The Reformation and Peasant Unrest in the Swiss Confederation

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In the late Middle Ages the subjects of the Holy Roman Empire considered the German cantons of the alpine Confederation unique. Through successful rebellions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries these cantons had freed themselves from Habsburg rule, and maintained independence from foreign princes. For this reason, among others, the Confederation became a symbol for peasant independence and revolt against feudal authority. Popular songs even circulated in the empire that commented on the lack of feudal authorities among the cantons:

> Nun sind etlich die wend kein Herren han
> weder dem Bahrt noch keiser sin undertan.

and

> Tuon uns die Swizer jetzt ein widerstand
> so werden sie zwingen alle land
> dem adel gar vertringen.[1]

The German lords considered the lordless peasants of the Confederation a definite threat to traditional authority, for their successful struggle with the Habsburgs was an example to restless peasants throughout Europe. "We want to become Swiss" was the German phrase used by peasants seeking relief from the burdens of serfdom and seigneurialism.[2] Modern historians have also emphasized the Confederation's unique social and political institutions. In an essay discussing mercenary soldiers in sixteenth century Europe, V.C. Kiernan speaks of the Confederation peasantry as "the mountaineers who had most resolutely defied feudalism. . ., and whose revolutionary example had not gone unnoticed in Central Europe." [3] The Swiss historian, Wilhelm Oeschli, remarked that the "democratic and repub-

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lican form of state" separated the Confederation from the predominately "feudal" Holy Roman Empire.[4]

A close examination of the Confederation in the sixteenth century, however, suggests that the area's uniqueness has been highly exaggerated. Feudal and seigneurial institutions survived in the northern and western cantons of Zuerich, Thurgau, St. Gallen, Appenzell, Schaffhausen, Glarus, Aargau, Basel, Bern, and Solothurn. The legal status and economic condition of the peasantry in this area of the Confederation closely resembled that of the peasantry in much of southwestern Germany. Local differences certainly existed, but the basic legal relationships governing the peasant and his seigneur were common in these areas. Still, some basis for the persistent notion that the Confederation peasants were legally independent can be found in the central forest cantons of Schwyz, Uri, Unterwalden, Luzern, and Zug. Originally seigneurial institutions similar to those in the northern and western cantons also developed in the forest cantons. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, seigneurialism had disappeared from the central cantons of the Confederation.[5]

The movement for independence from the Habsburgs began in the forest cantons, and was accompanied by major changes in the traditional relationships between seigneur and peasant. In the twelfth century, when seigneurialism was a common feature in the forest cantons, monasteries or individual lords supervised the land and received payments in rent. Lords also held legal jurisdiction and received ecclesiastical payments. The Fraumuenster Cathedral in Zuerich, for example, held a monastery in Schaechental, eighty estates and sixteen farms in Silenen, and the right to collect the tithe in Urnerland. The Monastery of Wettinger held the villages of Altdorf, Schattdorf, and Silenen in Uri. The monastery at Mueri held much of Gersau in Schwyz plus the villages of Engelberg and Buochs in Unterwalden. In addition, it controlled the fishing rights in Kuessnacht and Buochs. Secular lords holding land in the forest cantons included the counts of Rapperwil, and the Habsburg dynasty.[6]

During the fourteenth century seigneurialism began to vanish from the forest cantons; by 1500 the traditional rights of the

lords, and the land itself belonged to the communities. The process was usually accomplished through purchase, but the transaction was often initiated by peasant rebellion. In 1294 the monastery of Gnadental sold its possessions in Schwyz for sixty-seven *Pfunde* to the inhabitants. The margravine of Baden relinquished her right to receive rent payments from the village of Arth in 1353; ten years later she sold similar rights to the inhabitants of Kuessnacht for seventy-five *Pfunde.* In 1440 the inhabitants of Stein purchased fishing rights from the monastery of Mueri.[7] The community of Seelisberg bought the right of the tithe from the Abbot of the Fraumuensterabteri in Zuerich in 1418. By the sixteenth century seigneurialism had virtually disappeared from the area. The essential jurisdictional tasks, such as the maintenance of lower courts and the distribution of farm lands, were assumed by the self-governing communities.[8]

