

Essays in German History

F. L. CARSTEN



ESSAYS IN GERMAN HISTORY

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F.L.CARSTEN

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PREFACE

The essays assembled in this volume deal with very different periods of German history, from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century. Yet there is a continuous thread running through all of them: an attempt to try and discover why the German historical development was so different from that of its neighbours in the west and in the east, why German history seemed to take the ‘wrong’ turning at every decisive point, why the forces of reaction were so often victorious over those which seemed to open the way to a more promising future. These questions – more easily put than answered – early on induced me to make comparisons with the history of more fortunate countries. As I did my researches and writing outside Germany, it was only natural to draw on the experiences of the countries where I lived, first in Holland and later England.

When I began my historical researches in Holland nearly half a century ago, my interests concentrated on the peculiar phenomenon of early ‘Prussia’, starting with the German colonization east of the Elbe. The conquest and the intermingling of Germans and Slavs did not seem to account for the characteristic traits of the later Prussia, and the Teutonic Knights did not seem to exercise any traceable influence on the kingdom which inherited their name and colours. More and more I found that the specific ‘Prussian’ developments – the rise of the Junkers, the subjugation of the towns, the destruction of the powers of the Estates – could only be explained by an analysis of the social changes in late medieval and early modern times. My Oxford thesis of 1942 was exclusively concerned with the agrarian changes which produced the ‘Gutsherrschaft’ of north-eastern Germany, and this had to be seen side by side with the decline of the once so powerful towns of the Baltic area, in contrast with the development elsewhere in Germany and in western Europe.

In the 1960s my attention began to focus more and more on the enormous mass of documentation which survived the downfall of the Third Reich. Yet, as some of the essays in this volume show, my interest in Prussia and the Prussian army remained as strong as ever. It certainly was no accident that my first book on a topic of the twentieth century was devoted to the role of the German army after 1918, in which the ‘Prussian spirit’ survived the defeat and the revolution: an army hostile to the world of democracy and the new republican order. My work in this field is surveyed in the essay “From Scharnhorst to Schleicher”, first published in a volume edited by Michael Howard. The antecedents and rise of National Socialism and of the Fascist movements were other obvious topics for someone who had lived through the 1920s and 1930s, first in Berlin and then outside Hitler’s Germany. Indeed, my interest in

these questions was first aroused when I was an active member of the German socialist movement in Berlin; the failure of the revolution of 1918-1919 and of the German labour movement had been some of the first historical problems which aroused my interest as a young student. To return to them in later life was like coming back to my earliest rather immature attempts. If anything, the distance of time and the masses of documents now available had only sharpened my interest. Finding some exciting new document in the archives is one of the great pleasures of the working historian, whether it confirms or contradicts an opinion held over a long time.

My work owes a great deal to the help and advice given by colleagues and friends considerably older than myself. Professor Norbert Elias first encouraged me to embark on what then seemed a very ambitious project of research, which many years later saw its fruition in *The Origins of Prussia*. In the 1930s Professor J.G. van Dillen in Amsterdam was good enough to accept for publication the first results of my work, some examples of which are included in this volume. At Oxford, I owed a great deal to the help which I received from three senior historians, Professor G.N. Clark, Mr. Reginald Lennard and Professor F.M. Powicke, and to the generous financial assistance given by Wadham and Magdalen Colleges. Most of all I owe to my wife from whose help and criticism I have benefited through many years. I am very grateful to Mr. Martin Sheppard and the Hambledon Press for publishing this volume of my selected essays, several of which have previously only been published in German.

F.L.C.

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FOR RUTH

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SLAVS IN NORTH-EASTERN GERMANY

THE relation between Germans and Slavs at the time of the medieval German colonisation east of the Elbe and the Saale is one of the most important aspects of this great movement. If it could be proved, first, that the Slavs as a rule were neither killed nor driven into the marshes or farther east, but stayed on, and secondly, that the remaining Slavonic population outnumbered the German immigrants, our whole estimate of the German colonisation, and not this alone, would be changed. This article tries to answer the first of the two questions for one region, namely the north-east of modern Germany. This area was subjected to three different types of colonisation : under the native Slavonic princes, in Pomerania and Rügen, under conquering German princes in the Brandenburg Mark, and thirdly under the Teutonic Order in Prussia.

I

We possess more documents about the colonisation of Pomerania and Rügen than about that which took place in the Brandenburg Mark, and in the former countries the problem is less disputed. The colonisation was carried through chiefly by the monasteries, which had been established since the middle of the twelfth century by the native princes. At a very early date they received estates of unusually large size, were awarded far-reaching rights, and soon began to develop their vast possessions. On these monastic estates German villages sprang up in quick succession, while the Slavonic inhabitants had been handed over to the monasteries with the land. As a rule, at the time of their transfer or soon afterwards, they were freed from their former burdens, and sooner or later placed under the jurisdiction of the village mayors and the *advocatus* of the monastery. Thus their legal position became the same as that of the newly settled German peasants, both entering into the same relationship with the monasteries.

The Slavonic peasants would naturally adapt themselves to the customs of the Germans and intermarry with them when living together in the same village. We have, in Pomerania, various proofs of this from the early thirteenth century. In the district of Tribsees from 1221 onwards the Slavs living together with the Germans in one village paid the tithe like the latter, whilst the Slavs, who had vacated their acres in favour of the Germans and now lived in

other villages, gave the *Biscoponiza*, the episcopal tribute.¹ And from 1241 the peasants of the monastery of Eldena were able to defend themselves in court according to their own law, but when they lived in the village of another nationality they had to use its laws.² The Slavs living in German villages soon adopted the German standard of agriculture, with the iron plough and the three-field system, as well as their laws and dues. This development spread even to the purely Slavonic monastic villages, as the monks were especially interested in the increase of their revenues resulting from it.

Various monasteries were expressly granted the right of using Slavs for the purpose of colonisation,³ probably because they could not introduce quickly enough a sufficient number of German peasants into the country. These Slavonic settlements served the same purpose as the German villages, and presumably from the very beginning had a similar constitution. Thus the old Slavonic villages of the bishopric of Cammin in East Pomerania gave the full unfixed tithe (*integra decima*), while the newly founded Slavonic villages had to pay, instead of the tithes, a fixed due from each hide, approximately the same as that given by the German peasants.⁴ In 1296 Slavonic peasants of a village belonging to the monastery of Buckow, under the guidance of their *villicus* Volzeko, were apparently acting as assessors in a village court.⁵ It may be assumed that amongst the so-called "German" villages many were entirely or partially occupied by Germanised Slavs, the formal bestowal of the *ius teuthonicum* on the Slavonic peasants of a whole monastery⁶ being only the seal of a transformation which already had taken place.

After the middle of the thirteenth century the process of Germanisation began to extend to the Slavonic peasants outside the

¹ *Codex Pomeraniae Diplomaticus*, edited by K. F. W. Hasselbach and J. G. L. Kosegarten, No. 134, p. 310.

² "Si quis vero in villis gentis alterius . . . elegerit habitare, volumus ut illorum iure utatur, quorum contubernium approbavit . . .": *ib.*, No. 400, p. 827.

³ "Vocandi ad se et collocandi . . . Teutonicos, Danos, Sclavos vel cuiuscunque gentis . . . homines . . .": privileges for the monastery of Dargun of 1174, for the monastery of Eldena of 1209, for the monastery of Neuenkamp of 1231, and for the monastery of Kolbatz of 1272: *ib.*, No. 36, p. 92, No. 88, p. 210, No. 188, p. 427, *Pommersches Urkundenbuch* (quoted as *Pomm. U.B.*), II, No. 963, p. 268.

