

If the Frisians attack the Ammerland and want to subject it to the yoke of servitude, we want to defend our freedom together and against them with an armed hand." It was therefore not easy for the princes to subjugate this territory; the Count of Ammerland, a feudal lord of Henry the Lion, was defeated by the Östringer Frisians in 1153, the entire army of knights perished and was buried in a mass grave at Schakelhave near Jever. Henry the Lion himself was defeated by the same Östring Frisians near Barkel in 1156 - for a hundred years, this was followed by a mass grave.

this country was left in peace by the princes, so that the Ostringers 13 27 informed the King of France:

"We are not subject to any worldly lord and do not want to be advised by anyone to place themselves above us."

The Frisians of Rüstring were equally independent, defeating the Counts of Oldenburg at Koldewärf in 1368, fighting against the Counts of Oldenburg and the Bishops of Bremen, until they finally had to surrender in 1418, but rose up once again and, after decades of peace, were finally overpowered in 1499 by Count Johann von Oldenburg with his huge army of recruited lansquenets, the so-called "Black Guard". But no sooner had the lansquenets departed than they rose up again, kicked the reeves out of the country and became independent again, following Count Edzard the Great of East Frisia. This time they were no longer successful. Although they had barricaded themselves with women and children in a redoubt piled high with blocks of ice near Hartwarden, Duke Henry the Quade (Evil) of Brunswick, led by a traitor from their own ranks, came to their backs, they were completely defeated and had to conclude a peace of submission at EsenSham, from which they were unable to free themselves, even when they attempted a new uprising a year later with the help of the Count of East Frisia.

The Land Wursten on the left bank of the Weser, also a free Frisian farming country, was overrun with war by Duke Henry's son, the Archbishop of Bremen Christoffer, in 1517 and, after a defeat at the Wremer Tief in 1518, the Wurster farming communities were forced to make peace, in which they not only paid tithes, but were also forced to pay the archbishop's castle,

the "Morning Star", in their land near Weddewarden. But the archbishop demanded more and more, and his cathedral dean Hinrich Klenke so abused the peasants that they simply beat him to death on the SieverShamm. In 1524, the archbishop then broke into the country again with a band of farmhands, plundered it thoroughly, stormed the churchyard of Mulsum and, after murder and fire, threw down the land. Some of the Wurster peasants fled the country as "Ballinge", returned once more in the fall of 1525, but were then finally defeated near Lehe, the land was once again thoroughly devastated, and the Wurster peasants had to take the oath of homage to the archbishop in Lehe on September 7, 1525, with their fingers raised, bareheaded and barefoot. The episcopal bailiffs, crib riders and Gebderpreffer now came into the country and never left until the archbishop's see of Bremen, like so many others, was overturned by the Reformation. Their successors, the princely officials, did no better. At that time the verse came up:

"God preserve dam and dyke, Siel
un Bullwark un derglieken, Darto
unse Hab un Good,
And an honest sausage of blood!"

The strongest and most tenacious of these free peasant states was Dithmarschen, which was not in Frederick but in Lower Saxony. In 1227 they had helped to break the Danish power in the battle against the Danish king Waldemar on the side of "Count" Adolf IV of Holstein, the Counts of Schwerin and the Bishop of Bremen on St. Mary Magdalene's Day, on the field of Bornhöved. Since then they have been under a very loose dependency of the Archbishop of

Bremen. They did not put up with foreign princes in the land. In 1319, they defeated Count Gerd of Holstein at Oldenwörden, ruled themselves with self-elected judges and jurors, did not allow lords and nobility to arise, and the Holstein dukes could not master them. Duke Gerhard VI of Schleswig invaded their country with a large army in 1404, was also lucky enough to collect a large haul of cattle, jewels and equipment from this very wealthy peasantry and was in a hurry to get out of the country again, so that his field commander Hinrich von Ahlefeld was already mocking: "The Duke had a hare skin tied in front of his head." But the duke was right: on the return march in the late evening, his army was overrun by the Dithmarschers in the Hamme on a narrow path between swamp and moor and completely killed; Detlev von Lilieneron, the great Holstein poet, described this battle in the Hamme in a harrowing way. Since then, St. Oswald's Day has been a public holiday for the Dithmarschers, and they also enforced that the fortress built against them, Delf-brücke, had to be razed, as their song sang:

"Tredet harto, ji stolten Dithmarschen,
Unsen Kummer, den Wille wi wreken.
Wat hands gebuwet Han,
You can just talk to the hands."

After the counts of Oldenburg had had so much success with their "black guard", King Hans of Denmark also decided in 1500 to take this famous Landsknecht force into his service and use it to force down the Dithmarschers. With about 30000 men of these lansquenets under the field commander

man Jürgen Schlentz against about 6000 Dithmarscher, he moved into the country. No sooner had he advanced for a few days than the weather changed, snow and hail fell, the previously frozen roads thawed, and the Dithmarschers had opened the floodgates of Barsfleth and Ketelsbüttel and let the floodwaters into the country; the huge army train rolled laboriously through the narrow and muddy road towards the small town of Hemmingstedt, the

The "black guard" led the way, the Holstein knighthood behind, and finally the enormous train and the wagons taken as a precaution to transport the loot. Then they came upon a high redoubt across the road, from which the heavy guns were firing into the densely packed ranks of the "black guard". The lansquenets were unable to form an assault group on the narrow road, got into a scrum and pushed each other off the road into the mud. Junker Schlentz personally tried to tear his men forward in an open attack, was thrown from his horse and pierced by the Dithmarsch councillor Wolf Jsebrand, then the Dithmarschers rolled up the helpless shouting lansquenets, threw themselves at the densely packed Holstein knights, who could not get away to the rear because of their own wagons, tore them off their horses and literally killed almost the entire army. The flower of the knighthood of Denmark and Holstein remained in this muddy path, in the pig moor of Hemmingstedt. King Hans emerged from the slaughter with great difficulty.

"Gistern weren se alle rike,
Now they're standing here in the
mud. Now the ghosts are carrying
the high motor, now the ravens are
chopping the eyes out."

In the church at Oldenwörden and Hemmingstedt, the Dithmarschers were able to hang up around a hundred captured flags, and the chroniclers claim that they put their dogs on golden knight's chains.

"Dithmarsen schölen Buren fln?

They may well be men! - FriSke,
riske, strong swords,

De ehr Hövt in den Wulken dregen. - "

However, it was also the Dithmarscher's last victory. They were granted peace for 59 years. In the meantime, the Reformation came to Dithmarschen. It brought a major internal change. The old clan associations, the Schlachten or Kluften, which had held the farmers together throughout the country, declined in prestige, the contrast between rich and poor arose, the Lutheran preachers fought among themselves, making the farmhands in particular dissatisfied with the large farmers, the Superintendent vr. Smedenstedt preached openly in the Meldorf church in 1553 against the 48 regimental lords, the supreme authority of Dithmarschen, indeed he did not hesitate to call on the King of Denmark and his brothers in the name of God to establish a "lawful regiment of princes" in Dithmarschen. He began to terrorize the people's assembly, the supreme court of Dithmarschen, the old order dissolved, vr. Smedenstedt and his friends carried the clash into the country. Christian III, King of Denmark, nevertheless maintained peace until his death in 1559. But Duke Adolf, his brother in Schleswig-Holstein, began the battle anew immediately after the king's death, incited by Smedenstedt, who had meanwhile advanced to court preacher. He had the good fortune to find in the old, noble, greatest war captain of the da

The count of Dithmarschen, Count Johann von Rantzau, was quite possibly the best general of his time. Johann von Rantzau invaded Dithmarschen in 1559 and found a poorly organized resistance in which each parish tried to defend itself alone and was defeated. He finally stormed Meldorf on June 3, 1559, threw down the rest of the Dithmarschers, finally defeated the Dithmarschers once again near Heide and inflicted heavy losses on them. Several thousand men had still gathered at Wöhrden, but their preachers persuaded them to hand themselves over to the king, because they themselves wanted better and higher pay for the preachers in princely service, and so on June 13, 1559, the brave Dithmarsch people offered to submit. On June 20, 1559, the people of Dithmarsch took the oath of allegiance to the duke bare-headed and unarmed. There was considerable fear among them that they would be massacred, as they were here in their thousands, but Johann von Rantzau prevented such a slaughter. Duke Adolf, a spiteful fellow in other respects, could not refrain from shouting to the peasants as he rode away after the oath had been taken: "Nu gahet to Hus und etet war warmen Kohl!"

That was the downfall of peasant freedom in North Germany; from that day on, no free soul breathed between the Low Countries and Denmark. The princes and lords had finally triumphed.

In Denmark itself, a peasant revolt had broken out a little earlier in the course of the so-called Earls' Feud, which is not dealt with here. Again it was the peasants of Jutland who, under the leadership of a fellow fighter of the wild Christian II, the last Union King of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and the

old seabird Sören Norby, the "skipper Clement", rose up in the course of the difficult struggles for the throne in 1533. At the northernmost corner of Jutland, the old Vendsyffel, the gray-bearded old sea robber skipper Clement brought up the peasants. The gluttonous bishop Stygge Krumpen hid in the oven of his Børglum monastery. On September 14, 1533, Skipper Clement occupied Aalborg with an army of peasants, seized the monastery property everywhere with the declaration that the whole world belonged to God and that it was not understandable why he still had to have property in Jutland, demanded that the noblemen should prove to the people's assembly what good they and their ancestors had really done for the country, that they had such great possessions, and took it from them. In the pouring rain of October 15, 1533, he completely routed an army of the Danish high nobility under Erik Banner and Holger RosenkranS near Svendstrup, reintroduced the old Germanic district organization and self-government, built up a thoroughly orderly peasant state system and might have been successful, had not Count Johann von Rantzau, who later became the Dithmarscher's feeder, finally crushed him with a superior army and abolished the peasants' freedom. Skipper Clement was executed in Viburg on September 9, 1534. He died bravely and without seriousness.

King Christian III and the victorious Danish

The high nobility took full advantage of this success. The peasants on estates were condemned according to Harden, i.e. district wise, in the king's mercy and disfavor, the guilty as well as the innocent. The innocent could then subsequently prove their innocence; if they were unable to do so, they had to forfeit body and goods at the hands of the king.

to be dissolved. Most of the free farms thus came into the possession of the Crown, and the owners could only remain on them as tenants. Hvitfeld, one of the historians of the time, himself states that the payments amounted to "enormous sums". Since that day, peasant freedom had also died out in Jutland. When Duke Christian also fell on the islands in 1556 and the Hansa was finally defeated and Wullenweber was executed, the power of the high nobility there also came to an end. Nowhere was it enough for the peasants to take independent action. The following period was characterized by an increase in burdens and a decrease in peasant independence. Around the middle of the 17th century, the situation was such that 44 percent of all peasant farms in Denmark and Jutland were under manors, compared to only 19 percent in Schleswig and 55 percent in Holstein; in Funen as much as 90 percent, in Scania 56 percent and in Jutland 51 percent. The term "free land" became synonymous with aristocratic or ecclesiastical land.

The demise of the Frisian independent farmers

The peasants' struggles of the early 16th century in the rest of Germany are in part only a parallel phenomenon, in part they are really special developments.

The decline of the medieval peasantry in the rest of Germany

A large number of factors came together to bring about the decline of the peasantry, which had reached a certain peak of economic prosperity and self-government in the 15th and 14th centuries.