The question naturally arises, why the seigneurial lords agreed to sell their rights of domination over lands in the forest cantons, while holding tight to their seigneurial rights in the remainder of the Confederation. The most obvious reason is that the forest cantons were simply too poor to support the owners of seigneurial rights. The foreign lords lost interest in the meager contributions from the area and agreed to sell traditional rights to the inhabitants. After 1400 the forest cantons experienced a rapid population increase that aggravated the area's poverty.[9]

Over population and intense poverty were also responsible for the mass migration of young men from the Confederation into mercenary armies during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The reputation for invincibility of the Swiss mercenaries made them the most valued soldiers in Europe. At a meeting of the Confederation diet in 1512 representatives from the duke of Lorraine, the pope, the king of Spain, the Republic of Venice and the duke of Savoy negotiated to hire troops. During the Italian wars, Francis I employed 16,000 Confederation pikemen in his regular army.[10]

Before the Reformation peasants from the urban cantons served with their brethren from the forest cantons in the mercenary companies. But in the urban cantons this institution never became an economic necessity. In fact, mercenary service tended to depopulate the countryside and adversely effect

agricultural production. Bern, for example, suffered a severe shortage of farm laborers and skilled craftsmen. In many cases women and children cared for family farms while their husbands and fathers fought in foreign wars. The Council of Bern repeatedly passed legislation forbidding voluntary service, but was unable to stop the exodus of men.[11]

In the forest cantons the situation was strikingly different. Because of poverty and population pressure, a large segment of the local peasantry depended on the income from mercenary service for survival. Population figures for the cantons of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, and Luzern indicate that by the end of the fifteenth century about one-half of all living men had served at least once in mercenary armies.[12]

Not surprisingly, mercenary service promoted elements of corruption in Confederation affairs. Foreign rulers frequently pensioned office holders to insure that the supply of soldiers did not diminish. The majority of men in service were recruited by independent entrepreneurs, known as "head eaters," who received a bounty from their foreign employers for each soldier supplied. The entire practice was popularily known as the "fleshbank." By the beginning of the sixteenth century the pensioners and private entrepreneurs had become an economic aristocracy, which dominated local government in several cantons.[13]

Popular resentment against mercenary service reached a peak during the early years of the Reformation. The religious leaders in the Confederation emphasized social reform, and succeeded in focusing contemporary attention of the evils of foreign military service. Ulrich Zwingli's first published work, *The Ox and Other Beasts*, was a polemic aimed at the institution. After he gained an important pulpit in Zuerich, Zwingli continued to denounce foreign service and those who became rich from it. Heinrich Bullinger recorded the following passage from a sermon delivered by Zwingli:

> He showed how there were in the Confederation two kinds of nobility, who did much more injury than the old nobility had ever done in times past. . . The first nobility are the pensioners, whom he called pear roasters because they sat at home behind the stove, and did not come out,

> and still they got the treasures of all the lords. . . The other nobility are the captains who walk around in rich silks, silver and gold. . . They are like butchers who drive cattle to Constance; they drive the cattle out, take the money for them, and come home without the cattle; then they go out again and do likewise repeatedly. . . Thus also the pensioners and the captains do. . . Now consider whether one can blame these blood merchants severely enough.[14]

In addition, Zwingli warned his parish that God was displeased with the Confederation because of the immoral trade in soldiers. Divine grace would return only when "the deception of the poor" ended.

Another social issue on which Zwingli commented was the payment of the tithe. Since the church had originally used the tithe to support ecclesiastical institutions, it claimed holy authority for the tax. Zwingli noted this fact in 1520: "Our provost. . . wrote a letter to me in which he said that tithes were of divine right."[15] Zwingli preached to the contrary; since no substantial basis for the tithe could be found in scripture, the tax should be voluntary. A peasant or burgher could support the church if he wished, but he was not obligated to do so. Whether or not it was Zwingli's intention, his sermons encouraged the peasantry to resist payment of the tithe, and considerable unrest occurred in the villages around Zuerich.[16] Because of these and similar examples, contemporaries often associated such questions as the abolition of mercenary service and the adjustment of the tithes with the religious Reformation.[17]

The spirit of reform spread rapidly in the Confederation, especially to the northern and western cantons, where other prominent leaders, such as Vadian of St. Gallen and Oekolampadius of Basel emerged. Yet, despite the popularity of the movement and the brilliance of its leaders, the Reformation never penetrated into the conservative forest cantons. These self-governing rural cantons remained staunchly Catholic and regarded the religious radicalism of their neighbors with hostility.[18] In 1524, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden joined their traditional allies, Luzern and Zug, to oppose the reformed doctrine in a formal military alliance.[19]