⁴ *Ib.*, II, No. 976, p. 279, alleged to be of 1273. It is significant, however, that the latter rule is missing in the first version of this charter (No. 975, p. 277). It would seem that it was inserted later during the process of Germanisation.

⁵ *Ib.*, III, No. 1751, p. 259.

⁶ Monastery of Kolbatz in 1247: *Codex Pomeraniae Dipl.*, No. 368, p. 755.

monastic estates. Slavonic villages bought themselves free from the re-surveys undertaken by the princes to increase the number of hides and thereby their dues. At the same time, the villages received the assurance that they would possess their hides in perpetuity.¹ In 1276, John of Gristow, a relative of the princes of Rügen, fixed the boundaries of one of his villages and conceded to its inhabitants the free use of everything within its boundaries, while they were to give him and his heirs the customary dues.² Other Slavonic peasants bought the heritage of their hides³ and freedom from labour services. They also were exempted from the receptions and entertainment of the prince and his officials.⁴ In another case, the peasants were granted the right to marry freely and relieved from the duty of maintaining their lords' horses and hounds.⁵ Thus the Slavonic burdens were removed. All these charters fixed the yearly dues once and for all, bestowed upon the peasants the right to sell and bequeath, and freed the villages from every re-survey. In 1286, a man with the Slavonic name Bratus was *villicus sive burmester* of the village of Gugulis ;⁶ and in 1327 one John Prysław was village mayor of Schillersdorf.⁷ Thus, throughout Pomerania, Slavonic villages were peacefully transformed into German villages.

In his last will of 1302, Prince Vizlav of Rügen stipulated that the Slavs on his estates should in future enjoy the same freedom as they had had in his lifetime.⁸ There is no trace of any discrimination, persecution, or extirpation of the Slavs ; neither were they more burdened than were the German peasants : in 1314, Niendorf on the isle of Rügen, a " new " foundation (as its name shows) and one of the few villages with a German name, paid the highest dues per hide of all the villages on the island belonging to the prince.⁹

Germans and Slavs as a rule lived side by side here,¹⁰ and similar

¹ The first example to be preserved is from the year 1255, others from 1280 and 1291 : *Pomm. U.B.*, II, No. 616, p. 27, No. 1173, p. 432, No. 1181, p. 437, III, No. 1574, p. 125. ² *Ib.*, II, No. 1027, p. 319.

³ Thus 1296, 1307, and 1330 : *ib.*, II, No. 1788, p. 294, IV, No. 2351, p. 267, VII, No. 4592, p. 371.

⁴ Thus 1290, 1297, and 1324 : *ib.*, III, No. 1542, p. 102, VI, No. 3799, p. 240, *Urkunden zur Geschichte des Fürstentums Rügen unter den eingebornen Fürsten*, edited by C. G. Fabricius, III, No. 447b.

⁵ 1300 : *Pomm. U.B.*, III, No. 1927, p. 398.

⁶ *Ib.*, II, No. 1387, p. 599. ⁷ *Ib.*, VII, No. 4262, p. 87.

⁸ " Item volo et mando heredibus meis, quod Slavi mei . . . eandem libertatem habeant in omnibus, quam meo tempore habuerunt . . ." : *ib.*, IV, No. 2057, p. 68.

⁹ According to the roll of the dues of the island : *ib.*, V, No. 2918, pp. 191-9.

¹⁰ C. J. Fuchs, *Der Untergang des Bauernstandes und das Aufkommen der Gutsberrschaften nach archivalischen Quellen aus Neu-Vorpommern und Rügen*, p. 25.

conditions existed elsewhere.¹ According to a Pomeranian chronicle of the sixteenth century, the last woman to speak Wendish on the isle of Rügen died in 1404 ;² only in the east of Pomerania there existed " a few Wends and Kassubs in the country " about 1530.³

The Slavonic nobles quickly adopted German economic methods and feudal law, and tried to increase the revenues of their estates by founding German villages and towns. It is significant that while founding the town of Prenzlau in 1235 duke Barnim of Pomerania stated: *Nostris volentes utilitatibus et commodis providere . . . in terra nostra civitates liberas decrevimus instaurare. . .*⁴ Through intermarriage the amalgamation of the German and the Slavonic nobility was very much accelerated. By the end of the thirteenth century it had made great progress, and it is often impossible to ascertain whether a particular family is of German or Slavonic origin.⁵

II

The colonisation of the Brandenburg Mark differed from the peaceful colonisation of Pomerania and Rügen ; a German princely family—the Counts of Ballenstedt of the house of Anhalt, the so-called " Ascanians "—conquered and subjugated the different parts of the Mark during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is said that when Otto, the son of the first margrave Albrecht the Bear, was christened, he was given the county of Zauche by the childless Prince Pribislav of Brandenburg, and that Albrecht became Pribislav's heir on his death in 1150.⁶ But possibly the margraves only sought to prove their legitimacy in thus establishing a direct link with the former rulers. This in itself would indicate that there was no wholesale removal or extirpation of the Slavs, not even of the noble upper class. Of course, many a Slavonic nobleman died

¹ In 1327 three peasants of Stoltenhagen were expressly mentioned as *Slavus* : *Pomm. U.B.*, VII, No. 4291, p. 119.

² Th. Kantzow, *Pomerania*, edited by G. Gaebel, I, p. 316. J. W. Thompson, *Feudal Germany*, p. 449, n. 2, asserts that " the Slav tongue ceased to be understood in Rügen after the sixteenth century." N.B. This is about two centuries too late.

³ Kantzow, *Pomerania*, II, p. 153.

⁴ *Codex Pomeraniae Dipl.*, No. 219, p. 479.

⁵ W. von Sommerfeld, *Geschichte der Germanisierung des Herzogtums Pommern oder Slavien bis zum Ablauf des 13. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 228-9 ; M. Wehrmann, *Geschichte von Pommern*, I, pp. 110-11.

⁶ " Heinrici de Antwerpe Tractatus de Captione Urbis Brandenburg," *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptum Tomus, XXV, p. 483 ; " Cronica Principum Saxoniae," *ib.*, p. 477 ; " Pulcava's Böhmisches Chronik," *Codex diplomaticus Brandenburgensis*, edited by A. F. Riedel (quoted as *Riedel*), DI, p. 3.

in the battles, and others, who would not submit to the new rulers or to baptism, had to emigrate. But the above-mentioned report of the conquest of the town of Brandenburg tells of partisans of the margrave amongst the native nobility. And in 1208 we find the *Slavi nobiles Heinricus, Prizslaviz, Pribbezlawz et Andreas fratres* witnessing a charter of the margraves.¹

Soon the intermarriage between the German and Slavonic nobility increased to such a degree that, as in Pomerania, all authentic indications whether a family was German or Slav are missing.² Only in one family of the high nobility, that of the lords of Friesack, can Slavonic origin be proved beyond doubt;³ while the same has also been alleged of two other families of the high nobility, the lords of Plotho and the Gans von Putlitz.⁴ As late as the fourteenth century, many knights had Slavonic Christian names,⁵ an almost certain indication of a non-German origin. On the other hand, even after the conclusion of the conquest some Slavonic noblemen, either voluntarily or under pressure, gave up their estates. While the noble family of Friesack seems to have died out after 1290,⁶ the noble Jaczko of Salzwedel, in the Old Mark, who in 1235, centuries after the conquest of this district, was mentioned as a witness in one of the documents of the margraves,⁷ left the Mark a little later to acquire the county of Gützkow in Pomerania. As late as 1263, the *filius domini Jakeze* held possessions in the Old Mark.⁸ Yet another Slavonic lord, John of Havelberg, lost his

¹ Riedel, III, No. 11, p. 89.