The most important reason for this was the decline in imperial power. The weaker the emperor became, the more the empire's power waned, the more powerful the individual princes became and the more rights they acquired. Step by step, the sovereign powers, coinage law, customs law, police sovereignty and high jurisdiction passed into the hands of the individual princes, counts, bishops, monasteries and lords. Land ownership and public powers are combined in the manner of the "sovereignities". This becomes particularly oppressive in the Rhine Valley and Upper Germany, where these sovereignities are small and their pressure is therefore much more direct on the peasants.

This is also where Roman law first appeared, introduced by the law schools in Italy, with its emphasis on princely power. In its late form, Roman law granted the emperor the unlimited right to legislate - the same right was also claimed by the princes. This gave them a legal opportunity to set aside the old, **u n r e c o r d e d** customary laws, to present the "older" Roman law as **-aS** correct, the German legal custom as an abuse of the law.

This was associated with capitalism, the implementation of pure monetary thinking, all the more so as the perpetual penny also became established. Roman law favored this development. It favoured the creditor over the debtor, money over labour and, above all, no longer recognized the old law of the land. Once upon a time, the farmer had entrusted his farm, the original Odalshof, to a lord as superior property for protection and protection, and taken it back from him as inferior property for use and food. Roman law constructed, or rather the Roman jurists constructed, from this purely capitalistically the

Concept of "preearium", "possession by petition", i.e. a surrender of the farm "on the lord's favor", whereby the farm could be "reclaimed" by the lord of the manor at any time. The legal relationship between landlord and peasant, which was still based on a mutual fiduciary obligation, was thus turned into the worst kind of legal relationship through a nasty twist of the law. The landlord's demands can be constantly increased by the threat of seizure of the farm. At the same time, the stronger the perpetual penny appears, the more usury sets in. Early capitalist thinking does not recognize the sacredness of peasant labour, but only implores private legal contracts that must be fulfilled.

There is a clear contrast between the German sense of justice and the Roman sense of justice. Karl Motz (Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte, Heft 48, 1-24) once contrasts the principles of law:

German law:

Statutes cannot supersede natural law (Saxony law).

A word is as good as a letter and seal (peace law).

Jurisdiction is the free choice of the lords.

Gemeiner Nutz goes before sunderlichen Nutz (Saxon law).

No one can grant land without the permission of the heirs (recurring).

The heir is born, not born (recurring).

Roman law, on the other hand:

The law was collected in fifty books.

Thus it is fixed forever (Ulpian, Digests).
Talking in black and white.
No farmer can be a judge.
The owner can do with his property as he pleases
(Gaius, Institutions).
Plots of land are purchased goods like slaves and
animals (Ulpian, Digests).
As it is written in the will, so it is legal (Twelve
Tables Act).

This also changed legal thinking, and the proverbs before and
after the advent of early capitalism contrast with each other with
shocking clarity.

Before early capitalism:

Common use goes before common use.
Nobility comes from the farmer.
One man, one word.
Usury is forbidden by our Lord God.

With the advent of early capitalism,
however:

The I and Me, the Me and Mine, reigns alone in this
world.
Old money makes you noble.
Money is the second blood of man. Cash
is the watchword.
No one is a slave to his word.
Whoever says that usury is a sin has no money,
believe it freely.

At the same time, however, there was also a revolution in the
monetary system; with the discovery of America

The money was devalued on a large scale, and the interest and rents that knights and lords, secular and ecclesiastical greats received from their peasants were largely devalued, insofar as they were not in kind. This also put them under a certain amount of pressure to increase the output of their peasants, so that their recourse to Roman law was partly based on economic pressure, which became all the stronger the more useless the knights' armies became. The small knight himself tried to throw himself into agriculture and acquire farms in order to secure himself, while the prince, forced to pay the expensive lansquenet armies, fell into debt. Driven by this indebtedness, they tried to extract more money from their peasants, as the defensive towns were reluctant to do so, or sold state offices and rights to the large landowners, who in turn, having paid dearly enough for these rights, tried to extract the money for them from the peasants. Finally, the colonization of the east came to an end, and even declined due to the weakness of the empire. The Hussite uprising in Bohemia severely set back the Germans there; the defeat of the Teutonic Knights at Tannenberg against Poland-Lithuania in 1410 and the loss of further territories of the Order to Poland through the Second Peace of Thorn in 1466 also closed off the route to the north-east. In Poland itself, the rule of the nobility against the king became ever stronger. The Imperial Diet of Thorn in 1520 decided that from then on every peasant should work one day a week "for the lord", regardless of old freedoms, and in response to a complaint from the peasantry the king declared himself incompetent to intervene in the relationship between peasant and lord of the manor. The number of independent peasants in the Polish Empire declines steadily.

The people of the city are now in a state of complete serfdom, despite the warnings of the far-sighted priest Skarga:

"The innocent blood of the peasantry, which is shed beyond all measure, will one day demand revenge!" This bad Polish peasant law radiated over to East Germany, influencing the organization in East Prussia, Silesia, Brandenburg and Pomerania.

The Jewish usury in the countryside is able to settle in with the farmer who is so burdened.

The great preacher Geiler von Kayserberg complained: "Are the Jews better than the Christians, that they will not work with their hands? Are they not under the saying of God: 'By the sweat of your face you shall earn your bread! To be usurious with money is not to work, but to toil others in idleness. "

The Jewish question, in which farmers and craftsmen were equally affected, also sparked the first unrest. Again and again, the working people forced the expulsion of the Jews against the will of the princes and authorities, who were well fed by the Jewish protection money that had grown out of the people. Thus they were expelled under pressure from the people: 1432 from Saxony, 1435 from Zurich and Speyer, 1438 from Mainz, 143 from Augsburg, 1450 from the Duke of Bavaria, 1453 from the diocese of Würzburg, 1454 from Brno and Olomouc, 1457 from Schweidnitz, 1458 from Erfurt, 1468 from Neisse, 1470 from the archbishopric of Mainz. And yet they kept coming back...

As the 14th century drew to a close, the situation of the peasantry deteriorated. The great Hussite War of 1419-1436 had a significant impact on the Upper German peasantry.

but even before that, in 15-1, there had been peasant unrest around Gotha, where the peasants were particularly opposed to the church's three tithes, the tenth share of everything bearing stalks and stems, the tenth share of vegetables, fruit, root crops and wine, and the tenth share of animals. Since then, peasant unrest has flared up again and again; at the same time, it is linked to the general dissatisfaction with state and church conditions. Neither the Council of Constance nor the later reform councils had been able to reform the church in head and members; the weakness of the emperor's power, the arbitrariness of the princes and, above all, the ruthless abuse of hunting rights by the lords of the manor had resulted in general bitterness. Pamphlets circulated, such as the "Reformation of Emperor Sigismund", which was highly regarded as the testament of the popular emperor and demanded equal coinage, the old law, the suppression of Roman jurists and the elimination of secular and ecclesiastical princes. The art of printing brought ever more such pamphlets to the countryside, and from the Swiss mountains, where the power of princes and lords was supported (even if there were still enough serfs on urban and monastic land in Switzerland), freedom beckoned and a sharp wind blew.

"Whoever increases Switzerland - the master's avarice!"

went an evil verse in Swabia. Some of the lords were simply shameless. Aneas Sylvius reports that, before he ascended the papal chair as Pius II, he had to write to Emperor Frederick III's chamberlain in Austria with the significant name of Un- gnad: "Your arrogance is a complaint.

But far more unbearable is your rapacity, with which you have oppressed everyone and made everyone liable to pay interest. Everything has been for sale with you. The poor have had to give their blood for your glittering delicacies and delicious meals. We pass over the women who were led into your house at night and the ravished virgins."

Johannes BohaemuS AubanuS correctly describes the real situation of the peasantry as it had to become under the concentric pressure at the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century: "The last class is that of those who live in the countryside in villages and farmsteads and are therefore called country people or rural people. Their situation is rather pitiable and hard; they live apart from one another, humbly with their dependents and livestock. The huts are made of mud and wood, rise little above the ground and are covered with straw; these are their homes. Small bread, porridge and boiled vegetables are their food, water and whey their drink. A linen skirt, a pair of boots, a brown hat is their clothing. The people are always without rest, hardworking, unclean. They bring to the nearby towns for sale what they gain from the fields and cattle, and buy what they need here, for there are few craftsmen among them. In the church, of which there is usually one for each farmstead, they all come together on feast days and hear God's word and mass from their priest, after noon they discuss their affairs under the lime tree or in another public place, the younger ones dance to the music of the piper, the old ones go to the tavern and drink wine. No man goes out without weapons... T h e y g i v e their lords their wages, they give their wages many times a year, build the fields, sow the fields... There is nothing,

what this slavish and miserable people shall not owe them (the masters), nothing that eS, as soon as commanded to do without danger, refuses to do: the guilty party shall be severely punished."

Peasant unrest flares up again and again. They first appeared in 1476, when in Würzburg the so-called "PfeiferhanSlein" from Niklashausen near Württemberg called for struggle and resistance against the great and powerful in sermons which this simple shepherd described as an invocation of the Virgin Mary. He is arrested and burned to death on the orders of the Bishop of Würzburg. The unrest then subsides. The situation in Kempten Abbey in the Allgäu became much more critical. Wilhelm Vogt writes in his "Prehistory of the Peasants' War": "In the area of Kempten Abbey, peasant torture had long been indigenous; it was systematically practiced there. The ecclesiastical lords of this landscape still outdid the secular lords in their cunning and d e c e i t f u l n e s s in cheating their subjects of their rights and freedom. When Abbot Johannes took over the government around 1480, some believed that he would m a k e good and forget the many and gross injustices of his predecessors through just rule; but soon the sheep turned into a wolf. He surpassed the methods of the previous abbots, reducing the free peasants to interest and the tenants to serfs. Anyone who resisted this tyrannical arbitrariness was tortured by the ecclesiastical court until he gave in or left his house and farm. The tenants who leased an estate had to make themselves comfortable with unaffordable burdens. The free people were cheated of their freedom wherever p o s s i b l e ; fatherless and motherless orphans were robbed of their inheritance and forced, together with their guardians, into serfdom.

write. The abbot inherited half of the serfs after their death. The interest and taxes were arbitrarily increased to an immeasurable amount and whatever else was unjust. The complaints about this were countered with shameless openness: "The abbot is only doing it like other lords." A sympathetic testimony to the behavior of the other lords! The unbearable pressure exerted by the abbot led to a meeting of the peasants at the old Malstatte in LuibaS in 1491, the year of a severe famine to which the spiritual lord paid no heed. The peasants also sent their own messenger to the emperor, but he never arrived to present their grievances. The abbot obtained help from the Swabian League, the association of princes and lords of Swabia, whose troops attacked the peasants and forced them into submission. In the same year, peasant riots also broke out in Holland, in the counties of Drenthe, Overijssel and West Friesland, as a result of hopeless overtaxing, the so-called "cheese bread riots", because the peasants carried a loaf of bread and a cheese in their banner as the least they wanted from their hard work. This uprising was also suppressed.

In 1493, a peasant conspiracy in Alsace, which had not progressed beyond the initial stages, was just as quickly quelled by surprise arrests.