The obvious question, why the forest cantons stubbornly resisted the Reformation, may be answered in several ways. To begin, the five Catholic cantons had consistently opposed Zuerich's growing influence in the Confederation. Only sixty years before, the Catholic cantons had temporarily stemmed the threat by defeating Zuerich at the Battle of St. Jaques. The city's leadership of the Reformation in the Confederation was sufficient reason for the forest cantons to oppose the movement.[20]

The social institutions of the forest cantons suggest another possible answer. As mentioned, seigneurialism had died out in the area before the sixteenth century. The ecclesiastical institutions, major holders of seigneurial rights in the remainder of the Confederation, no longer collected rents or tithes in the forest cantons, and the local peasantry had no reason to associate the church with heavy taxation. Zwingli's popular proposal, that the tithes be made voluntary, was meaningful only in the urban cantons where the church remained an oppressive seigneur.

The final answer is related to mercenary service. The economic dependence of the forest cantons on the institution has been noted. The area's opposition to religious reform may have developed from general resentment against Zwingli's outspoken opposition to mercenary service. The forest cantons declared Zwingli an outlaw in 1523 for publicly charging the Confederation with "selling Christian blood and eating Christian flesh."[21] Once Zwingli's position on mercenary service became well known, there was little chance that the forest cantons would accept religious reform.

In 1525 peasant rebellions swept across much of German speaking Europe, including the northern and western cantons of the Confederation. The five forest cantons of Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug and Luzern, however, remained peaceful, despite the unrest in the cantons surrounding them. This puzzling contrast between the two areas of the Confederation can be explained most convincingly in terms of their different social and religious institutions. A closer look at the actual rebellions and the written complaints that accompanied them will clarify the connection between these institutions and peasant unrest.

It is difficult to find a pattern in the peasant discontent that occurred throughout the northern and western cantons of the

Confederation. There is no evidence, for example, that rebellion began in Zuerich during the Reformation, and moved across the other cantons like a circular wave. Nor do the facts suggest that rebellion began in Germany and penetrated the Confederation from the north; Basel and Schaffhausen, the two cantons most directly exposed to southwestern Germany, were among the last cantons to experience trouble in 1525. Rebellious villages undoubtedly sent representatives to other nearby villages in search of support or to instigate violence, but there is no sign of a widespread conspiracy. The movement completely lacked organization and leadership even on the cantonal level. No attempt was made to form a peasant army from the bands of men involved in looting local monasteries, and no pitched battles occurred between peasants and Confederation troops. In nearly all cases the seigneurs subdued the peasants through negotiations rather than violence.

During the early months of 1525 the peasants from many areas of the canton of Zuerich refused to pay rents, tithes and lenten hens. The first violence occurred in April, after the abbot of Rueti, a local seigneur, suspected trouble and fled from his monastery. He took a collection of religious treasures from the town with him. The enraged peasantry, resenting the theft, plundered the monastery at Rueti, pillaged the wine cellar and razed the buildings to the ground. Peter Meier, the representative of the Zuerich Council, sent a report of the action and a list of complaints from the peasants of Gruenigen who had participated.[22] Another invasion of a monastery occurred at Toess later in the month. These and similar incidents were the only examples of mass violence in Zuerich. A more common pattern of peasant unrest was a peaceful assemblage before a bailiff's residence or a monastery, during which lists of complaints were submitted and then forwarded to the Council of Zuerich. These lists provide extensive information on the sources of peasant discontent in 1525.