² A. F. Riedel, *Die Mark Brandenburg im Jahre 1250*, II, p. 39; L. von Ranke, *Zwölf Bücher Preussischer Geschichte*, Sämtliche Werke. XXV, I, p. 11; B. Guttmann, "Die Germanisierung der Slawen in der Mark," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, IX, 1897, p. 455; W. von Sommerfeld, *Beiträge zur Verfassungs- und Ständegeschichte der Mark Brandenburg im Mittelalter*, pp. 45-6.

³ Riedel, I, p. 269, VII, p. 42, XXVI, No. 244, p. 189.

⁴ G. W. von Raumer, "Der Senioratslehnhof der Freiherren Edlen von Plotho auf Parey bei Burg im Herzogtum Magdeburg," *Allgemeines Archiv für die Geschichtskunde des Preussischen Staates*, IX, 1832, pp. 290-4. Riedel, I, p. 277, and von Sommerfeld, p. 23, deny this.

⁵ "Yvanus milens residens in Grabove." 1345; "Yvan von Nybede," 1355; "Pribislaus de Wopersnow," 1389; in the family von Redigsdorf occur the Slavonic Christian names Prizbur in 1274 and Ivan in 1317, 1341, 1350, 1352, 1354; in the family von Wartenberg Yvan in 1352, Benesch in 1363, 1373, 1374, Wenzla in 1374, Janekow in 1387, Janco in 1397; in the family von dem Knesebeck recur Yvan in 1338 and 1367, and Paridam continuously until modern times; in the family von Wedel we find the Slavonic Christian name Czulis in 1286, 1291, 1296, 1398. All these examples are taken from Riedel's Codex.

⁶ The last of their charters belongs to this year: Riedel, VII, No. 2, p. 48.

⁷ *Ib.*, XXII, No. 6, p. 5. ⁸ *Ib.*, XXII, No. 17, p. 95.

estates at about the same time ;¹ but we do not know the reasons for these emigrations.

But apart from these few cases, there is no evidence of any dispossession of the Slavonic nobility. If they submitted to baptism and offered no political resistance, they remained in the country and mingled with the German knights to form a united upper class. Still less could the new masters have any interest in wiping out the Slavonic peasants, as this would have robbed them of their sources of revenue and their farmhands. Many documents show that an extraordinary number of Slavonic peasants remained on their farms. As late as the fourteenth century, many villages were described as *villa slavicalis* or as *Wendish*. Even the religious conversion progressed very slowly. As late as 1235, about two centuries after the conquest of the Old Mark, four villages belonging to the monastery of Diesdorf, in the extreme western part of this district, still retained pagan customs ; consequently, a church was to be built to forward the conversion of the peasants. Ten years later, this not yet being achieved, the peasants were warned that *Teutonici catholicae fidei cultores* were to be settled in their place if they still refused to become Christians.²

Economic inefficiency was another reason for which Slavs could be expelled, as is shown by an example from the possessions of the Ascanian house. In 1177, the prior of the monastery of Hamersleben besought margrave Otto to dispossess the Slavs of the monastic estates which they had hitherto neglected, and to settle in their place Germans, who as Christians would serve to benefit the monastery. The margrave complied with the request.³ This shows that such powers were vested in the margrave himself. There are some further proofs that Slavs could be displaced or expelled. In 1173 it was said that two villages of the monastery of Leitzkau were then occupied by Slavs, but should they later on be occupied by Germans they were to pay the monastery one-third of the tithes. In fact, fourteen years later both villages paid the tithe, but one also paid the Slavonic corn tax, the *Voꝛop*,⁴ and was therefore inhabited by Slavs ; possibly the other village was occupied by Germans at

¹ Between 1256 and 1283 : *ib.*, II, pp. 359-60, No. 1, p. 329, No. 9, p. 368.

² *Ib.*, XVI, Nos. 11-13, pp. 400-1.

³ " Veniens siquidem ad nos dilectus nobis Fridericus, eiusdem loci prae-positus, debita sollicitudine postulavit, ut ab eisdem praediis Sclavos, per quos eatenus neglecta erant, mutarem et Theutonicos, qui voluntati et utilitati eorum sub Christiana religione deservirent, subrogarem . . . Proinde ego . . . satisfeci petitioni ipsorum et desiderio . . ." : *Codex Diplomaticus Anhaltinus*, edited by O. von Heinemann, V, No. 553a, p. 297. We do not know if this refers to possessions in the Brandenburg Mark.

⁴ *Riedel*, X, Nos. 9-10, pp. 75-6.

this date.¹ At about the same time another Slavonic village was stated to have become deserted (*deserta facta*); many years later twelve hides of its land were given to German peasants.² The monastery of Chorin evacuated Slavs out of one of its villages.³ And in 1426 Margrave John reinstated his Wends of Kalbu, who had been expelled by his stewards, and at the same time reconfirmed all their old liberties, rights, and charters.⁴ The causes of these evacuations are obscure, but it is notable that in none of these latter instances can expulsion in favour of German peasants be proved.

The Germanisation developed rapidly in the Brandenburg Mark. As early as the eleventh century, in villages of the Old Mark belonging to the monastery of Corvey, peasants with German and Slavonic names lived side by side.⁵ In a village of the Havelland *cives and sclavi* lived together in 1302.⁶ In other villages, in the fourteenth century, *duo slavi*, a *Conradus Slavus*, or an *Elizabeth Slava* were specially mentioned,⁷ which indicates that the other peasants were Germans. In many a village, German and Slavonic fields or hides were lying side by side.⁸ As in Pomerania, new Slavonic villages were founded, and Slavonic villages transformed into German ones.⁹ The Slavs, like the German peasants, had to attend the General Assizes, the *Landding*,¹⁰ and in the towns they, like the Germans, stood under the jurisdiction of the mayor.¹¹ The Slavonic villages, like the German ones, had a village mayor,¹²

¹ Guttman, "Die Germanisierung der Slawen in der Mark," p. 448, holds the view that both villages remained Wendish, and that it was the Slavs who paid the tithes in 1187.

² A document of 1201 mentions it as a remote event: *Riedel*, XVII, No. 20, p. 346. *Riedel*, *Die Mark Brandenburg im Jahre 1250*, I, p. 147, seems to think that the village had become deserted because of a war.

³ In 1274 (?): *Riedel*, XIII, No. 18, p. 217.

⁴ *ib.*, XVI, No. 55, p. 49. This is the last charter which calls the inhabitants of this village *Wends*. Cp. the various privileges indicating a very favourable legal position of Kalbu of the years 1360-1536: *ib.*, Nos. 22-4, 26, 31, 38, 116, 149, 183, pp. 16-149.

⁵ Between 1053 and 1071: *ib.*, XVII, No. 9, p. 426.

⁶ *ib.*, XXIV, No. 38, p. 344.

⁷ *ib.*, XIV, No. 60, p. 49, II, No. 15, p. 31, XVI, No. 77, p. 438.

⁸ 1271, 1375, and 1491: *ib.*, XXII, No. 12, p. 8, IV, No. 97, p. 142; *Kaiser Karl's IV. Landbuch der Mark Brandenburg*, edited by E. Ffidicin (quoted as *Landbuch*), pp. 108, 126, 131.

⁹ e.g. by the chapter of Havelberg Cathedral before 1275: *Riedel*, III, No. 15, p. 93; frequently in the Ucker Mark according to a document of 1274 (?): *ib.*, XIII, No. 18, p. 217.

¹⁰ According to a charter for the district of Havelberg of 1275: *ib.*, III, No. 15, p. 93.