The situation in Carinthia, Styria and Kram was much more serious. German and Slovenian peasants were equally under arbitrary pressure from the great lords and imperial officials. In addition, these areas were threatened by the Turks and overburdened with the burdens of war. The first uprising took place in the winter of 1502-1503, the second in 1513 - the lords always succeeded, as the chronicler says, in "creating a series of pawern eyn gepiesz" (a

teeth). But when, after the suppression of the uprising of 1513, a huge new tax burden was to be imposed under the name of land tax, the German peasants of the linguistic island swore allegiance to God with the Slovenian peasants and open war broke out. Under the battle cry "stara pravda" ("old law"), around 80000 peasants took up arms in a short time, demanded from the officials whether they wanted to leave the people with the old customs and turned to Emperor Maximilian. Emperor Maximilian agreed with them and promised himself, the peasant-friendly lord, to come to the country, whereupon the peasant army disbanded and went home in peace. Before the emperor arrived, however, the officials proceeded with arrests. The outraged peasants took up arms again and stormed the castles, almost all of which in Kram and Carinthia went up in flames. The emperor, bitter at the unrestrained uprising and influenced by the high nobility, instructed the Styrian governor Siegmund zu Dietrichstein to restore order. A large army of lansquenets moved in, and the uprising was crushed in a bloody slaughter on St. Michael's Day. A lansquenet song from that time still tells the story:

"Listen wonderfully! the bear is
so unruly!

in a short time, war and strife
came from far and wide, and the
cries of the people were heard
from outside:

stara pravda!

Another one wants to talk,
his masters are now well silent!"

The senseless slaughter of Dietrichstein and the mass executions destroyed the prosperity of these countries for a long time.

The Alsatian peasant conspiracy in the Bruch rhein, headed by Joß Fritz, one of the most interesting figures among the peasant leaders, developed into a trouble spot; the secret society of the Bundschuh appeared throughout the upper Rhine valley and worried the princes, no matter how much the authorities tried to get hold of the conspirators.

In Württemberg, a much more threatening movement emerged. In this state, the power of the nobility was relatively low. The duke's bourgeois officials ran the government and administration, often men who had risen rapidly in rank and were unpopular with the people due to their luxury and extravagance. In fact, this "respectability" of an early capitalist nature was hated by peasants and workers. The secret society of Poor Conrad, which only accepted workers and small farmers, originally formed in Beutelspach and then became particularly strong in Schorndorf, began to o r g a n i z e discontent, and in 1514 the first uprising took place in the Rems Valley, which developed quite peacefully. Duke Ulrich was forced to call a Diet to hear the complaints. The parliament demanded that the hated ducal councillors should be removed, the enormous expenditure of the ducal budget c u r t a i l e d and the administration cleaned up. Very serious conflicts ensued; in the end, the duke emerged victorious through the use of force. Arrests and executions put an end to this uprising. A much more moderate peasant movement in the Ortenau in Baden,

which merely put an end to the worst abuses of hunting

right was suppressed just as senselessly and bloodily. But the pressure increased. The impoverishment of the small knighthood as a result of the decline in monetary values caused them to press further on the peasants, while the indebtedness of the princes brought forth ever new taxes. Above all, the abuse of princely rule, both secular and spiritual, became completely unbearable. It is very significant that it is precisely this abuse of landlordism that has repeatedly incensed the peasants. Prof. von Below ("Territorium und Staat") writes very correctly: "The fact that the Peasants' War took place in the area of the small territories corresponds to the character of the peasants' complaints: the rebellious peasants also complained about the simple knights, about private landlord demands, but preferably about the oppression and drudgery of the lords. The first uprising in the Great Peasants' War was immediately directed against a sovereign, the owner of the county of Stühlingen. According to the Zimmer Chronicle, the uprising was sparked by an order issued by the countess to the subjects (not just the landlord's unfree subjects!) to collect snail shells so that she could wind yarn on them. It remains to be seen whether this particular message is true; it perfectly captures the spirit of the local lords."

In addition to these drudgeries and maliciousness, in addition to the unthinkable abuse of the once free Germanic peasant for autocratic purposes, it is above all the religious excitement of the time that triggers the unrest. On 31. October 1517, Luther, still convinced that he was reforming the old church (not founding a new church), posted his 95 theses against the abuse of indulgences on the castle church in Wittenberg. 1518

The Reformation of Zwingli, who took a stand against the indulgence preacher Samson, began in Zurich in Switzerland, 151- Luther argued against Johann Eck in Leipzig, in 1520 Luther published his three reformatory writings, including above all "On the Freedom of a Christian", in 1521 he stood before the Diet in Worms, his translation of the Bible (there were also a large number of others) spread through the masts. Old, secretly whispered traditions of Hussite, Wielefite and other doctrines, which proved that the peasant's lack of freedom was against God's word and commandment, awoke anew. At the same time, the secret mistrust of the old freedom and the old law, and probably also of the old pre-Christian faith, which had sanctified the peasant's earth and heritage, had not yet died out. Mistende were enough and found each other as well as they had once found each other in Westphalia in the Fehmhöfe. In his account of "German Politics", von Galera rightly points out this background: "In the Peasants' War*, two main currents flowed together: one of popular, secular Christianity in the cities, which was more radical than that represented by Luther, and one of the peasantry, which was free of Christianity. Here in the flat countryside, Christianity was still widely viewed with hostility as something alien, imposed by Boniface and incomprehensible. Just as the urban "Heretics* of the secular-ethnic atmosphere of German Christians The "wizards* and "witches* came from the rural, non-Christian, old-people atmosphere. The "paganism* of the peasants was drowned out by the radical Christian voices of the townspeople who knew how to read and shout. It should not be inferred from this that the " old folkish paganism* did not exist.

would have been. The desecration of churches, the mockery and derision that the peasants made of Christian symbols speak louder than all the academic proclamations and declarations of urban educated leaders. The anger of the peasants was not only directed against people, against lords, priests and monks, it was also directed against the churches, against the altar and the crucifix!"

A report from the Bavarian chancellor to his duke (although Bavaria remained calm in the later Peasants' War!) dated 8 March 1522 shows just how unsettled things were a few years before the outbreak of the Great Peasants' War:

"May Your Grace reflect on the plagues that are now arising everywhere. A booklet has been printed for the common man, in which he is admonished for many reasons to throw off the servitude in which he has hitherto b e e n frightened by the tyranny of kings, princes and lords, and that he should do a good work. All this comes from the villain, Luther and Francis' (Sickingen's) followers. If there h a s b e e n a tremendous slough and rebellion against the princes for many years, it is now."

The knightly uprising of Franz von Sickingen and Ulrich von Hutten in 1524, which was suppressed by the great princes, intensified the unrest. Duke Ulrich of Württemberg, expelled from his country by the Swabian League and exiled in Switzerland, blew into the fire from outside, and the economic, political and religious unrest grew ever stronger. As early as 1522, it was said that a new confederation w a s being formed in the Lake Constance region. The extraordinary conference of the Swabian Confederation held in Ulm on February 5, 1525, already found "the indignations of the common man are already extremely difficult". In the Allgäu in the prince abbey of Kempten

The uprising began, again directed against the brutal methods of the prince abbot. The flames quickly spread. By the end of February, the country from the Allgäu to Kauffbeuren was insurgent, only the Bavarian possessions were able to hold on. In Upper Swabia, in the Leipheim region under the preacher Magister Jakob Wehe, the local farming communities, the so-called Leipheimer Haufe, g a t h e r e d . They negotiated with the Swabian League, who deliberately delayed the negotiations until they had gathered their warriors under Jörgen Truchsess zu Waldburg. War was now unavoidable. In a short time, Upper Swabia, the Black Forest and the Mainz region were in revolt, the Prince-Abbot of Kempten was expelled from his castle of Liebenthann, Rothenburg, Würzburg and the Elector Palatine and the Bishop of Speyer were forced to join the peasant cause. Almost all the provinces, however, acted separately; that was their weakness. Even the so-called Twelve Articles, which were drawn up in Upper Swabia at the beginning of 1525 and contained the overall demands of the peasantry, were not accepted by everyone. Nor were they radical. They demanded free election of pastors (Art. 1), reform of the largest tithe, abolition of the cattle tithe (Art. 2), abolition of serfdom (Art. 5), free fishing and hunting rights, unless the forest and water had been legally purchased from the lords (Art. 4), free use of wood (Art. 5), "Fifthly, we also find half of the wood a burden, for our lords have appropriated all the wood to themselves, and if the poor man needs something, he must buy it for double the money. Our opinion is that whatever wood, clerical or secular, they have not bought, should revert to the whole community and be given to each one of them.

dec community should be quite free to take its necessities into the house for free." This calls for the restoration of the old Holzmark. The

Article 10 demands once again the restoration of the commons: "We have been complained about the tithe, that some have appropriated meadows and fields that belong to a community. We will take them back to our common, unless the matter has been purchased honestly; but if it has been purchased unfairly, we shall settle amicably and fraternally with another according to the nature of the matter."

The 6th and 7th articles call for an easing of the lord's services, the 8th article for the redemption of manors and farms that cannot bear this: "We demand that the lordship should have these estates of honorable people inspected and create a fair payment so that the farmer does not do his work in vain, for every day laborer is worthy of his wages." The 9th article calls for just justice, and the 11th article demands the abolition of the death penalty: "In the eleventh article we want to abolish the custom called the death penalty altogether, never to suffer nor permit the disgraceful taking and robbing of widows and orphans against God and honor, as has happened in many places in various forms. From what they were supposed to protect and shelter, they have taken and robbed us, and if they had had a little courage, they would have taken it. God no longer wants us to suffer this, but it should be completely abolished, no one should be obliged to give anything for it at death, neither a little nor a lot." These were all reasonable and practical demands; in the end, the farmers even agreed that if one or more of the articles did not meet the

Bible to d r o p them. The seal of the peasantry - with the old Hagal rune - was under the piece of writing.

The lords deliberately dragged out the negotiations, some of the minor nobility joined the peasants, Götz von Berlichingen at Hornburg with an iron hand, but with half a heart and treacherous thoughts, Florian Geyer zu Geysersberg at Giebelstadt Castle with full conviction. The so-called Helle Haufen of the Odenwald and the Neckar spread successfully into Württemberg and surrounded Weinsberg, where the Obervogt Ludwig Helfrich Graf zu Helfenstein sat. While the negotiations were still in progress, the army of the Swabian League under Georg Truchsess von Waldburg attacked and destroyed a group of peasants near Leipheim. The Helle Haufen then called on Count Helfenstein to s u r r e n d e r and sent him two heralds on Easter Day 1525, asking him either to evacuate the castle or to send women and children out for safe conduct, as they would then be stormed. Count Helfenstein, following the evil method of denying martial law to the peasant army, had the heralds shot. Weinsberg Castle was then stormed, Florian Geyer planted the peasant flag on the heights, Count Helfenstein and his knights were captured and hunted through the spears on the orders of the peasant leader Jäcklin Rohrbach. This was the court martial form of e x e c u t i o n at the time, which corresponds to today's execution by firing squad. The peasants were wrongly accused of this act by hate-filled atrocity propaganda - it was perfectly in order under the laws of war, as Helfenstein had had parliamentarians shot and had thus placed himself outside the honorable laws of war.