The northern canton of Schaffhausen resembled Zuerich economically; it produced grain and wine which encouraged the survival of the traditional seigneurialism. Peasant unrest occurred there in July of 1524 after a hail storm ruined the crops in parts of the Klettgau and Hegau. The peasantry living in

Thaingen suffered shortages of grain and wine, and were unable to pay the tithes and rents. In the beginning of 1525 these peasants revolted and marched against the city.[23] Meanwhile, an Anabaptist preacher appeared in nearby Hallau and excited the peasants with radical sermons. The discontented subjects met at Loehningen and decided to refuse future payment of the tithe. During the week preceding Easter Sunday, angry mobs gathered before the city of Schaffhausen to demand entrance. The Council of Schaffhausen restored order by offering food and drink to the discontented and by promising to consider their complaints. The rebellion continued in the Klettgau and around the nearby town of Thaingen despite threats from various seigneurs to use force.[24]

Because of the lack of adequate source material, the peasant movements in Thurgau and St. Gallen will be briefly summarized. Thurgau, a canton held as a seigneurial possession by the Confederation, had an unruly peasantry. In 1524 the Confederation sent Bailiff Amberg to govern the area. Amberg assembled a regiment and threatened to punish any attempt to reform the Church or challenge Confederation authority. By 1524, however, radical preaching was already common. In July several bands of peasants from Frauenfeld, Wyl, Stammheim and other surrounding villages stormed the monastery at Ittengen and burned it to the ground.[25] Similar outbreaks occurred until the Confederation negotiated an uneasy peace with the peasantry in 1527.[26]

The abbey of St. Gallen also had a tradition of peasant unrest. Serious trouble began for the abbot in 1523 when the communities of Geusserwald and Straubenzell refused to pay the traditional taxes and brought complaints to the abbey. By 1525 unrest had spread throughout the abbot's lands and formal complaints were made to other members of the Confederation regarding the abbot's rule. On July 26 a mob attacked and destroyed the residence of the abbot's chief magistrate, Dr. Winkler. The magistrate escaped by hiding for several days in a secret tunnel under his courtyard.[27]

The canton of Bern also resembled the city cantons already considered. Bern's peasant unrest occurred in the grain producing areas where the traditional agricultural methods and seigneurial relations remained. The city had expanded its authority into the

countryside, and by 1525 most of the seigneurial rights were held by Bern or other lesser cities. Naturally, Bern itself held the majority of the key privileges.[28] Bern also had a traditionally rebellious peasantry; major uprisings had occurred in 1445 and in 1513.

Peasant unrest emerged in Bern again in 1523 when several villages refused to pay the tithe and the rents.[29] Dissent became especially prevalent in the eastern part of the canton, which was exposed to radical influence from Zuerich. In January of 1525 complaints from the countryside regarding the large and small tithes and local tolls had overwhelmed the Council of Bern. Three months later the Council published the Reformation Articles. Despite their title, the articles confirmed the political and religious status quo and admonished the peasantry to be regular in their payment of land rent, state taxes, the large and small tithes, and the inheritance taxes.[30]

The actual events of the peasant movement in Bern were unspectacular. The peasants refrained from storming monasteries or attacking officials. The dissenters' principal tactics were widespread disobedience, and refusal to pay tithes. Late in May, for example, large groups of peasants assembled in the villages of Schenkenberg, Lenzberg and Neuenburg to prepare lists of complaints.[31] These and similar lists provided a starting point for negotiations with the authorities.

The two northwestern cantons of Basel and Solothurn remained outwardly peaceful until the spring of 1525. Then, on April 28, the peasants of the bishopric and city of Basel, along with the peasants of Solothurn, rebelled and began to plunder local monasteries.[32] Peasant mobs also besieged the bishop's seat at Pruntrut. The town of Biel, a possession of the bishop with a staunchly Catholic and patrician council, soon become the target for religious and social upheaval. Both the city of Basel and the Liesthal suffered unrest. On May 3 a group of peasants assembled outside the city wall of Basel, but they found the city gates closed. In a letter dated May 3 the mayor of Muehlhausen told the Council of Basel about the peasants' attempt to overrun his town, and noted growing peasant mobs in the nearby villages of Hapgizhein and Richisshein.[33] On May 4 the Council of Basel requested the assistance of the Confederation to negotiate with

the unruly peasants.[34] The Confederation's arbitrators quickly restored order by considering the lists of complaints submitted by the peasantry.

The peasants from the northern Solothurn seigneuries of Dornach, Tierstein and Gilgenberg rebelled in late April, 1525 and joined with peasant mobs from the bishopric of Basel to storm the monastery of Beinwil. Afterwards they assembled with the peasants from the bishopric and took an oath of mutual support. Warnings from the city councils proved futile, for early in May a band of 2,000 armed peasants marched on the villages of Rynach and Pirs.[35] Delegates arriving from Bern to negotiate with the peasants found armed mobs threatening to destroy the cloisters and monasteries. By May 9, however, negotiations were under way, and the representatives of Solothurn could report that the entire day had been spent negotiating with the disobedient peasants.[36]

Most of the lists of complaints submitted by the discontented peasantry in 1525 came from the Northern and Western regions, principally because the forest cantons experienced no unrest. The complaints were generally of two kinds, reflecting the social and economic conditions of the peasants and the burning issues of the Protestant Reformation.