¹¹ Privileges for Salzwedel of 1247, and for Templin of 1320: *ib.*, XIV, No. 5, p. 3, XIII, No. 1, p. 165.

¹² Documents of 1226, 1375, and 1427: *ib.*, VIII, No. 53, p. 140, XVI, No. 26, p. 19, No. 56, p. 49.

who exercised the lower jurisdiction. These Germanised Slavs were considered Germans rather than Slavs. The foundation charter of the monastery of Diesdorf enumerates eight villages *quarum incolae adhuc Sclavi erant*,¹ *adhuc* presumably meaning up to the time of their conversion. A later charter of the same monastery mentions one *Bernardus, filius Slobe, quondam Slavus*.² Likewise a medieval chronicle speaks of the Pomeranians as : *Pomerani slavi, nunc Saxones, convertuntur per S. Ottonem. . .*³

It has often been stated that the Slavs were much more burdened with services and dues than the German immigrants. As in Pomerania, the Slavs originally gave the church the full tithes on the field (*more Polonorum* it was called in the New Mark), while the newly settled Germans paid a small fixed due instead.⁴ But as early as 1267, the Slavonic and German peasants of the whole district of Pritzwalk gave the same tithes fixed at a low level.⁵ As to the dues of cottagers, we have a document from the New Mark according to which Slavonic cottagers were considerably more burdened than the sole German cottager of the village ;⁶ while, in the Old Mark, *Elizabeth Slava* paid the same dues as the cottagers with German names.⁷ Slavonic hides, mentioned in the *Landbuch* of 1375, gave a little more in dues than the German hides in the same village.⁸ These few indications certainly do not prove that the Slavs were much more burdened than the Germans.

Presumably most of the class of the so-called *Kossaten* (cottagers) were Slavs. These were smallholders whose land was insufficient for their maintenance and who, therefore, had to work for peasants or noblemen. However, the situation of these cottagers was not unfavourable. Their holdings were called a *heritage*.⁹ In 1340, two cottagers in the Old Mark possessed a hide free from any dues whatsoever.¹⁰ In 1362, the cottagers of another Old Mark village, together with the peasants, bought a wood for common use.¹¹ In 1490, the cottagers of an Ucker Mark village appeared side by side with the peasants as witnesses in their village court.¹² And above

¹ 1160 : *ib.*, XVI, No. 2, p. 394. ² 1341 : *ib.*, XVI, No. 50, p. 422.

³ "Chronicon Theodoricii Engelhusii," *Scriptorum Rerum Brunsvicensium*, edited by G. W. Leibniz, II, p. 1096.

⁴ 1236, 1241, and 1243 : *Riedel*, XX, No. 5, p. 181, XIX, No. 1, p. 124, XXIV, No. 4, p. 3.

⁵ *Ib.*, II, No. 15, p. 449. ⁶ 1355 : *ib.*, XIX, No. 26, p. 78.

⁷ *Ib.*, XVI, No. 77, p. 438. ⁸ *Landbuch*, p. 108.

⁹ 1362 : *Riedel*, V, No. 81, p. 337. ¹⁰ *Ib.*, XVII, No. 19, p. 237.

¹¹ *Ib.*, V, No. 81, p. 337. ¹² *Ib.*, XIII, No. 85, p. 77.

all, the cottars had to render almost exactly the same services as the peasants.¹

The Slavonic language and customs persisted the longest in the *Kietze*, villages established originally under the protection of Slavonic castles, and mostly situated near the water. Their inhabitants could be considered as belonging to a certain piece of water and could be sold together with it² (presumably an old Slavonic institution), just as the peasants were sold together with the land on which they dwelt. The holdings of the *Kietzer* were likewise called a *heritage*,³ and as far as we know they had to render restricted services.⁴ As with the German villages, the *Kietze* had village mayors,⁵ jurymen, and their village court.⁶ The *Kietzer*

¹ The same services according to documents of 1335, 1360, and 1473 (*ib.*, X, No. 232, p. 463, Supplementband No. 27, p. 238, XIII, No. 131, p. 292); services of two days yearly in 1477 and 1485 (*ib.*, V, No. 299, p. 454, XI, No. 215, p. 429); of four days yearly in 1439 and in the bishopric of Lebus about 1400 (*ib.*, XXII, No. 289, p. 263; Riedel, *Die Mark Brandenburg im Jahre 1250*, II, p. 261); services of two days as compared with eight of the peasants at the end of the fourteenth century (Riedel, I, No. 9, p. 451); of six days as compared with four of the peasants in 1485 (*ib.*, XX, No. 92, p. 86). Only the cottagers of Nachtheide in the Old Mark had to render unlimited services in 1375: "VIII cossati Alberto pro servitio quamdiu vult . . .": *Landbuch*, p. 206.

² Documents of between 1321 and 1391: Riedel, VIII, Nos. 182, 194, 319, 334, 339, 380, pp. 224-361, VII, No. 28, p. 321, No. 56, p. 341.

³ 1389, 1450, and 1525: *ib.*, VIII, No. 380, p. 361, IV, No. 107, p. 156; *Landbuch*, pp. 272, 302; H. Ludat, *Die ostdeutschen Kietze*, pp. 164-5.

⁴ Exemption of the *Kietzer* of Wriezen from all services with the exception of boating and errands on the water if necessary in 1420 (Riedel, XII, No. 27, p. 430); manorial services of eight days yearly of the *Kietzer* of Spandau in 1437 and 1441 (*Codex Dipl. Brandenburgensis Continuatus*, edited by G. W. von Raumer, I, No. 117, p. 139; Riedel, XI, No. 141, p. 101); apparently also restricted services of the *Kietzer* of Küstrin in 1412 and 1511 (Riedel, XIX, No. 93, p. 60) and of the *Kietzer* of Arneburg in 1441 and 1452 (*ib.*, VI, Nos. 273, 275, pp. 204-6). The first document I know of which stipulates unrestricted services for *Kietzer* is one for the fishermen of Köpenick, Rahnsdorf, and Woltersdorf of 1487 (*ib.*, XI, No. 219, pp. 433-5), repeated in 1516 and 1649. But in 1375 the service of the *Kietzer* of Köpenick was valued at two *frusta* of money (*Landbuch*, p. 21) and thus fixed.

If Guttman, "Die Germanisierung der Slawen in der Mark," pp. 498-9, and Ludat, pp. 181-2, speak of unrestricted services of the *Kietzer* as an old Slavonic institution and, as proofs, quote documents of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries (a period of rapid deterioration of the peasants' situation) it shows how lightly such statements are made, the above documents apparently being unknown to them.

⁵ 1383, 1420, and 1589: Riedel, VIII, No. 351, p. 344, XII, No. 27, p. 430; Guttman, p. 501, n. 6; Ludat, pp. 162-3.

⁶ 1383: Riedel, VIII, No. 351, p. 344.

were not necessarily tied to the soil. In 1378 a nobleman stipulated that if he should ever wrong his Wends of Uscz, they were to be allowed to leave and go to another prescribed village, but had to render him, as before, services during the harvest.¹ All this indicates that the situation of the *Kietzer* was not bad, their Germanisation assimilating them to the rest of the country population. By the middle of the fifteenth century the Germanisation of the *Kietze* in the Brandenburg Mark had also been completed.²

In the New Mark, to the east of the Oder, and in the bishopric of Lebus, the colonisation started and German law was introduced before these districts came under the rule of the margraves who then proceeded with it without making any fundamental changes. Apparently, even the old Slavonic castle system remained intact ;³ and most of the Slavonic nobles remained on their estates,⁴ while the majority of the high noble families, the von Wedel, von Güntersberg, and von Borke, were probably of Slav origin.⁵ The immigration of German peasants also does not appear to have been very extensive. As late as 1345, two villages near Lippehne were expressly mentioned as *villae theutonicales*,⁶ showing that they must have been comparatively rare. To a large extent Slavs were used as settlers, and very often they lived side by side with Germans.⁷ In the bishopric of Lebus the German villages were founded on uncultivated land,⁸ no dispossession of Slavs taking place. And in the New Mark German peasants were granted *free years*,⁹ which were generally only given to settlers on new land.