However, disunity soon arose in the peasants' camp, and Ge sindel all too often followed the moves of the peasant army and sought to rob where they were fighting for a fairer order. The peasant governor of Württemberg, Mathern Feuerbacher himself took action against these marauders of the revolution. However, the peasant army was no match for the Swabian League in military terms. It lacked cavalry, its veteran soldiers were too few, the peasant monkeys were not skilled enough with weapons, and in many cases there were no piece masters for the captured guns. Florian Geyer did manage to repel Georg Truchsess von Waldburg in the battle of Gaisbeuren, but after his withdrawal to Franconia, Truchsess succeeded in deceiving the peasants in a shamefully misleading treaty of Weingarten and forcing the Upper Swabian peasantry, and on April 25 also the Hegau and Black Forest peasants, to withdraw. The Württembergers, on the other hand, took part in the open battle between Sindelfingen and Böblingen on May 12, 1525, in which they were only defeated after a one-day battle. After this battle, the captured peasant leaders were executed in a diabolical manner and Jäcklin Rohrbach was roasted to death on a slow fire.

On June 2, 1525, Truchsess von Waldburg confronted the Hellen Haufen for the second time at Königshofen an der Tauber and defeated them after a valiant resistance. Florian Geyer and his black mob were driven back to Ingolstadt Castle, where they fought their way to complete annihilation in the castle and churchyard. Florian Geyer, who emerged from the slaughter with around 200 men, fell in the field near Rimpar on June 9, 1525, the last great peasant leader in southern Germany. Now Truchsess, the "peasant

today", as he was called, also defeated the resistance of the Allgäu people, who put up a brave fight at Schratzenbach and were only defeated after being almost completely annihilated. Their remnant capitulated, locked up in an old folk castle, and had to go home with their white staffs. The leader of this uprising, the Knopf von Luibach, was executed. In Alsace, parallel to the uprising on the right bank of the Rhine, there was also a major peasant uprising, which was mainly directed against the monasteries and ecclesiastical lords. These summoned the French Duke Anton of Guise, a bigoted and fanatical opponent of all spiritual and personal freedom, who also had to deal with a peasant uprising in parts of his French Lorraine. The army of these foreign troops trapped the Alsatian peasants under Erasmus Gerber in Zabern, but had to grant them an honorable surrender with arms and flags. When the peasant army withdrew, the Duke of Baden fell upon them and the Alsatian peasants were routed in a bloody slaughter. Margrave Ernst von Baden was so enthusiastic about this that he called on the Duke to intervene with his French, Greeks and Albanians on the other side of the Rhine.

An uprising of miners, small farmers and workers around Langensalza, Mühlhausen and the Harz mines, unleashed separately from the large southern German peasant movement by the enthusiastic preacher Magister Thomas Münzer, was defeated by the united army of the Landgrave of Hesse and the Dukes of Brunswick and Saxony near Frankenhausen on May 15, 1525. A bloody criminal court punished the uprising. Magister Thomas Münzer was tortured at Heldrungen Castle and executed in the princes' camp,

after he had admonished the princes before his death to treat their subjects more humanely.

Martin Luther in particular had turned against Münzer. The peasants had placed particular trust in Luther's Bible translation and preaching, and they had expected special support from his moral authority. At this moment, however, the Old Believers and New Believers were a closed phalanx against the freedom of the German peasants. Luther published his pamphlet "Against the murderous and rapacious ranks of the peasants", demanding that "they should be smashed, strangled and stabbed, secretly and publicly, whoever can, as one must beat a mad dog to death". He did not care about the justified complaints of the peasants -

"We should ask for them to obey; if not, there is not much mercy here. Just let the guns go under them, otherwise they will make it a thousand times worse". He sided completely with the authorities, i.e. the petty princes, from whom he expected protection for his church, and in this hour abandoned the fighting people in a great cause. It is obvious that the bishops and abbots of his opponents could not be expected to go easy on the peasant. They felt all too strongly that too much of the old peasant freedom, of the old knowledge, was alive in the background of this movement. That is why the peasants saw them as their worst and most hateful enemy. Herbert Wiebe writes very correctly (Odal, August 1924, "Der Bauernkrieg und die nationalsozialistische Erhebung"): "The anger of the peasants was directed even more against the church than against the nobility, to whom they granted partial protection. A centuries-old grudge seemed to break through in the rage of destruction against churches and monasteries. It was the tradition of the old freedom

and rights had not yet disappeared, from those times when no priesthood oppressed and exorcized free peasants. Now it turned out how little the foreign cult had really taken hold of the peasant's soul."

Almost independently of the actual uprising in Swabia and Franconia, there was an uprising in Tyrol and Styria. These territories contained fewer small dominions, but in addition to the H a b s b u r g dynasty, the archduchy of Austria, the duchies of Styria and Carinthia, the county of Tyrol and Carniola, there was only the large possession of the archbishopric of Salzburg, particularly poorly administered and with strong social pressure, also included in Tyrol was the bishopric of Brixen, to the south the bishopric of Trento with a partly Italian population, finally the small county of Bruneck and in Carinthia the small bishopric of Gurk. As long as Emperor Maximilian lived (until 1519), Tyrol was thoroughly peaceful, and the emperor himself used to say: "Tyrol is a rough peasant flax, but it's good to be there." It only became critical here when the young, fanatically Catholic Archduke Ferdinand t o o k over the country in 1521. The peasantry was still r e p r e s e n t e d in the estates and Roman law had not yet penetrated the country. The Archduke, completely in the grip of his court Jew Gabriel of Salamanca, began to curtail the old freedoms.

Things got underway much more quickly in Salzburg, whose Archbishop Matthäus Lang, greedy, wasteful and up to his ears in debt, sucked the country dry. Here, in the spring of 1525, the farmers and miners rose up and demanded an end to the arbitrary taxes, the death tax, the body tax, the ordination tax levied on the ordination of every priest, demanded free parish election and

above all, the removal of the Roman jurists and legal judgment according to the custom and practice of the land. The archbishop had to retreat to his fortified castle, the Höhe-Salzburg, while the peasants, nobles and staff carried out a new, sensible administration. The diocese of Brixen was tidied up in exactly the same way. In Tyrol, under the pressure of the unrest, Archduke Ferdinand offered negotiations at a "hasty Diet" on May 23, 1525. In the meantime, he had brought in troops to deceive the legal Tyrolean peasants. Albanian soldiers had already moved into the Bistum Trient on the bishop's orders and numerous peasants were burned alive by the bishop as rebels. The Tyroleans then rose up again, especially as the Archbishop of Salzburg had also broken the truce and had the small mining town of Schladming massacred by Croatian horsemen. The uprising found the right leader in Michael Gaismayr, who had previously been secretary to the Bishop of Brixen and had gotten to know the clergy well enough. He certainly belonged to the secret association of those in the know, to which the peasant chancellor of Tübingen Wendelin Hipler, the Weigand of Miltenberg and other spiritual leaders of the Swabian and Franconian uprising had also belonged. He organized the disappointed and extremely angry peasantry. In his pamphlet "Das ist die Landesordnung, so Michael Gaismayr gemacht hat im 1526 Jahr Jan.", he gave them the best political program ever created in the entire Peasants' War. This Land Ordinance no longer contains complaints solely because of the abolition of old abuses, but a government program of which it has rightly been said that "it contains more healthy insight into the needs of the country, more honest savagery, and more honesty in the way it is governed."

The "records of the remedy and progress contained more practical knowledge of the means than the total records of the spiritual and secular princes of Tyrol, the archdukes of Innsbruck and the chief shepherds of Trento, Chur and Brixen put together". GaiSmayr d e m a n d e d that "all ungodly men who persecute the eternal word of God, who burden the common poor man and prevent the common good, should b e rooted out and abolished" - this goes against the Bishop of Brixen and his followers. All freedoms should be "abolished if they are contrary to the word of God and falsify the law, in which no one should be favored over another" - this goes against the feudal privileges of the nobility.

All c i t y walls, as well as all castles and fortifications in the country" w e r e to be fortified - this was in opposition to the archducal castles and the castles of the nobility.

The word of God should be "faithfully and truly preached everywhere in GaiSmayr's country and all sophistry and jurisprudence should be eradicated and the same books burned" - this goes against the deeply hated Roman law, but also shows that GaiSmayr, who often enough spoke of "the people's republic", opposes the old one as the people's leader and new sovereignty.

The courts everywhere in the country, as well as the parishes, are to be counted, so that they can be provided for with the least possible expense" - this goes against the judges' spuriousness and the excess of lazy bellies and the benefices of the clergy. This state ordinance calls for completely modern and practical things in order to

Hundreds ahead of their time, permanently salaried judges and court officials, even the advocate, the lawyer, should become a civil servant, establishment of a university, abolition of internal customs duties, use of the surplus of tithes, which are not necessary to support the parish priests, for the establishment of organized care for the poor, which should above all take over the care of the poor. Gaismayr demanded: "The monasteries and German houses (houses of the Teutonic Knights) should be turned into hospitals." He even drafted a whole program of land improvement by a Land Council to be set up to put bridges, hydraulic engineering, country roads and paths in order. "Mosses and meadows and other barren places in the country should also be made fertile and the common use should not be omitted for the sake of some selfish persons (meaning the hunting lords). The mosses from Merano to Trento could all be dried and cows and cattle and sheep could be kept on them, and much more grain could be grown in many places, so that the country would be provided with meat."

Gaismayr takes up the old Allmendrecht again:

"In every court, every year at the appropriate time, a whole congregation is to be ordered to clear the fields and commons, have them cleared and make good pasture, and thus improve the land for and for." And then come magnificently clear measures of national socialism against the rulers of all times: "All chalices and jewels should be taken from all churches and places of worship and used for the common needs of the country..."

"A good sum of money should be kept in reserve in case the country is hit by an unforeseen war..."

"First of all, all smelting works, mines, ore,

Silver, copper and whatever belongs to them and can be affected in the country, belonging to the nobility and foreign merchants and companies such as Fuggers, Hochserers, Paumgarters, Pumphlers and the like, to common country hands, because they have cheaply spoiled them. For they have obtained their justice through despised usury, money for the shedding of human blood, likewise paid my husband and laborer his wages with fraud and evil war, and also made the spice and other goods more expensive through their speculation... They have also increased the price of all the goods they have brought into their hands, and thus burdened the whole world with their unchristian usury, and thereby created a princely fortune for themselves, which should now be justly punished and put an end to.

Thereafter, a supreme factor shall be appointed in the country over all mining matters, who shall handle all matters and calculate them annually. And no one shall be allowed to smelt, but the country shall have all ore smelted by its appointed factor..." - "This should provide the country with quite a bit of income from the mine. For this can be done most easily, so that the government of the country with all its offices and fortifications can be maintained from it." Taxes should only be levied if this income is insufficient.

Gaismayr succeeded in getting the Tyrolean and Salzburg uprisings going once again. In the Salzburg region, the archbishop despaired of being able to master the uprising. For weeks Gais mayr was able to hold his position around Radstadt against an immense superiority of lansquenets of the great commander Jörg von Frundsberg, then fought his way across Tyrol and led the ruins of the army to Italy

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Venetian territory, where he stayed until 1528, a secret terror of the Habsburgs, until two Spaniards murdered him on behalf of the Habsburgs in Pavia. The Bishop of Brixen regretted that his clerical garb had prevented him from personally assassinating the great peasant leader, "if he were in a lower position, he would probably have relieved the government of the burden of GaiSmayr for a long time". In Upper and Lower Austria it had remained comparatively calm, only the subjects of Zwettl Abbey had risen up, as had the subjects of Melk Abbey and some other, particularly ecclesiastical areas. The religious agitation caused by the Reformation, above all the indignation at the clergy's hereditary insidiousness, had provoked the uprising.