One of the most striking features of the complaints from the Confederation is the emphasis on religious issues. In Zuerich, the peasants from Gruenigen asked simply that God be their only lord.[37] The complaints from nearby Kyberg began with the statement that the peasants desired only to restore God's order on the earth.[38] Similar requests occurred throughout the northern and western cantons. Usually these complaints specifically mentioned the issues involving local preachers and the tithe.

The peasants were obviously aware of the religious controversies and sought to insure their own salvation through proper preaching. The peasants from Grueningen asked the city of Zuerich to appoint competent preachers who could teach "the proper word of God." [39] Other locales, including Kyberg in Zuerich and Thaingen in Schaffhausen requested the power to appoint their own preachers. In other areas of Schaffhausen the rebellious peasants merely requested that the city supply additional preachers and support them.[40]

The problem of supporting a local preacher was often associated with the tithe. In most parts of the Confederation the large cities had jurisdiction over the revenue from the tithes paid by the local peasantry. The peasants in several cantons resented city jurisdiction over this rich source of income. The articles from Loehningen in Schaffhausen stated that the local peasantry was willing to pay the tithes, but they wanted to regulate the amount and supervise the spending. The first portion would support a priest. Another portion should be used to buy masses for the dead and to pay baptism fees. The remainder of the tithe should support the destitute or be placed in reserve against difficult times.[41] Almost identical sentiments were expressed by rebellious peasants from Dornach in Solothurn, from the Liesthal in Basel [42] and from Ebenschwyl in Zuerich.[43] The peasants from Thurstetter in Bern petitioned that any farmer supporting a widowed mother (called "paying the widow's share of the grain") be exempted from the tithe obligation.[44]

Often the peasants refused to pay the tithe altogether, or qualified which portion of the tithe they considered unjust. The villages of Riffenschwyl and Regensberg in Zuerich agreed to pay the large tithe on grain and wine, but refused to pay the so called small tithe on other produce, because it was counter to God's law.[45] The grape pickers' guild in Schaffhausen stated simply that the tithe should be judged according to the scriptures, and if no justification could be found, it should be abolished.[46] The peasants from Tierstein in Solothurn agreed that the large tithe was set down in the Old Testament, but they asked that it be reduced in years that storms ruined their crops. The village of Thunstetten in Bern recognized its obligation to pay the hay tithe, but not the tithe on the second cutting of the grass.[47] Similar complaints were submitted by villages in Basel and St. Gallen, and from other villages in cantons already mentioned.

The villages complaining of secular economic and social problems tended to emphasize issues related to seigneurialism, such as serfdom, rents, taxes, and legal jurisdiction. For the sake of clarity the burdens associated with serfdom, namely the days of labor owed to the seigneur, the inheritance and death taxes, and the annual contribution of a lenten hen, will be discussed together.

Almost without exception lists of complaints from Zuerich asked for the abolition of serfdom and its burdens. The peasants from the seigneury of Regensberg noted that it was against God's law to have lords, and serfdom should, therefore, be abolished.[48] The complaints from Gruenigen, also in Zuerich, simply stated "no man should be a serf." [49] Articles from Tierstein in Solothurn asserted that the local serfs were so overburdened that they could not feed their children. The articles made clear that the peasants ". . . don't want to be the property of the lords." [50]

Grievances against the days of forced labor were especially prominent in Zuerich and Bern. The articles from Gruenigen stated "no man should owe days of labor," and the peasants from Regensberg complained of days spent fixing the wells for the burghers of the city.[51] Turning to Bern, the complaints from the villages under the jurisdiction of Thunstetten pointed out that a local peasant owed the seigneur three days of plowing, one day of transporting wood, and one day of cutting hay per year. If a son or daughter moved to a separate cottage, he or she also performed these days of labor. They requested that this practice be halted. Peasants from the villages of Utzendorf and Buetterkinder complained of traveling to work in turnip fields, and requested that the burden of carting supplies to the local manor house be lifted.[52] Similar complaints were submitted by villages in Basel, Schaffhausen and Solothurn.