¹ 1383 : *Riedel*, VIII, No. 319, p. 318.

² Guttman, pp. 501-2 ; Ludat, pp. 112-4, 123-5.

³ G. W. von Raumer, *Codex Dipl. Brandenburgensis Continuatus*, II, p. 117 ; *Die Neumark Brandenburg im Jahre 1337 oder Markgraf Ludwigs des Alteren Neumärkisches Landbuch*, p. 52.

⁴ Guttman, p. 495 ; P. von Niessen, *Geschichte der Neumark im Zeitalter ihrer Entstehung und Besiedlung*, p. 391.

⁵ As late as 1286 the von Wedel were mentioned as *Hasso, Zulitz, Ludeko* without a family name, and ranking before various German knights (*Riedel*, XIX, No. 1, p. 443) ; the Christian name Czulis frequently recurring in the family is certainly Slavonic. Von Niessen, p. 313, considers the von Güntersberg to be identical with the von Kenstel, who were Poles ; and the von Borke were undoubtedly Slavs (*Riedel*, XVIII, No. 1, p. 100). The von Liebenow had extensive estates as early as the time of the Poles, but were probably of German origin.

⁶ *Ib.*, XVIII, No. 32, p. 81.

⁷ Von Raumer, *Die Neumark Brandenburg im Jahre 1337 . . .*, p. 61 ; P. J. van Niessen, "Zur Entstehung des Grossgrundbesitzes und der Gutsherrschaft in der Neumark," *Programm des Schiller-Realgymnasiums zu Stettin 1903*, p. 19 ; von Niessen, *Geschichte der Neumark . . .*, p. 152.

⁸ Charter of 1252 : *Riedel*, XX, No. 10, p. 183.

⁹ 1232 and 1261 : *ib.*, XIX, No. 1, p. 1, XXIV, No. 7, p. 5.

These are the only documents of the Brandenburg Mark to give information on this important point. In the whole colonisation area, the iron plough enabled the Germans to break up hitherto untilled soil, while the Slavs could not drain the moors and marshes or clear the forests, which then covered great parts of Northern and Eastern Germany, nor build dykes against flooding by sea or river. Helmold's *Chronicle of the Slavs* expressly says that "the Hollanders received all the swamp and open country" (*terram palustrem atque campestram*) in the Old Mark near the Elbe.¹

Many Slavs became burghers of the towns. The foundation charter of the Neustadt Salzwedel of 1247 speaks of the *rustici teutonici sive sclavi* as future citizens of equal rights, both to come under the jurisdiction of the mayor.² As early as 1233, one *Wilhelmus Sclavus* was alderman of the important town of Stendal, while in 1266 *Johannes Slavus* became a member of the aristocratic guild of the clothdealers, and in 1287 *Conradus Slavus* was one of its officials. *Jacobus Slavus* was juryman (*scabinus*) of Stendal in 1272, alderman in 1285, and again in 1301 and 1307.³ In 1332 *Henneke Went* was alderman of the Altstadt Salzwedel, and in 1336 *Johannes dictus Went* was a burgher of this town.⁴ The Slavs in the towns mixed very quickly with the Germans and were entirely assimilated.⁵ All this shows that in the Brandenburg Mark also the colonisation and the mingling of Germans and Slavs took place in an essentially peaceful manner.⁶

¹ Helmold, *The Chronicle of the Slavs*, translated by F. J. Tschan, p. 235; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptorum XXI, p. 81. Thompson, *Feudal Germany*, p. 553, does not see the problem when he states: "The first German incomers into these regions had naturally . . . appropriated for themselves the tilled soil of the conquered Wends."

² *Riedel*, XIV, No. 5, p. 3.

³ *Ib.*, XV, Nos. 9, 27, 41, 62, 69, 112, pp. 10-82.

⁴ *Ib.*, XIV, Nos., 104, 108, pp. 75-8.

⁵ Guttman, pp. 504-5; Ludat, pp. 125-6.

⁶ There is no documentary evidence whatsoever that "Albrecht's (the Bear's) successors unfortunately abandoned this policy of toleration and the Wends were wantonly hunted down": thus Thompson, p. 447, n. 3, who refers to A. Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, IV, pp. 558, 609, for his assertion. But most of the documents quoted by Hauck are from the time of Albrecht the Bear, but do not concern the Brandenburg Mark. The only one referring to it expressly states that many Slavs still lived in the bishopric of Brandenburg in 1197 (Hauck, p. 609, n. 2; *Riedel*, VIII, No. 35, p. 122). On p. 578 Thompson states, on the other hand, that "in Brandenburg around Dessau, Wörlitz, and Pratau . . . a ruthless expulsion of the Wends took place under Albrecht the Bear and Wichmann of Magdeburg." But these three places did not belong to the Brandenburg Mark but to Anhalt. E. O. Schulze, *Die Kolonisierung und Germanisierung der Gebiete zwischen Saale und Elbe*, p. 130, asserts without any proofs: "Hier um Dessau, Wörlitz, Pratau fand denn auch

III

If, in any country of the colonisation area, a deliberate policy of segregating the nationalities was attempted, it was in the Prussia of the Teutonic Order. The struggles during the conquest of the country and long-drawn-out revolts during the following decades undoubtedly blotted out a great part of the native nobility and peasantry. Here we may indeed speak of an embittered resistance by the Prussians against the foreign knights during the first decades of their rule.

After the last big revolt of the Prussians, which began in 1261 and lasted for fourteen years, the Teutonic Order divided the Prussians into various classes. Those Prussian noble families who had remained loyal retained their extensive estates, were put on equal footing with the German nobility and speedily Germanised.¹ In particular, noblemen of Prussian origin were engaged, during the fourteenth century, in the colonisation of the eastern *wilderness*, no distinction at all being made between them and the German nobles.² The other native Prussians who had remained loyal were likewise tied by very real bonds to the Teutonic Order, becoming an elevated class, the so-called Prussian Freemen; while the disloyal and newly subjugated were made villeins. This was the fate of the majority of the Prussians in many parts of the country.³

The *Prussian Freemen* had to render military services as light-armed horsemen, to build new castles and to repair or pull down old ones at the Teutonic Knights' request, as it was regularly laid down in their *Handfesten*, while they were exempt from all other services and paid only a nominal due. In general, they were treated as Germans and were quickly Germanised. In the bishopric of Samland, as early as 1309, the *ius teutonicale* was bestowed upon two Prussians; ⁴ and thirty years later Prussian Freemen were simply called *Theutonici rustici*.⁵

ebenso wie im Brandenburgischen und um Jüterbock eine rücksichtslose Austreibung der Wenden statt, von der wir sonst in unsern Gegenden nicht hören." Cp. Guttman, p. 427, n. 4.

¹ E. Weise, *Die alten Preussen*, p. 24; H. Harmjanz, *Volkskunde und Siedlungsgeschichte Altpreussens*, D. 14.

² K. Kasiske, *Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens im östlichen Preussen bis zum Jahre 1410*, p. 146; H. und G. Mortensen, *Die Besiedlung des nordöstlichen Ostpreussens bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts*, I, pp. 63-4.