The Great Peasants' War had thus succumbed everywhere. All the goals for which it had fought had not been achieved. A bloody judgment of revenge by the victors took place, and even years after the uprising there were hangings, executions and torture. All the so-called atrocities of this disparate and in many ways helpless movement were insignificant compared to the vendetta that now ensued. The power of the small princes had increased, the imperial power had been weakened, the unity of the empire had suffered severely, Luther himself, who had railed so loudly against the peasants, had to experience that his movement was often equated with the uprising and that the old church was strengthened again in large areas. The peasants' burdens became heavier than they had been, the people's strength was broken, over 10000 peasants were lost to the empire through battles, executions and banishments. The impoverishment was general and was held up to the people with scorn by the victorious class. The only success was,

that a large number of castles and monasteries remained destroyed. Zimmermann correctly writes in his work "The German Peasants' War": "More than a thousand monasteries and castles were destroyed by the peasants. Very few of them were rebuilt, and their former inhabitants had to adopt a different way of life. The time of aristocratic and monastic castles was over. The people were no longer plagued by the former, and no longer stultified by the latter. The few nobles who received the fire taxes knew how to use the compensation money for purposes other than castles and dungeons; the princes learned from the peasants how to secularize even the monasteries that were still standing. Weinsberg has been rebuilt, and Swabia's garden is adorned by castles that are almost in ruins: if they had been standing, it would never have become a garden."

However, individual unrest followed the Peasants' War. In East Prussian Samland, almost at the same time as the battles of 1525/26, there was an uprising of workers and peasants, which was mainly about the desire for the abolition of the corporal properties and the restoration of the old law - it was suppressed by the Teutonic Knights with the help of Polish troops. In Estonia, the Estonian peasantry rose up at almost the same time and was also crushed.

Finally, in 1680 there was an uprising of Czech peasant communities in Bohemia, who resisted the unbearably high burdens of their landlords and forced a more favorable "Robotpatent", which was soon enough perforated.

In the Habsburg lands, the will to counter-reform, as already clearly demonstrated by Archduke Ferdinand, was at the same time generally associated with the

Fight against the liberties of the estates. The struggle against the Turks waged by Habsburg was also highly unpopular among the peasant masses. It demanded huge taxes, military and military services, while on the other side of the Turkish border the peasants were much freer from ecclesiastical and aristocratic rule, and above all there was complete religious freedom, and anyone who converted to Islam, no matter how lowly they might have been, could rise to the highest heights. There was a very serious social reality behind the pleasing phrase "better a Turk than a Papist" - the old Turkey was not only the land of the "infidels", but also exerted a strong attraction on all the oppressed and persecuted. Even among GaiSmayr's peasants, quite a few had fled to the Turks to escape the gallows and the wheel.

So it was understandable that, when in 1559 every fifth man in Austria was to be conscripted for the Turkish war, the peasants used this opportunity to refuse and demand the restoration of the old law, created a warrior group of the so-called "ELdkreuzer", set fire to the particularly hated parsonages in the Waldviertel, signed up to the old field commander Markgraber and waged war against Habsburg for two years. Through bribery, the government succeeded in separating the peasants and finally subjugating the Waldviertel again with an army under the Hungarian Colonel General Morakhsy. Markgraber was murdered by a traitor - and now the "beautiful execution" was carried out for two months, hanged, flayed and ears and noses cut off with the blessing of the most reverend abbot of Zwettl.

In Upper Austria, the so-called "Landl" (without the Inn

quarter, which was only added by Bavaria in 1779), things had remained relatively calm. In 1594, the peasants of the Mühlviertel had defeated Weikart von Pollheim, leader of the provinces, at Neumark on November 11 and achieved a halfway reasonable settlement of the mutual relations between the landowners and the peasantry. This was easier here because the whole area was already protectorate and the insatiable monasteries and ecclesiastical lords had no say in the matter. However, Upper Austria was under the pledge of the Bavarian crown, and when Ferdinand II (1619-1637), the emperor of the Thirty Years' War, came to the throne, he gave his friend, Elector Maximilian of Bavaria, a free hand for the Counter-Reformation. Not only were Catholic priests reinstated everywhere, but tithes were also collected again, often years in arrears. As there were not enough German priests, Italian priests were brought in. Riots broke out, during which the governor Count Adam Herberstorff moved in with troops and invited the farming communities of several parishes to a peaceful negotiation on the Thingplatz near the large lime tree on the Haushamer Feld. Here, contrary to law and order, he had the heads of the parishes arrested and the 36 prisoners thrown into pairs on the ground for their lives. Those who lost were hanged from the lime tree. The country then rose up against the prince's despotism, with the peasantry, nobility and burghers united. Ferdinand, however, now demanded immediate conversion to the old church or emigration. The violence of his soldiery led to an open battle; the great farmer Stephan Fadinger - from an old family of judges - took the lead, the towns joined in, and the governor Count Adam Herberstorff was crushed near Linz. Unfortunately

Fadinger, who had built up a veritable peasant state here, was deceitfully murdered at a trial before Linz. His successor, a small country nobleman named Achaz Millinger, was able to skillfully keep the imperial and Bavarian troops pressing in from all sides at bay for almost a year. On November 2, 1626, he confronted the great Bavarian commander Pappenheim at Emlinger Holz with a real army, and with the chant "Because then the hour has come for us to fight", the Upper Austrian land defenders broke through the Bavarian ranks. Only towards evening could Pappenheim boast of victory. The resistance was now crushed, the children of the fallen peasants were dragged to the monasteries, the Protestants were driven out of the country and Millinger himself was executed.

This struggle already played a role in the Thirty Years' War. The Thirty Years' War with its terrible devastation completely broke the back of the German peasantry. Entire landscapes were laid waste. The destruction of the farms and the plundering of the villages was boundless. Slave markets emerged. In some areas, such as Mecklenburg, Silesia and Thuringia, the devastation was almost universal. At peace in 1648 there were only 4 villages left in the county of Ruppin, Hesse counted 390 burnt villages and 17 burnt towns, in Württemberg 55 villages lay in ruins. The Uckermark had become a desert and was completely overgrown. Elector Maximilian of Bavaria wrote in 1649: "The fields in Bavaria are filled with dead carrion, thistle and thorns; instead of the harvest, people are crying out for death to put an end to the hunger." The following is reported from Freifing: "As a result of the Swedish invasion of Bavaria

under Bernhard von Weimar and the subsequent plague and famine, the estates and farms were mostly abandoned; as a result, estates and land fell into such disrepair that entire farms were sold for 20, 30, 40 and 50 guilders."

Even before that, the peasant had been pushed into the depths everywhere after the failed peasant wars. The infamous "Peasants' and Shepherds' Regulations" in the Duchy of Pomerania/Stettin literally stated: "The peasants in our country are not hereditary landowners and tenants, but their own body, komines proxrü er coloni §lebae aäscrixi. Accordingly, the hooves, fields, meadows, etc. belong solely to the lordship and authorities of each place, and the peasants must follow without any resistance if the lordship wants to take back the farms, fields and meadows or transfer the peasant to another farm." Of course, things got even worse after the war. As it was said in Pomerania, "de Buren verlopen edder ver- dorwen". As far as the large estates had survived, they attracted the abandoned farms; war profiteers, abdicated colonels and speculators bought up huge estates. What all the oppression of the previous hundreds of years had not achieved, this terrible war did. Only where it had not reached, East Frisia, parts of the Lower Rhine and some Austrian lands were able to hold their own to some extent. Some areas were completely shattered, such as Lower Bavaria, Central Schlefia, Bohemia, Pomerania and Mecklenburg.

In addition to poverty, a terrible spiritual darkness descended on the German land; the witch trials increased tremendously, they were not only a horrible torment, but also a deliberate extermination of Norwegian blood, as reddish-blond hair was regarded as a symbol of the German people.

sure sign of witchcraft. The church, both Catholic and Protestant, repeatedly called for witches to be condemned.

(Note: The Jesuit Delrio, one of the fathers of the witch trials, expressly declared in rejection of all common sense: "Those who claim that those journeys and meetings are only dreams and deceptions, sin against the honor due to the Church as mother, for the Catholic Church punishes only certain and obvious crimes. She only treats as heretics those who have been caught in heresy before the whole world. For many years she has treated witches and ordered that they be punished by the inquisitors and handed over to the secular arm, as is clear from the writings of Sprenger, Nider, Jaquierius, Michaelis and as experience teaches. So either the Church is mistaken or those doubters are mistaken. But whoever says that the Church errs in matters of faith, let him be accursed.")

On the other hand, there were no more school lessons. The Bavarian court comrade Edler von Kohlbrenner was still writing about the Bavarian peasants in 1774, when the Enlightenment had already shed the first light on this dreadful darkness:

"There are no teachers for miles around. That's why very few people can read and write. The peasant youth grow up like wild animals; neither an economic nor a spiritual book can teach them." Another report from Bavaria in 1784 reads: "Hardly the 50th peasant woman can read, hardly the 100th can write." Even from the year 1790, a source from Swabia states: "Just as little is known of a village school in the whole area. The same can be said of the most indispensable craftsmen. Hardly in the tenth village is there a blacksmith or a wainwright from whom one can be served for the daily necessities."

could. I don't want to mention beggars of all colors and classes, land strikers, hunters and game, court clerks, butchers, coverers, garbage collectors and thieves, although they all hurt the farmer so much with their conventional demands."

Everywhere there was now economic depression. In East Prussia, and in the whole of the East for that matter, it had begun with the fact that the farmer, who until then had been free and was entitled to hereditary interest on his estate, was refused permission to leave without the consent of the landlord. The farmer had just become rare, and they did not want to let him go. Quickly enough, the jurists made out that the peasant was bound to the clod in general, that he belonged to the clod, and pushed him down into serfdom. The Königsberg legal scholar Sahme then argued that hereditary serfs "who were either born on the estates or who had made themselves subservient to the hereditary serfdom because of debts, together with their wives and children, were to be regarded almost as serfs in respect of their farmland and the stock (--- the necessary agricultural inventory), in that they may not sell the stock and may not leave their farmsteads without the permission of the lordship, just as they may be sold, pledged, exchanged, leased and vinced (claimed as property). But what they own and acquire through their occupation, they can dispose of as free people." From here, the path to real serfdom was only a short one; thus we find quite open advertisements in the first newspapers of the time in which serfs were put up for sale. In the Königsberg "Intelligenzwerk" in 1740, for example, a Herr von Foller announced that he had a few serfs for sale, namely a cook, his wife, their

two daughters and a forester". In East Prussia, the yeoman farmers became almost insignificant in terms of numbers; in 1701, there were 54,000 serf farmers, compared to only 8,000 so-called "Hochzinsler", i.e. tenant farmers with limited services.

In Brandenburg and Pomerania, the so-called *lassitic law* developed, in which either the farms were hereditary *lasftisch*, i.e. in any case could be inherited undivided to the descendants in return for *u n m e a s u r e d* services or could even be inherited in perpetuity ("Freistift" or "Freistift" in Bavaria).