The inheritance and death fees were among the most despised of all burdens associated with serfdom. Villages complained of the traditional fees in every area in which unrest occurred. The villages of Ebenschwyl and Riffenschwy in the canton of Zuerich, for example, claimed that death and inheritance fees prevented an honest man from providing for the welfare of his survivors.[53] In Greifensee the subjects demanded that the lords discontinue the practice of taking a man's best clothing and possessions at his death.[54] An identical complaint was voiced by the serfs of Tierstein in Solothurn.[55]

Protests against customary restrictions on the peasants' rights to hunt, fish and gather wood from the forest were almost as common as complaints against serfdom.[56] Laws protecting the game for the pleasure and nourishment of the wealthy were common in western Europe. These laws became especially

oppressive, however, in famine years, for they deprived the poor of a valuable source of meat. Complaints against these laws circulated throughout Germany, Austria and the Confederation during 1525, and can be found among the famous Twelve Articles of Southwestern Germany. In Zuerich, the subjects from Greifensee stated that since God put all animals on the earth, all men, both rich and poor should have the right to hunt.[57] The peasants from Regensberg suggested that all "unreasoning" wild animals such as fish, birds, bees (for honey) foxes and rabbits should be free for the taking.[58] Villages in Basel requested "free use" of fields, forests and rivers, for gaming and for gathering fuel.[59]

Another burden that became most oppressive during famine years was the rent payments owed to the seigneur. Generally, the Confederation's peasantry made these payments in kind, which deprived the rural family of a substantial part of its own produce. The peasants from Kyberg in Zuerich informed their seigneur that the continual payment of grain was a great burden; they requested that "letters and seals" be presented to the peasants to prove the validity of the rents.[60] The peasants from Greifensee complained that charging land rents in wheat, wine and oats was "ungodly."[61] The village of Siblingen in Schaffhausen requested that the rents be adjusted according to weather conditions. The peasants reminded the seigneur that when "Almighty God" visited bad weather upon them crops were ruined and, therefore, less rent should be paid.[62] The peasants from nearby Utzendorf requested that a household with a newly born child be exempt from the rents. They claimed that each child increased the lord's possessions, and the year's rents would compensate the parents for expenses.[63]

Complaints from Bern even criticized the lord's misuse of the rent money; Thunstetten, for example, accused the lord of committing usury with their rent.[64] In addition, several villages in Solothurn objected to the high rents, and suggested that a widow's estate be exempted from rent payments.[65]

Unfortunately, it is impossible to discuss all the complaints appearing on the lists submitted in 1525. Only the most consistently emphasized grievances appear above. Other less common complaints concern such topics as marriage, pledges of

obedience, the peasant's right to buy and sell land, and the problem of mercenary service. Many dealt with specific local problems. In Basel, for example, the peasants from Muenchenstein complained that sheep and pigs from the monastery of St. Jacob were allowed to run wild in their village.[66]

The accounts of the unrest of 1525, and the written complaints submitted substantiate the thesis that the continued existence of seigneurialism, along with the climate of religious consciousness created by the Reformation were major factors in determining the behavior of the rebellious peasants in the northern and western cantons. Consequently, one may also suggest that the early disappearance of seigneurialism and the resistance to the Reformation that characterized the forest cantons contributed to the lack of peasant unrest in this region. Such conclusions seem clear, but much additional work on the local level is necessary for confirmation. The grievances discussed above present an excellent point of departure. The complaints requesting religious reform invite close scrutiny of the local effect of the Reformation in the Confederation. Very little has been published on this critical topic. The peasants' complaints also emphasized the unpopularity of seigneurialism in the sixteenth century. A study which explained the regional differences in this institution would be extremely helpful. Finally, studies of specific rural villages which were under the jurisdiction of the cities in the urban cantons such as Basel or Zuerich would clarify issues involving rents and taxation. Until historians resolve these basic issues, conclusions on the unrest of 1525, or other specific topics, remain unproven.

NOTES

1. Josef Macek, *Der Tiroler Bauernkrieg und Michael Gaismair* (Berlin: V.E.B. Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1965), p. 359.