³ W. von Brünneck, "Die Leibeigenschaft in Ostpreussen," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanistische Abteilung*, VIII, 1887, p. 41; G. Aubin, *Zur Geschichte des gutsherrlich-bäuerlichen Verhältnisses in Ostpreussen von der Gründung des Ordensstaates bis zur Steinschen Reform*, p. 12; R. Kötzsche and W. Ebert, *Geschichte der ostdeutschen Kolonisation*, p. 88.

⁴ *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Samland*, edited by C. P. Wölky and H. Mendthal, No. 211. ⁵ *Ib.*, Nos. 302 and 308.

The *Prussian Serfs* could be removed from their farms and transplanted to other manors, but there was no question of a systematic dispossession in favour of the Germans. German villages as a rule were founded on uncultivated or assarted land, as is indicated by the many *free years* which they were generally granted. The serfs either managed their own holdings as peasants, or possessed small properties as *gardeners* (cottagers) and, in addition, worked on a manor, or they served as menials. They had to help the Teutonic Knights to build and repair castles and frontier fortifications, dykes and canals, and to do drainage work, which might take them at times far away from their domicile to the east of the country. Furthermore, they had to serve their lords in the fields, but probably these services were restricted according to the custom of the country.¹ Presumably the Prussian serfs had only a right of usufruct and not of property on the soil on which they dwelt, but their holdings were in practice hereditary. They could certainly freely acquire and bequeath movable goods, as long as they did not belong to the inventory of the farm.² The serfs were not tied to the soil and had only to pay a small ransom on leaving their lord.³ All this indicates that their situation was not so unfavourable. In any case, their economic Germanisation, beginning at the end of the thirteenth century, assimilated them to the German peasants.

First in the west of the country, and a little later in the east also, villages were granted to Polish or Prussian mayors for settlement; ⁴ while Polish villages were the first ones to be transformed according to German law, *ad utilitatem ordinis* as it was

¹ The Prussian Freemen were expressly freed from the mowing of hay and corn, from wood-cutting and wood-carting, *and the like* (*Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, I, 2, Nos. 329, 343, 347, 350). Had the tilling of the field—ploughing, sowing, carting of dung—been part of the Prussian services, it would have been enumerated as well.

² See K. Lohmeyer, *Geschichte von Ost- und Westpreussen*, I, p. 196; von Brünneck, pp. 42-3; H. Plehn, "Zur Geschichte der Agrarverfassung von Ost- und Westpreussen," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, XVII, 1904, pp. 434-5; Aubin, p. 14; Elisabeth Wilke, "Die Ursachen der preussischen Bauern- und Bürgerunruhen 1525," *Altpreussische Forschungen*, VII, 1930, p. 41; H. Harmjan, *Volkskunde und Siedlungsgeschichte Altpreussens*, p. 17.

³ Charter of 1263 which does not mention any conditions for leaving, and others of 1263-9, 1267, 1277, and 1280 stipulating a ransom of $\frac{1}{4}$ Mark: *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, I, 2, Nos. 204, 263, 353, 381, II, 3, No. 732.

⁴ e.g. 1295, 1300, 1310, and before 1325: *ib.*, I, 2, No. 650, II, 2, No. 604, II, 1, No. 7; *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Samland*, No. 242.

significantly stated in one case.¹ From now on the inhabitants became in every respect equal to the German peasants, paid their dues, and as a consequence the revenues of the Teutonic Order increased.

Prussians also became peasants in German villages, especially in the bishoprics. In 1326, the German and Prussian inhabitants of a village in the bishopric of Samland were granted by a special act of grace the German hereditary and criminal law.² The official who drew up the charter did not find anything remarkable in the fact that Germans and Prussians lived together in the same village; he merely considered it noteworthy that they came under the same law and the jurisdiction of the village mayor. Elsewhere, the jurisdiction over the Prussians in the village was reserved to the *advocatus* of the bishop.³ In the *Handfeste* of another Samland village German law was bestowed upon the Prussians who acquired a heritage in the village; but first they had to appear before the bishop,⁴ probably so that he could ascertain their economic efficiency. According to these charters the German and Prussian peasants had to pay exactly the same dues from their hides, no difference being made between them. An extraordinary number of Prussians were used as settlers in the bishopric of Ermland. Many Prussian mayors were granted villages for settlement, the peasants of which nearly always enjoyed German law.⁵ At the foundation of a village Prussian Freemen received hides in them, were submitted to the jurisdiction of the village mayor, and thus admitted into the village community.⁶ Prussian

¹ e.g. 1290, 1298, 1303, and 1312: *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, I, 2, Nos. 569, 700, 729, 801, II, 1, Nos. 73-4; *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, edited by C. P. Wölky, No. 247; *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, edited by C. P. Wölky and J. M. Saage, I, No. 137; Kasiske, p. 157.

² "Omnibus et singulis in memorata villa nostra Medenowe residentibus tam Teuthonicis quam Pruthenis ex speciali favore et gratia contulimus . . . ut in successione hereditaria nec non in excessibus seu violentiis quibuscunque . . . ad officium advocatiae spectantibus iure Theutonico omnes unanimiter gaudeant . . .": *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Samland*, No. 243.

³ *Ib.*, Nos. 244-5, 256, 286.

⁴ "Pruteni, si qui in eadem villa mansos seu hereditates emere voluerint, praedicto Culmensi iure cum ipsis uniformiter perfruantur, qui tamen, antequam idem ius assecuti fuerint, se nostro . . . conspectui praesentabunt . . .": *ib.*, No. 259 (1327).

⁵ *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, I, Nos. 277, 283, 288, 290, 292, 297, 299, 302; II, Nos. 2-3, 7, 19, 22-3, 50, 68, 85, 89, 97, 99, 101, 103, 106, 127, 133, 148, 159, 165, 187, 217, 247, 262, 279-80, 320, 337, 348, 361, 369, 435, 476, 487b; III, Nos. 48, 102, 167, 191, 311, 477, of the years 1336 ff.

⁶ *Ib.*, II, Nos. 138-9, 156, 207-8, 280, 318, 383, 435; III, No. 58; probably also Nos. 402 and 412, of the years 1349 ff.

peasants also remained in newly founded German villages,¹ while Prussian villages were granted Culmic law.² Probably the Prussian proportion of the population was very high in all the Ermland villages.³

The Teutonic Order itself also founded villages according to Prussian law and granted villages to Prussian mayors for settlement, but at first did not permit Germans to live side by side with less efficient non-Germanised Prussians. When the shortage of settlers became more noticeable in later years, this practice could not be maintained and was relaxed under certain conditions. Then it was stipulated in a number of *Handfesten* that Prussians using the wooden plough in a German village were required to pay the same dues as the Germans paid from their iron plough.⁴ This shows that the Order did not in the least object to Prussians living in German villages provided that they worked with the German plough and became economically Germanised and efficient; ⁵ then they could be trusted with the heritage of a German peasant. It may be safely assumed that amongst the so-called "German" peasants of the later period many were Germanised Prussians, exactly as we know this of many a "German" noble.

Before the end of the Middle Ages, the Germanisation had succeeded everywhere. Only in the Samland, where the Prussian population was at its densest, did their language and customs survive up to the end of the sixteenth century.⁶ Thus we see that in Prussia, as well as in the Brandenburg Mark and in Pomerania, the colonisation was accompanied by a process of amalgamation and assimilation. After the political resistance of the Prussians was crushed, nothing was further from the aim of the Teutonic Order than a policy of extirpation or dispossession of the Prussians.

In the whole area dealt with by this article the German villages seem preferably to have been founded on soil hitherto uncultivated

¹ 1349 and 1355 : *ib.*, II, Nos. 147, 223.