"lord's favor") could be confiscated at will by the landlords. In Bavaria, although its legal situation *w a s* still somewhat better, there were only 1162 free farms in 1791, 3.6 percent of the total number of farms

- all others belonged to the clergy, the electors, the nobility and the cities. Conditions were almost at their worst in Austria, where in 1786 a peasant in Hungary handed Emperor Joseph II a memorandum with the following content: "Merciful Emperor! Four days of forced labor, the fifth day fishing, the sixth day hunting with the lordship, the seventh belongs to God! Consider, merciful emperor, how I can give taxes and duties!"

Servitude, i.e. the obligation for peasant children to work on the farm in exchange for food and clothing, was practiced almost everywhere; apart from Austria, large parts of Baden and Württemberg, real serfdom existed in Swedish Pomerania, BeeSkow and Storkow, where the peasants were sold like goods.

Free farmers had only *s u r v i v e d* to a small extent, namely in parts of Brandenburg, in Nieder-

Silesia, almost everywhere in Hanover, in some parts of Pomerania and in Westphalia.

Only the old land of Germanic law, from which the sun of freedom shone again and again even in the darkest times of German history, Schleswig- Holstein, set an unnoticed good example. Count Christof Rantzau was the first landowner in Germany to free all his serfs as early as 1688, followed by the great families of Ahlefeld, Rumohr, Revent- low and others, insofar as serfdom existed on individual estates. But even next door in Mecklenburg, conditions could only be described as cattle-like, as anyone interested in the dark side of human existence may read in Witte's "Kulturbilder aus Altmecklenburg".

The Enlightenment, unjustly much maligned, brought the peasants the help from outside that even individual unrests, such as those that had broken out in Austria and Austrian-Silesia, could not bring. Even if the Enlightenment period was far removed from the feeling for the old rights of the Germanic free peasant, which had been so shamefully trampled underfoot, it nevertheless represented a fundamentally Nordic uprising against the spiritually alien power of the clergy of both denominations and the brutalization of the living people by the upper classes. Their demand for human rights initially also brought peasant rights, against the strongest resistance. When Frederick William I of Prussia wanted to free the serfdom farmers in East Prussia and Pomerania in 1718/19, he still failed; Frederick the Great only declared the previous non-hereditary lassitic property to be hereditary in 1777. Nevertheless, the acquisition of landed property by peasants remained impossible in Prussia. Yes, it happened a g a i n in that period,

As a result of the penetration of the paddock economy, the peasantry was largely uprooted. Almost everywhere in Swedish Pomerania and Mecklenburg, the peasants' land was turned into manors and the peasants were pushed down into day labor. Only Frederick the Great prohibited the laying of peasants in his territory, but in many cases too late, after the greatest damage had already been done.

In Austria, it was the unforgettable Emperor Joseph II who took the unbearable burdens off the peasants, not only improving his economy but also protecting him against arbitrariness.

The power of the church, which had become unbearable, was broken so severely at that time that it never really recovered from this blow. In 1782, Joseph II abolished most of the monasteries in Austria, issued an edict of tolerance that allowed the free practice of religion and, above all, created a school system in the villages that brought light back into the artificially stupid minds of the descendants of former Germanic free peasants who, spiritually free, had been the creators of a culture that was thousands of years old. Even in Bavaria, things were tidied up. Here, around 1800, 16,000 of the 29,000 farms were still owned by the nobility and monasteries, 7,000 by the electorate, and the monasteries owned up to 1,000 peasants - but even here, a number of monasteries were confiscated, the superfluous branch churches and field chapels were demolished in 1802, processions were banned by the police and the peasant youth were given school teachers instead.

In Prussia, too, eS was the schoolmaster, who above all under Frederick the Great gave the poor people, tormented by superstition, the opportunity to exercise their faith. Frederick the Great's fundamental attitude towards the Church was eternally memorialized in his will

and did not shy away from using biting mockery and, if necessary, state violence to limit this spiritual oppression of the old Odals peasantry, which had been so deeply oppressed for centuries.

However, that period, caught up in the idea that everything had to come from the prince, also stifled any remaining powers of self-administration in the peasantry through police regimentation and overly paternalistic interference, just as it, paying homage to reason alone, uncomprehendingly banned as superstition and nonsense an infinite number of old folk traditions, in which many a legacy of former Germanic tradition had been planted. Nevertheless, the Enlightenment period in the form of enlightened absolutism, although it nowhere really abolished the dependence of the peasant, gave him back his stolen land, but everywhere only lightened his burdens, has the immortal merit of having loosened the chains of his body and his spirit, wherever a prince allowed himself to be guided by the liberating thoughts of the pioneering philosophers Voltaire, Montesquieu and Diderot (who could not help it that the cast of the casts of the casts of their thoughts was to become the later sapless liberalism!) and declared war on the dark forces of peasant hostility.

However, the peasant question was not solved anywhere. In Poland, where Russian jealousy had prevented the formation of a strong central power that could have solved the peasant question, in cooperation with selfish magnates from the silent Diet of Warsaw in 1719 until the end of the state, the state ultimately perished because of the unresolved peasant question. In France, the great revolution was not sparked by the peasant question, but the peasant uprising was the cause of the ferment in the

capital Li-er the country. There, too, the situation was simply hopeless. Tarne says of the French farmer:

"In vain he might labor with redoubled zeal, his hands remained empty, and at the end of the year h e saw to his sorrow that his field had produced nothing for himself. The more he acquired and produced, the heavier his burdens had become." Some areas, such as the once flourishing Sologne, had become swamp and forest. The Englishman Poug wrote in 1789: "French agriculture stands on the point of view of the

10th century." In response to a royal inquiry, the Bishop of Chartres replied: "People eat grass like sheep and die like flies." Another bishop reported in 1740: "Despite all their efforts and perseverance, our overworked farmers cannot pay the taxes and at the same time serve the dry bread." In many areas of Germany, the s i t u a t i o n was hardly any different, often much worse. For Bavaria

S. Rottmanner listed the following servitude and burdens of the peasants (and Bavaria was considered an economically favorable area!): "1. cleaning the manorial secret chamber; the man gets 20 kr. for this during the day, The man is paid 20 kr during the day, a few dumplings at lunchtime and a black gogelhopf (oven cake) in the evening; 2. errands for the lordship, Z kr are paid per mile; 3. carrying grain to the Schranne, which t a k e s Z or 4 days; payment 18 kr and 1 metzen of oats; 4. threshing the manorial and tithe grain throughout the winter; for the bushel 10 k r . and nothing to be p a i d ; 5. every farmer must have a catch dog, every estate owner a small dog, of which the manor has a total of 16 to 18, well fed; 6. driving manure onto the fields, mowing hay and haylage, cutting all grain, namely

at the best of times; 7. to do whatever else the lord commands; the women have to clean the rooms, for which they receive 2 pfennigs a day, they have to break and spin flax and hemp for 2 kr. a day without food; they have to cut turnips, pluck hops; the men have to work in the wood, carry stones, sand, lime to a building; 8. Hunting work: for several weeks the men had to work b e a t i n g foxes and hunting; in return they received nothing but torn clothes, tired feet and often a bruised back."

The armies of the French Revolution smashed the old Germany into ruins. Now it took its revenge that for centuries, in order to be able to rob the people, the people's ability to defend themselves h a d b e e n abandoned, that the peasants had been deliberately and cynically made weaponless; the profound indifference to the fate of the state and the many individual states had become all too j u s t i f i e d by the indifference of the old German Empire and its individual states to the peasants' old rights, the bitter verse all too justified:

"We have few worries
Well for the Roman Empire - It
dies today or tomorrow,
It's all the same to us."

Prussia's defeat, despite the heroic bravery of its army in the disastrous battles of Auerstädt and Jena, could also only occur so quickly because not only did the fortresses capitulate, but the people almost immediately accepted the French victory and were only outraged by the heavy burdens of war.

Stein's fight and his opponents

The imperial baron Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein, who carried the legal concept of the people in him like no other German of that time, was the one who, as Prussian minister, initiated the great peasant reform. Stein correctly recognized that the peasants had to be given property, a homeland, security on their land, redemption and the elimination of subservience if the peasant was to be used as a living member of the state. His natural opponents were therefore all those circles of large landowners who, out of selfishness, opposed this necessary measure. At the same time, however, he recognized that it was necessary to protect the land and the farm from becoming free commodities. He therefore had to take a negative stance towards the preferential ideas of the French Revolution. Stein demanded that the Fronde be abolished completely, that hereditary servitude be abolished and that the peasant be given back his land. The hatred against him among the landowners was boundless; from these circles Napoleon, whose troops occupied Prussia, received a letter from Stein in which he recommended measures for a national reorganization for the purpose of a later uprising. Napoleon then expelled Stein from Prussia. Stein's edict of October 9, 1807 on "facilitating the possession and free use of landed property and affecting the personal circumstances of the inhabitants of the countryside" nevertheless stipulated that every inhabitant was given the right to acquire property, regardless of whether it had previously been of a noble or bourgeois character. From the date of the edict, no new relationships of servitude could arise.

The old relationships of servitude ceased immediately for farmers and relatives with hereditary property, and for all others on Martinmas Day 1810. This was also Stein's work. Unfortunately, due to this act of envy on the part of his reactionary opponents, he was no longer able to carry out the most important area, i.e. the redemption of the previous servitude, the Lasfitian property rights and other basic obligations. His successor, State Chancellor Karl August Prince von Hardenberg, was not only economically heavily indebted to the Jews, but was also popular with and supported by the large landowners. Thus, the decisive edict of September 1811, "concerning the regulation of manorial peasant conditions", was largely a loss for the peasants; they were only able to obtain free ownership in return for ceding half of their land. Although the servitude and payments in cash and in kind were to be abolished, this loss of land was extraordinarily high. According to Ponfick-Wenzel's commentary on the Reich Settlement Act, this regulation edict alone transferred 1700,000 acres into the hands of the large landowners from the Bauernbefitz. But the large landowners were not yet satisfied. When the national uprising against Napoleon I had been successful, the French rule had been thrown off, but instead of the dreamed-of German unity and a free Germany, the princes and the old conditions had returned, when the fire of this great national revolution of the Germans of 1813-1815 had burned down, the large landowners, as always in such times of reaction, made their claims anew. A declaration of 1816 on the Regulatory Act of 1811 exempted the farmers who were not able to work their land from regulation - in other words, they were not free to use their land for their own purposes.

Rather, the land was turned into an estate and the itself was economically pushed down into day labor. The self-seeking of the large estates gave rise here to the father generation of the first fighting bands of the later Social Democracy; the superfluous children of day laborers began to move to the cities as early as between 1820 and 1830, since for them, the descendants of former yeoman farmers and peasants who had moved to the German East as free colonists, who had been cheated of everything over the course of time, there was no longer any advancement in the day laborer class. They carried with them the dull feeling of injustice suffered and thus became the first ranks who, cheated of their homeland, formed the army of proletarian upheaval in Marxism against a fatherland that had denied them justice for centuries. The landowning class, however, remained firmly convinced that they were the real "national class", the "pillars of throne and altar".