> There were some who did not want lords,
> They are subjects of neither the grave (?) nor the Kaiser.

and

> We should revolt like the Swiss
> So that all the nobles
> Will be driven from the land.

2. Wilhelm Oechli, *History of Suntzerland 1499-1914*, trans. Cedar Paul (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1922) p. 7.

3. V.C. Kiernan, "Foreign Mercenaries and Absolute Monarchy" in Trevor Aston, ed. *Crisis in Europe 1560-1660* (Garden City: N.Y., 1967), p. 130.

4. Oeschli, *History*, p. 7.

5. Hans Nabholz, et al., *Geschichte der Schweiz*, Vol. I (Zurich: Schulthess and Co., 1932), p. 318.

6. Werner Roellin, *Siedlungs — und Wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Aspecte der mittelalterlichen Urschweiz bis zum Ausgang der 15. Jahrhunderts* (Zurich: Fretz und Wasmuth, 1969), p. 40.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-48.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

9. The poverty of the forest cantons is a prominent theme of Swiss economic history. A brief discussion of the problem may be found in A. Hauser, *Schweizerische Wirtschafts — und Socialgeschichte* (Zurich: 1961), p. 84. The forest canton's dependence on imported grain is explained in Hans-Gerd von Rundstedt, *Die Regelung des Getreidehandels und der deutschen Schweiz im spater Mittelalter und am Beginn der Neuzeit* (Stuttgart: R. H. Aubin, 1930), p. 36. W. Bickel describes the economic and demographic history of the forest cantons in his *Bevoelkerungsgeschichte und Bevoelkerungspolitik der Schweiz seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Zurich: Guteberg, 1947), p. 47.

There are many additional indications that the forest cantons were agriculturally unproductive as seigneurial holdings. In general, two different types of agriculture existed side by side in the forest cantons. The valley floors were cultivated in the traditional manner, producing grain and some wine. In the mountainous regions, however, cattle grazed on the thinner vegetation, and the region became famous for its brown cattle and milk products. In the Late Middle Ages this agricultural economy underwent an important change. Because of the increase in population during the period, the forest cantons could no longer grow enough grain to feed their inhabitants and began to import massive amounts of grain through Zuerich and Luzern. The mountainous topography prevented the grain production from increasing at the same rate as the population. The alpine herding economy was intensified; and, indeed, A. Hauser suggests that by the sixteenth century the forest cantons produced virtually no grain. Hauser bases this view largely on written correspondences between Schwyz and Zuerich in 1530, in which Schwyz begged Zuerich to export greater quantities of grain to her. The forest cantons exported milk products from the fourteenth century onward, but the most important result of the intensification of the herding economy was the exportation of cattle and horses. This began in the fifteenth century, and the brown cattle from the forest cantons reached as far as Hungary and Poland. Active cattle markets developed in Luzern and Zuerich, but the greatest number of export cattle were driven south through the Gottard Pass into Italy to be sold in Bellinzona, Lugano, Como, Chiasso, and Milan.

The conversion to a predominately herding economy after the elimination of seigneurialism does not alone account for the poverty of the forest cantons. Nor does it necessarily account for their undesirability as seigneurial holdings inasmuch as herding existed while the seigneurial lords still governed. However, the change in the economy does show that the traditional agricultural methods were insufficient to support the population. It does suggest that an extensive re-

form could become possible only after the peasants had escaped the restrictions of their former lords and become largely self-governing. See Hauser, pp. 85-86, and Roellin, p. 81.

10. Samuel M. Jackson, *Huldreich Zwingli, The Reformer of German Switzerland, 1484-1531* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), p. 18.

11. Edgar Bonjour, *Die Bauernbewegungen des Jahres 1525 im Staate Bern*, Diss., Bern. (Bern; May Drechsel, 1923), p. 18.

12. Bickel, *Bevoelkerungsgeschichte*, p. 49.

13. Bonjour, *Die Bauernbewegungen*, p. 18.

14. Jackson, *Zwingli*, p. 71.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

16. For a discussion of Zwingli's position on the tithes see Jackson, *Zwingli*, p. 156, and Robert C. Walton, *Zwingli's Theocracy* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967), pp. 103, 110, 143.

17. The following was a contemporary anti-Zwinglian ballad:

> Der Zwingli und sin rott,
> Sind heilig vor Gott,
> Wie Judas der Zwoelffbott,
> Der was ein verrater und ein Dieb
> Gang du hin, und heb den Zwingli lieb.