² 1379 and 1390 : *ib.*, III, Nos. 69, 245, 247.

³ Kasiske, p. 94.

⁴ "Und wer is, das ymant yn dem egenannten dorfe ein erbe mit eyne haken trebe und nicht mit eyne pfluge . . . dy sullen uns thun von dem haken als von eyne duczem pfluge . . ." : thus or similarly nine *Handfesten* of the years 1370 ff. : Kasiske, pp. 71, 73, 118 ; Mortensen, I, pp. 95, 97.

⁵ The decrees of the 15th century (a period of increasing shortage of menials and farmhands) which barred the settlement of Prussians on German hides (*Acten der Ständetage Preussens unter der Herrschaft des deutschen Ordens*, edited by M. Töppen, I, Nos. 72, 250, 286, 364) were not due to a policy of discrimination but were to check the desertion of the land and the shortage of menials, as was expressly stated by the Commander of Balga in 1425 (*ib.*, No. 344).

⁶ Plehn, p. 401 ; Kasiske, p. 158 ; Weise, pp. 22, 34-8.

or claimed from the marshes or woods (*aus wilder Wurzel*). In a thinly populated country, the Slavs and Prussians were too valuable to be annihilated or driven out. The large majority of them remained on their holdings and formed part of the peasant population. They had only to fulfil two conditions : first to adopt the German religion (significantly Christ was called *Teutonicus deus* by the Slavs) and therewith the tithe, and secondly the German methods of agriculture, enabling them to pay higher dues. If they refused to accept this they had to abandon their holdings. If they did comply with it they became Germanised and henceforth might as well be called Germans. This is exactly why the second question asked in the introduction, i.e. what proportion of the local population did the Slavs form, is so very difficult to answer. My personal impression is that the Slavonic or Prussian stock of the population was probably considerably larger than the German part. But much more local research work, geographical, ethnological, and medical, would be required to give any more definite answer.

THE ORIGINS OF THE JUNKERS

ALTHOUGH the Junkers of Brandenburg and Prussia only gained prominence in European history in the course of the nineteenth century, the foundations of their political and economic power were laid at a much earlier period. These foundations were: their large estates which were continuously encroaching upon the land of the peasants; the strict serfdom of the peasants and their children which persisted up to the nineteenth century; the rigid division of society into three main classes, nobility, burghers, and peasants, among which the nobility was dominant; the strong influence exercised by the Junkers upon the territorial princes who depended on their political support; their right of filling the higher posts in state and army; the identification of their own interests with those of the state.

It is well known that practically all these characteristics developed in the course of the sixteenth century, and that they were intimately connected with the transformation of the medieval agrarian system, the '*Grundherrschaft*', into a system of large estates producing corn for export, normally called the '*Gutsherrschaft*'. This system came into being only in eastern Germany and Poland during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; it not only entailed a complete revolution of the agrarian system, but it caused sweeping social and political changes from which the Junkers emerged as the all-powerful ruling class, the once free peasants having been reduced to serfdom and the towns to a mere shadow of their former wealth and power. Yet this manorial and political reaction has quite rightly been called 'capitalistic farming', or at least 'agrarian pre-capitalism';¹ for the farming of large estates was more rational from the purely economic point of view than that of small peasant holdings and produced a larger surplus for the market. This in its turn was a pre-condition of the growth of the cities of western Europe which could not buy sufficient corn from their immediate neighbourhood.

¹ Eileen Power, 'Peasant Life and Rural Conditions', *The Cambridge Medieval History* (1932), vii. 736; Otto Hintze, 'Wesen und Verbreitung des Feudalismus', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse* (1929), xix. 328.

The rise of the cities and industries of western Europe thus provided one of the motive powers for the decay of the towns of eastern Europe.

The manorial system of the middle ages, the 'Grundherrschaft', was very similar in most countries of Europe. Yet from this common starting-point entirely different systems developed in East and West. The famous German sociologist, Max Weber, forty years ago put this problem in the following form: It is an acknowledged fact that the 'Grundherrschaft' (consisting of peasants paying dues, side by side with landlords who did not have a considerable demesne) was everywhere the older, and in all major characteristics similar form of the manorial system, prevalent in the whole realm of European feudalism; thus the important question arises: how did it come about that this structural similarity led to such diverging developments in East and West? ¹ If we consider how deeply this diverging development was to influence the whole course of European history, and how well the causes of agrarian changes have been investigated for many European countries, it seems puzzling that, up to this day, the question put by Max Weber has not been answered satisfactorily, although many detailed studies have been published since. ²

If we try to find an answer to this question, we can exclude from the outset all parallel developments which took place in western as well as in eastern Germany and Europe. This applies in particular to the main argument of G. F. Knapp and his school, namely that the change of the methods of warfare compelled the knight to find new means of livelihood, to become a farmer himself and to acquire more and more land, hitherto farmed by peasants, for his demesne. ³ For, quite apart from the rights and wrongs of this much discussed opinion, the same force would have been effective in western Germany and western Europe as a whole, and it cannot therefore explain the entirely different development of East and West. This also applies to the more recently advanced theory, that the fall in the value of money caused a

¹ M. Weber, 'Der Streit um den Charakter der altgermanischen Sozialverfassung', *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 510.

² For Poland, J. Rutkowski, *Histoire Économique de la Pologne Avant Les Partages*, p. 106, has stated that the reasons for the agrarian transformation of the sixteenth century have not yet been established with the necessary clarity. The same has been stated for Germany by M. Weber, *loc. cit.* p. 510, and by W. Wittich, article 'Gutherrschaft', in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, 3rd edn. (1910), v. 210.

³ Thus G. F. Knapp, *Die Bauernbefreiung und der Ursprung der Landarbeiter in den älteren Theilen Preussens*, i. 37-8, and *Die Landarbeiter in Knechtschaft und Freiheit*, pp. 53-4; F. Grossmann, *Ueber die gutsherrlich-bäuerlichen Rechtsverhältnisse in der Mark Brandenburg vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert*, p. 16; S. B. Fay, 'The Roman Law and the German Peasant', *The American Historical Review* (1911), xvi. 251, n. 66; A. Bruce-Boswell, 'Poland and Lithuania in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *The Cambridge Medieval History* (1936), viii. 582.

shrinking of the income of the nobleman, which consisted of dues and rents, and thus induced him to increase his demesne.¹ For money economy was far more developed in the West than in the East, where dues were still largely paid in kind, so that the effect of the depreciation of currency must have been more strongly felt in the West.

As the system of 'Gutsherrschaft' only came into being in districts which had been colonized and Germanized in the course of the middle ages and in which Slavonic influences remained more or less strong, it is only natural that many historians should have tried to trace back its origins either to those Slav influences, or to the German colonization and the agrarian system which it created. For example, it has often been stated that not all farmers were granted the favourable conditions of German law at the time of the colonization, but that numerous Slavonic peasants continued to live under the harsher rules of Slavonic law, so that later the landlords were led to reduce the other peasants to the level of those living under Slavonic law.² Some writers have even gone so far as to consider the whole social system, and in particular the serfdom of the peasants, as it developed to the east of the Elbe, to be of Polish or Slav origin, and alien to German institutions.³

The persistence of Slav influences over a period of several centuries, however, is more than doubtful. For the Brandenburg Mark, which was to become the cradle of the Prussian State, there is no documentary proof whatever of unfavourable conditions among the Slavonic peasants in the fifteenth century. By that time, their Germanization had proceeded so far that all differences between them and the German peasants had disappeared.⁴ One document is quoted as a proof to the contrary :

¹ Thus H. Maybaum, *Die Entstehung der Gutsherrschaft im nordwestlichen Mecklenburg (Amt Gadebusch und Amt Grevesmühlen)*, pp. 108-16 ; A. Bruce-Boswell, *loc. cit.* p. 582 ; W. Maas, 'Zur Entwicklung der polnischen Agrarstruktur vom XV. bis XVIII. Jahrhundert', *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (1928), xx. 491 ; H. Rosenberg, 'The Rise of the Junkers in Brandenburg-Prussia', *The American Historical Review* (1944), xlix. 231.