The liberal idea of free trade, the conviction that "business is a dead man's business", the doctrine of the mobility of land, of its encumbrance and indebtedness also prevailed under Hardenberg; in 1816, large landowners were also given the opportunity to purchase additional land. Between 1816 and 1859, at a time when, after an economic crisis in the 1820s, the slowly increasing industrialization of the German region created ever more favourable sales opportunities for large estates and grain cultivation became more and more widespread, according to the same statistics, a further 6,200,000 acres in what was then old eastern Prussia were transferred to large estates through free purchase. R. Walther Darré remarks on this (Odal, June 1934), after having calculated the total loss of peasant land to large estates in the 19th century

The calculation refers to the old eastern Prussia, i.e. including Posen and West Prussia. If the area lost as a result of the Treaty of Versailles is assumed to be JO percent of the old eastern Prussia, the above area must be reduced by about JO percent. The area in the eastern provinces of today's Prussia that was transferred from farmland to large farms thus amounts to around 120000 acres.

In the above-mentioned commentary it is stated that on the whole in the large estates of the eastern provinces of Prussia in the course of the 19th century about 175 of the present estate area has grown at the expense of the peasantry; after deducting the state domains from the estate area, the increase is not much less than a quarter. Including the acquisitions made by the lords of the manor in earlier centuries, the total increase can be estimated at a good third.

According to the statistics of 1925, farms over 400 acres in the eastern provinces of Prussia and the two Mecklenburgs accounted for 15 60000 acres of agricultural land. If the increase in farmland during the 19th century is assumed to be one fifth, the area of lost farmland amounts to almost 120000 acres.

Both calculations give only approximate values. The agreement is more or less coincidental, as Mecklenburg is not included in the first calculation and the share of Posen and West Prussia was only very roughly averaged.

The number of farms laid is, as mentioned,

is not known. Assuming an average farm size of 60 acres - corresponding to today's settlement size - the area of 32,000,000 acres transferred from farmland to the large farm corresponds to a number of 50,000 to 60,000 farms. " So Stein's great idea had only been half realized, even devalued to a large extent by ruthless interested parties.

Nevertheless, compared to Prussia, the situation in other German regions was much worse. In Bavaria, serfdom was abolished in 1808, but it was not until 1848 that the natural feud and personal services, the manorial jurisdiction, the blood rent, the new land rent, etc. were redeemed; the remaining land charges were converted into money; the last redemptions entered in the land register were not paid off until 1940.

In Saxony, serfdom not only persisted for a relatively long time, but in 1830 there was still quite serious unrest, and it was not until 1848, the year of the storm, that conditions here became clean and the remnants of peasant freedom came to an end. In Baden, serfdom had already been abolished during the period of enlightened absolutism in 1783, but it was not until 1820 that the legal possibility of redeeming the land charges was created; by paying 18 to 20 times the annual value of these charges, the peasant became free. In Hanover there were peasant riots in 1831, which forced the final redemption ordinance of 1833. The worst situation was in Austria, where serfdom was not abolished until 1848 and the peasants fought hard for the final abolition of serfdom, although they had one of their best leaders in Hans Kudlich, the great Sudeten German peasant leader.

in the entire history of the peasantry. On August 31, 1848, the Austrian peasant forced the adoption of the motion in the Imperial Assembly: "From now on, the relationship of servitude, including all rights and duties arising from it, is abolished, subject to the provisions as to whether and what compensation is to be paid." However, the uprising was suppressed, the Greater German-minded Vienna was crushed by the Croatian troops of Prince Windisch-Grätz, and Hans Kudlich himself had to flee the country. However, the freedom from feudal burdens that he had won for the Austrian peasants could not be taken away from them, no matter how much the Habsburg clerical reaction might have wanted it. However, the transfer of basic burdens once again brought considerable enrichment to the old feudal powers. However unjustified these rights may have been in many cases, the peasant had to buy them all. As he was sometimes unable to do this alone, the tax power of the general public had to step in to satisfy the "entitled". In 1848, with the exception of Dalmatia, over 38.5 million foot and hand robots were registered throughout Austria. Of these, Lower Austria accounted for 6,177,184, Upper Austria for 97,300, Salzburg for 1017, Styria for 10,3008, Carinthia for 158,493, Tyrol for only 784, Bohemia for 704,2698, Moravia for 5270,574 and Silesia for 10,60,500. The most robot days were in Galicia, where almost 17 million were registered.

In addition, there were just over 15.5 million draught robot days with horses and almost 14 million with oxen. Of these draught robots, the Lower Austrian farmers had 1662114, the Upper Austrian 33472, the Salzburg farmers 33472, and the Salzburg farmers 33472.

148 in Austria, 285,333 in Styria and 19576 in Carinthia,

to replace the Tyrolean ones by only 207. Apart from Galicia, the lion's share of 8129510 days was allotted to Bohemia, 3586452 to Moravia and 264100 to Silesia. It is interesting to determine who was entitled to these benefits and had to be compensated, namely: 8102 lordships or dominions, 3300 parishes, 2206 churches, 8925 individual beneficiaries, 1157 legal entities (e.g. monasteries, corporations, etc.). The following were eligible for redemption: 2104 estates or former d o m i n i o n s , 4170 parishes, 2464 schools, 2539 churches, 10062 parishes, 15971 individual beneficiaries and 1566 legal entities. These entitled persons were matched by 2625512 obligated farmers. Thus the "victors" in the suppression of peasant freedom from Michael GaiSmayr to the Battle of Emlinger Holz, in addition to 3.9 million pensions and 79.4 million guilders in capital that the peasants had to raise, the Austrian provinces paid a further 7.6 million pensions and 151.2 million guilders in capital to these beneficiaries from the taxes of the general public (the strong prominence of the clergy is striking here...).

But in any case, by the middle of the last century the peasant had been freed from the feudal burdens imposed on him in the Carolingian period and its successor periods.

The enslavement of debt

From the outset, Freiherr vom Stein had been an enemy of the free indebtedness of peasant and rural land in general. "Just as a soldier is not allowed to carry his rifle into a pawnshop, a farmer is not allowed to put his land into debt." Stein used to say:

"He who mobilizes the soil turns it to dust", in this sense just as anti-liberal as it is anti-Semitic. The Regulatory Act of September 14, 1811 had therefore also set a debt limit of 25 percent of the value in § 29. If the large landed estates worked against the free redemption of the peasants' land and burdens, the *lieberale bourgeoisie* and its role model, Judaism, consciously worked against this binding of the land. The period after the Wars of Liberation, which brought the rise of the House of Rothschild and the unfortunate emancipation of the Jews, not only led to national debt (here, too, it was Hardenberg who removed the loyal Finance Minister Friese, who had opposed a Rothschild loan), but also to land indebtedness. It was precisely from this side that there was a storm against the debt limit. The large landowners, who at the time hoped to be able to buy up an indebted peasantry more easily (to their own detriment), supported this tendency. A cabinet order of December 29, 1845 lifted the debt limit. On September 25, 1849, Walter, a member of the Prussian Chamber, said very correctly: "The poor peasantry is approaching a far greater dependence, which arises from the divisibility of the land and the indebtedness: dependence on mortgage creditors. A system of upper property is formed which may be much more oppressive than that of former times, because it lacks the admixture of moral elements which the idea of landlordism contained. It forms a new kind of servitude itself, if one looks at the thing and not at the form." Soon enough, the large estates themselves got into difficulties when grain exports to England ceased in the fifties, foreign land was bought up and the land was sold.

The German market saw the emergence of the "Treibe" around 1870-1880, initially in small quantities and then increasingly on the German market. Until then, he had often used his easier credit opportunities to buy up farmland, so that in the Angerburg district, for example, 90 percent of all farms passed into his hands between 1816 and 1860, but soon he too began to be weighed down by debt. In addition, liberalism pushed further and further for the mobilization of land. The law of March 5, 1872 on the acquisition of property and the encumbrances in rem on land made it possible to incur extensive debt; only the entailed estates stood out from this debt. Westphalian farmers had protested in vain on January 25, 1870: "In our country, land is by no means a commodity, as is often the case in the East."

In Prussia, the debt of the Prussian land economy increased by more than 11 billion marks between 1866 and 1915, i.e. almost half a billion more interest had to be paid annually in 1915 than in 1866. The land was now completely in a floating state. Foreclosures and sales far outstripped inheritance. Between 1896 and 1907, 75 of the estates over 100 hectares in the administrative district of Köslin changed hands through sale and forced sale, only 22 by inheritance, in the administrative district of Königsberg 157 by sale and forced sale against only 55 by inheritance. The farmer was made completely rootless. In Hesse, a downright predatory system of estate slaughtering set in, driven by Jewish cattle and grain traders, and the plight of the farmer, both the solid old peasant farmer and the solid old landowner, led after Bismarck's departure and the opening of the German markets for foreign grain in the Caprivi era, the

The rapid fall in grain prices led to further loss of ownership. The tenant farmer Ruprecht-Ransern rightly declared in 1892 in an appeal for the founding of the Farmers' Union: "We must shout so that the whole country hears it; we must shout so that it r e a c h e s the halls of parliament and the ministries." According to the liberal idea, however, the political parties ignored the plight of the peasantry, seeing it as nothing more than a n oppression; indeed, the Jewish-led parties deliberately sought to uproot the peasantry, while the Marxist parties saw it as one of the prerequisites for their v i c t o r y . Outside the German Reich, too, the indebtedness of the German peasantry was perceived as a threat to life. The first Tyrolean Agricultural Conference on 26 January 1897 passed the following (albeit, as always, unsuccessful) resolution: "The first Tyrolean Agricultural Conference recognizes the ever-growing land debt as the real cause of the peasant plight. Therefore, if the farmers are to be helped thoroughly and for the long term, this evil must be grasped at its root, which is always the driving force, and this root must be rooted out. This root is ultimately none other than the m o r t g a g e a b i l i t y of land."

Thus a new serfdom emerged, which encompassed the landowner as well as the peasant, as well as every working person in the countryside. If even the old feudal economy had still known human ties, moral obligations of the lordship towards his subjects, this was no longer the case, the "business was over corpses". The robber barons' castles had crumbled, but the strongholds of banking c a p i t a l had been able to establish themselves impregably under the protection of the state; manual labor had disappeared, but the clause of immediate full payment had been abolished.

The ability to stretch the landowner's possessions and goods were at the mercy of ruthless seizure by the mortgage creditor in every time of need, and foreclosures became a huge business for a swarm of hyenas; money not only outlived the feudal lord, but forced him, like the peasant, into the last slavery of capitalism, whose best roots lie in the dishonorable ghetto of the Jewish Middle Ages, in the shameful privilege of taking interest, against whose first germs Michael Gaismayr had fought in Tyrol and which, as "the free economy", had become the shrine of the capitalist citizen of the pre-war period, worshipped in disgusting greed. In 1906, Professor Ruhland estimated the total tribute of the German people in speculation profits, interest premiums and the like at nine billion marks a year.

When the World War broke out, it became apparent that the German Reich had undergone an extraordinarily strong internal population shift. The large cities had grown, the rural population had declined and industrialization had led to a strong rural exodus. In 1871, 2 million or barely 5 percent of the total population lived in 8 large cities - in 1933 in 51 major cities, 19.7 million people or 30.2 percent of the total population. Not only did the rural population fail to keep pace with this figure, but it had already declined before the war. It amounted to 26 million in 1871, 24 million in 1914 (21.5 million in 1933).