Zwingli's supporters replied with a similar verse:

> Zwingli und d'evangelisch rott,
> Sind fromm Christen vor Gott,
> Der gottloss macht druss ein spott,
> Ist vor Gott ein moeder und ein Dieb.
> Die Zwinglis parthi Gott lieb.

Heinrich Bullinger, *Reformationsgeschichte nach dem Autograph*, Vol. I (Frauenfeld: ch. Beyer, 1840), p. 48.

18. In Uri and Schwyz the peasants dealt harshly with those few reformed preachers who penetrated their border. The government of Luzern jailed even traveling laymen suspected of heresy. In a letter written to the council of Bern on April 21, 1525 the city of Luzern described a prisoner:

> Hans Gloettli of Maschwander, who is now a prisoner here says he learned the following things from Master tailor Miescher of Kirchberg at Burgdorf (in Zuerich).

The prisoner denied the existence of purgatory, and denied that the Holy Virgin or the Angels could dispense grace. When punished for his crimes Gloettli made the perplexing statement that "It was written among the evangelists that it was not good to take bread from a child and give it to a dog." Johann Strickler, *Actensammlung zur Schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte 1521-1532*, Vol. I (Bern: 1889) no. 1057. The above is a useful collection of official documents related to the Reformation in the Confederation.

19. William Martin, *Switzerland from Roman Times to the Present*, trans. Jocasta Innes (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 61.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
21. Oeschli, *History*, p. 94.
22. Emil Egli, *Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zuercher Reformation in den Jahren 1519-1533* (Zurich: J. Schabelitz, 1879), nos. 699, 701, 702. Egli's collection of original source material is the best and most complete relating to Zurich.
23. Hans Nabholz, *Die Bauernbewegung in der Ostschweiz 1524-1525*, Diss. Zurich (Bulaech; h. Graf, 1898), p. 65.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
25. A. Farner, "Die zeitgenoesseschen Berichte ueber den Ittingen Sturm" in *Anzeiger fuer Schweizerische Geschichte* (Bern: No. 2, 1900), p. 277.
26. Nabholz, *Bauernbewegung*, p. 103.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
28. Bonjour, *Bauernbewegungen*, pp. 11, 12.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
30. Rudolf Steck and Gustav Tobler, *Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Berner Reformation 1521-1532*, Vol. I (Zurich: Dr. Paul Weiss, 1950), no. 601.
31. Bonjour, *Baurenbewegungen*, p. 59.
32. Guenther Franz, *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg* (Darmstadt: Herman Gentner Verlag, 1933), p. 150.
33. Emil Durr, *Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Basler Refin den Jahren 1519 bis Anfang 1534*. Vol. I (Basel: Verlag der historischen und antiquarischen Gesellschaft, 1921), no. 400.
34. *Ibid.*, no. 402.
35. Guenther Franz, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Bauernkrieges* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1963), no. 89.
36. *Ibid.*, no. 89.
37. Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 702.
38. *Ibid.*, no. 702.
39. *Ibid.*, no. 702.
40. Guenther Franz, *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg, Aktenband* (Darmstadt: Wissenschlaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1933), no. 83.
41. *Ibid.*, no. 88.
42. Durr, *Aktensammlung*, no. 407.
43. Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 710.
44. Steck, *Aktensammlung*, nos. 155, 156.
45. Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 710.
46. Franz, *Aktenband*, no. 87.
47. Steck, *Aktensammlung*, nos. 115, 156.
48. Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 729.
49. *Ibid.*, no. 729.
50. Franz, *Aktenband*, no. 117
51. Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 729.
52. Franz, *Aktenband*, nos. 145, 156.
53. Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 729.
54. Franz, *Aktenband*, no. 117.
55. Durr, *Aktensammlung*, no. 729.
56. Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 729.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 710.
58. Franz, *Aktenband*, nos. 88, 89.
59. Durr, *Aktensammlung*, no. 407.
60. Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 703.
61. Franz, *Aktenband*, no. 90.
62. *Ibid.*, no. 147.
63. *Ibid.*, no. 147.
64. *Ibid.*, no. 146.
65. *Ibid.*, nos. 88, 89.
66. Durr, *Aktensammlung*, no. 407.