In addition, this decline in the rural population meant that the economic development of agriculture had not increased to such an extent that the food supply of the German people was ensured even in times of war. The world war did not only call on the

This not only forced masses of the peasant population to take up arms, but also forced the agricultural sector to surrender large numbers of livestock for the army's needs. The forced cultivation of foodstuffs, which had never been prepared for in peacetime and suddenly began during the war, with the setting of maximum prices, hit the peasantry extremely hard, especially as a surreptitious trade quickly developed alongside the official trade, which also had a morally corrupting effect. The war societies themselves, filled with Jews, squandered the food partly out of ignorance, partly out of incompetence, carelessness, if not out of malice. The heavy war losses and the economic hardship towards the end of the war also paralyzed the will of the peasantry to resist to a large extent. Despite this, no unrest ever arose from their ranks and the November revolt was unable to gain a foothold even in areas with a largely peasant population. However, it hardly met with any r e s i s t a n c e here either. The German peasant was also exhausted to death at the end of the world war. In addition to the general burdens imposed on the entire German nation by the armistice and the Versailles Dictate, the German farmer had to deliver to France and Belgium in particular: 700 breeding stallions, 5,000 fillies of mares, 4,000 bulls, 140,000 dairy cows, 40,000 young cattle, 1,200 rams, 120,000 sheep, 10,000 goats and 15,000 ewe hogs. This livestock also had to be collected by coercive measures. The value of German money sank ever lower. On the one hand, this collapse of the currency meant a considerable reduction in debt for the German peasantry in general. Those who had to receive money from the land were i n a bad way; mortgagees lost their money through the devaluation, landlords lost their land.

The tenants had to pay rent in inferior paper money and had to fight with their tenants in front of the rent offices; undoubtedly a large part of agriculture, which had "material assets", became accustomed to handling money much more carelessly than had been the case until then - then came the stabilization of the currency when the dollar had "risen" to a trillion marks,

i.e. the mark was no longer worth anything at all. On the basis of values guaranteed by agriculture and industry, the Reichsbank issued money of stable value by placing a mortgage of 4 percent of the military contribution on all agricultural land (similarly for industry), where one gold mark was issued for one trillion paper marks. Although the farmer's debt was reduced, he was also left without a penny of money for the spring harvest, as this stabilization occurred in the winter of 1923 to 1924. He was persuaded from all sides to take out loans on behalf of bank capital. Now it became clear why the people's representatives had immediately lifted the maximum limits for interest rates in 1918 on behalf of finance capital - these agricultural loans were granted at between 30 and 40 percent, and the farmer was promised that he would be able to redeem these expensive bills of exchange in the fall of 1924 through mortgage loans. These mortgage loans never materialized, but the farmer was robbed of his harvest for the usurious bills of exchange at 30 and 40 percent interest. He was once again driven into debt. In the meantime, most of the mortgage banks had been merged; the morally depraved Jew Fränkel in particular, together with his Aryan and non-Aryan henchmen, had managed to create the Prussian Centralbodenkreditgesellschaft (Central Land Credit Society).

The German government was able to gather together most of the Prussian mortgage banks and thus create a virtual monopoly on mortgage lending, to which the farmer was helplessly exposed. By 1932, German agricultural debt amounted to 12 billion marks at an average interest rate of 8 percent, i.e. 1 billion 200 million a year, not including the greatly increased tax burden. The price gap, the fact that agricultural prices lagged behind the prices of industrial products, became enormous. On June 10, 1932, the government had to declare to the then German Agricultural Council: "Over 100 percent of the unit value is now owed by farms covering 3 million hectares.

have 12 million Prussian acres. Over 150 percent of the standard value find 1 million hectares in debt." From April 1, 1928 to October 1, 1931 alone, there were over 4,700 forced sales involving 308,000 hectares, and by the time Adolf Hitler seized power, there were almost 8,000 forced sales involving 500,000 hectares; every weekday, around 50 farms were forcibly sold on behalf of usurious creditors!

Unrest stirred again. In 1929 there were serious peasant riots in East Prussia, then in Schleswig-Holstein, bomb attacks, clashes with the police. The unrest spread to Schlefia, spread to the Görlitz area, flared up in the Rhineland, even appeared in Laufitz and the Mark Brandenburg, the song of the "Black Peasant Flag", which originated somewhere in Schleswig-Holstein, spread across Germany:

"Black is the worry, black is our bread, And black is the flag of peasant distress.

**We plow and sow and create without rest - We
reap - and yet know not what for, For what we
gain with our strength,
That will be taken from us and taken away!
What the tax still leaves us to live on, That
will be squeezed out of us as interest!
Now we're at the end - we don't want any more!
We find a desperate peasant army!"**

These desperate peasant riots, as justified as they were, were in danger of ending in the same tragedy as the great Peasants' War. The peasant alone was not in a position to throw off this burden of usury. He could defend himself, but he could not free himself.

The National Socialist movement was fortunate to have a man at its disposal to solve the peasant question as part of its political struggle, a man who saw the background and development from an ideological perspective like no other. R. Walther Darrs, in his works "New Nobility of Blood and Soil" and "The Peasantry as the Source of Life of the Nordic Rape", had recognized the importance of the peasantry for the preservation of the people and the ideological reasons on which the decline of the Germanic peasantry was based, which were effective in the thousand-year history of the decline of the German peasantry, much more deeply than all those who merely saw the economic hardship of the peasant. He had quietly built up the small agricultural policy apparatus of the NSDAP, and in the summer of 1953, after the disappearance of the German nationalist party man Hugenberg, he was appointed Reich Minister of Food, and had a ready-made program to save the German peasantry, which went considerably further than Stein's program.

By dissolving all the old diverse, confusing, overlapping organizations in agriculture, he, as Reichsbauernführer, merged all economic and economic-political organizations and associations into the Reichsnährstände, completely merging them into an exclusive professional organization, into which not only the actual economic organizations, but also distribution and processing groups for agricultural products were incorporated. Downwards, the local farmers' associations, district farmers' associations and regional farmers' associations under their special leaders form the basis of the Reichsnährstand, which is headed by the Reichsbauernführer with his staff office of the ReichsbauernführerS and the Reichsbauernrat. Four main departments have been assigned the tasks of safeguarding and promoting German nutrition and the German p e a s a n t r y , namely:

Main Department I: Processing of the overall structure of the estate, socio-political and labour law issues, g e n e r a l legal issues, municipal affairs, cultural issues, farmers' colleges, settlement, inheritance law, rural women's and rural youth organizations.

Department II: Vocational training, business management, plantcultivationandprotection, seed and animal breeding, horticulture, forestry, experimental rings.

Department III: Agricultural Cooperatives.

Department IV: Trade in agricultural products, pricing.

From here, the speculative element of trade was eliminated through the creation of a market order.

R. Walther Darre has taken these various measures in the field of grain management, fat management

The situation with regard to the trade, egg management, etc. was summarized as follows (Odal, August 1934): "i.e. , an a t t e m p t was made to carry out the entire movement of goods under the self-administration of the estates and the state limited itself to retaining overall control. This approach was cheaper for the state and ultimately more convenient for both farmers and the food trade. We took this last path last year with the Reichsnährstandsgesetz, and I would like to state today, after exactly ten months of this law's existence, that the path we have taken has proved to be the right one. Through this law, through fixed prices for almost all important p r o d u c t s , we were able to guarantee the farmer a sufficient wage for his work and thus fulfill the task that Adolf Hitler had set us, namely to save the German peasantry economically. On the other hand, we were also able to prevent an unnecessary burden being placed on the consumer." For the first time, this market regulation secured adequate prices for the work of German farmers while preserving the purchasing power of consumers, but above all it put a firm stop to speculation with the yields of our earth. This is why all speculators, their agents and bribe recipients are rooting against the DarreS market regulation.

Above all, however, the source of the racial health and prosperity of the Nordic peasantry, the OdalShof, was restored by the Reich Hereditary Farm Law of September 29, 1933. A hereditary farm is any agricultural and forestry property the size of a field belonging to a respectable farmer. A farmer can only be a German citizen, a German or ethnic German.

of blood and honorable. The hereditary estate cannot be divided, can only be encumbered under very strict conditions and can only be inherited by one descendant. This succession cannot be excluded or restricted by will. The hereditary estate is therefore basically inalienable, having become what it was before its moral foundations were destroyed in the Carolingian period. At the same time, however, around 70 percent of all peasant land was withdrawn from free trade, the first incursion into capitalism was carried out, and the world view of money was victoriously opposed to the world view of blood and soil.

It is no wonder that all those forces which destroyed the moral foundations of the Nordic Court of Odals, which suffocated the great Peasants' War in blood, which did not hesitate to overthrow the Baron vom Stein even with the help of foreign countries, are uniformly inclined against the hereditary court. Reaction, clericalism, capitalism, their agents, payroll clerks and agitators, as far as they think they can stir the people, are therefore all too happy to attack the hereditary court. Here you can see that after a thousand years of oppression, the Nordic idea has triumphed over them. But to destroy it, to lead the German peasant into interest slavery, into dependency, into spiritual bondage, is their ultimate goal. They have not changed - as they were in the past, so they have remained today. What they used to say openly, when the German peasant was defenceless, when the night hours of his history weighed on him, they now strive for secretly and hypocritically emphasizing the difficulties that the hereditary farm law would bring for the other descendants excluded from the hereditary farm. (Although they know full well that if they could bring down the hereditary court, neither the

The farmers would still have something left for their brothers and sisters, because they would take it back, as they did for a millennium for tithes, fiefs and later for mortgage interest).

All those opponents of the OdalShofeS of a reactionary, capitalist and clerical nature are opposed by Walther DarreS's confession to the sun (Odal, April 1934):

"In the Odal, the people secure for themselves the future shapers of their existence and thus prevent their descendants from descending into uncreative administrators, as over-supply alone in the down-to-earth economy without cultivation of the blood in the Odal must inevitably cause.

The opponents of German humanity have fully understood the situation and, whether they are obeying the behest of their un-German supranational patrons or whether their corrupt blood is whipping them up to attack, have begun their assault. Significantly, this attack is primarily directed against the Reich Serbian Court Law, whose germs they are eagerly endeavoring to destroy in order to restore the true roots of Germanism. -

So we are no longer upset about the spiritual battle over the Reich Serbian Law. But we have f o u n d it right to make the situation easier for ourselves by calling a spade a spade and thus giving the individual citizen the opportunity to form his own judgment about the spiritual currents. We know, after all, that certain "dark men" are as intolerant of stronger illumination and "shining a light" as a cat with a bell on its head. It is a well-known law of life that creatures of the night are very sensitive to the sun's rays and can die as a result. And Adolf Hitler's swastika is the sign of the rising sun!"

Reichöerbhof Act

dated September 29, 1933

with all implementing regulations

Hitler Laws III

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The Erbhofrecht is a popular law, even in its language, which is based in every respect on National Socialist ideas and ties in with old German ancestral rights. The word Peasant has once again become an honorary title, can only be someone who is of German blood, honorable and capable of managing their farm properly. After him, the farm then passes undivided to the heir. The hereditary farm is fundamentally inalienable and unencumberable. If the RNT heirs get into difficulties through no fault of their own, the

"Home refuge" granted.

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