² Thus G. von Below, *Territorium und Stadt*, pp. 24-5 ; B. Guttman, 'Die Germanisierung der Slawen in der Mark', *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte* (1897), ix. 491 ; P. von Niessen, *Geschichte der Neumark im Zeitalter ihrer Entstehung und Besiedlung*, p. 405 ; C. J. Fuchs, 'Zur Geschichte des gutsherrlich-bäuerlichen Verhältnisses in der Mark Brandenburg', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanistische Abteilung* (1891), xii. 22 ; F. Engels, 'Zur Geschichte der preussischen Bauern', introduction to: W. Wolff, *Die Schlesische Milliarde*, edited by F. Mehring, p. 65 ; M. Weber, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 91.

³ Thus E. Schmidt, *Geschichte des Deutschtums im Lande Posen unter polnischer Herrschaft*, p. 186 ; F. Mager, *Geschichte der Landeskultur Westpreussens und des Netzebezirks*, pp. 48-9, 56 ; F. Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, ii. 273, and *Freiherr vom Stein*, p. 53.

⁴ For all details, see F. L. Carsten, 'Slavs in North-Eastern Germany', *The Economic History Review* (1941), xi. 67 ff. See above, chapter 1, p. 7ff.

a late fourteenth-century survey of the possessions of the Brunswick monastery of Amelungsborn in the border district between Brandenburg and Mecklenburg. In one village, it was stated in this survey, the *mansi* 'belong to the monastery and not to the peasants, nor are they appropriated to the farmsteads, but only leased, according to Slavonic law, so that they can be taken away from the peasants if they do not satisfy the monastery in paying dues, and can be let out to other peasants. . .'.¹ Of the *mansi* of another village it was said that they 'are not given to the village community to farm but to the more loyal and reliable peasants. . .';² but in this case it was not stated that this was a Slavonic custom. The author of this survey obviously thought these conditions so exceptional that they needed special mention; for no similar remark occurs with regard to the other villages of the monastery. It would be a mistake to conclude from this document that these conditions were typical of the position of the Slavonic peasants of Brandenburg;³ for it was expressly stated that these villages belonged to Mecklenburg, and not to Brandenburg.⁴

In Prussia, the distinction drawn by the Teutonic Order between the Prussian (i.e. Slavonic) Serfs on the one hand and the German peasants and Prussian Freemen on the other, was originally much sharper than anywhere else in the colonization area. But here also, before the end of the middle ages the economic Germanization of the Prussian serfs brought them to the same level as the German peasants.⁵ Curiously enough, in Prussia the opposite argument could be made: the one district of Prussia where '*Gutsherrschaft*' never developed was the bishopric of Ermland,⁶ and this is exactly the district where the native Prussians were particularly numerous.⁷ This shows to what

¹ ' . . . sunt monasterii et curiae et non villanorum, nec sunt ad areas curiarum villae appropriati, sed simpliciter locati, secundum ius Slavicale, ita sane, cum cultores villae non satisfaciunt in pactis curiae nec sufficient tunc mansi possent auferri ab eis licite et locari aliis agricolis pro pactis . . . ': *Codex diplomaticus Brandenburgensis*, edited by A. F. Riedel (quoted as Riedel), I, no. 9, p. 457.

² ' Mansi non dantur communitati ad colendum, sed fidelioribus et certioribus in ipsa villa . . . ': *ibid.* p. 454.

³ This has been done by B. Guttmann, *loc. cit.* p. 491, and P. von Niessen, *op. cit.* p. 405.

⁴ ' Haec villae et mansi praedicti in dominio terrae Slaviae sunt siti . . . ': Riedel, I, 458. *Slavia* was, significantly enough, the medieval name of Mecklenburg.

⁵ H. Aubin, 'The Lands East of the Elbe and German Colonisation Eastwards', *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, I, 369. For details see F. L. Carsten, above, p. 13 ff.

⁶ G. von Below, *op. cit.* p. 91; H. Rosenberg, *loc. cit.* p. 229.

⁷ H. Aubin, *loc. cit.* p. 369; F. L. Carsten, above, pp. 14-15. Already G. von Below, *op. cit.* p. 90, has observed that large estates are most widespread in the predominantly German parts of the area around Königsberg, so that the relation would be exactly opposite to the one usually assumed: the stronger the German influence, the larger the estates!

strange conclusions the whole argument of the comparative importance of Germanic and Slavonic influences can lead ; in reality, the national characteristics or institutions of either nationality had nothing whatever to do with the origins of ' *Gutsherrschaft* '.

There is, however, one other (and apparently much more convincing) argument which also traces back the origin of ' *Gutsherrschaft* ' to the colonization period, basing itself not upon alleged national characteristics but upon economic developments. It runs briefly as follows : from the beginning the estates granted to the immigrating German knights, and those retained by the Slav noblemen, were much larger, and demesne farming was much more prevalent than in western Germany and western Europe as a whole ; large-scale production of corn for export by nobles did not only start in the fifteenth century, but much earlier ; in short, ' *Gutsherrschaft* ' did not originate in the fifteenth century, but ' was always there '.¹

When the German colonization to the east of the Elbe started, the manorial system of western Germany and western Europe had already moved far towards the disintegration of the manor and the gradual substitution of demesne farming by peasant farming. This development was intimately connected with the growth of money economy and the towns ; it was strongest in their vicinity,² as they provided the market for the sale of the peasants' produce.³ Compact estates had been split up, and in their place ' *Streubesitz* ' (the possessions of a landlord consisting of scattered small pieces of land and rights within a considerable area) had become more and more prevalent. This system could obviously not be introduced in the East where its pre-conditions were lacking ; many large and compact estates were granted, and demesne farming was probably rather widespread. For example, in the New Mark in 1337 (that is, not so long after the beginning of the colonization of this district) demesnes covered nearly one-seventh of the total land under cultivation.⁴ In the agreement of 1283 between the margraves of Brandenburg and

¹ This argument has recently been put forward very strongly by H. Rosenberg in *The American Historical Review* (1944), xlix, 228 ff. Dr. Rosenberg bases himself mainly on G. Aubin's study, *Zur Geschichte des gutherrlich-bäuerlichen Verhältnisses in Ostpreussen von der Gründung des Ordensstaates bis zur Steinschen Reform*. But the conditions in the State of the Teutonic Knights were by no means typical of eastern Germany.

² See Eileen Power, *loc. cit.* pp. 727-8.

³ M. Weber, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 90, and 'Der Streit um den Charakter der altgermanischen Sozialverfassung', *loc. cit.* pp. 510-11 ; J. Rutkowski, 'La Genèse du Régime de la Corvée dans l'Europe Centrale depuis la Fin du Moyen Age', *Extrait de la Pologne au VI-e Congrès International des Sciences Historiques* (1928), p. 3 ; F. L. Ganshof, 'Medieval Agrarian Society in its Prime', *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, i. 322.

⁴ 1733 *Hufen* out of a total of 12,388. These 1733 *Hufen* belonged to 187 estates so that their average size amounted to more than nine *Hufen* (i.e. about two to three peasant farms) : C. J. Fuchs, *loc. cit.* p. 20. H. Aubin, *loc. cit.* p. 388, has 8½ *Hufen*.

their vassals, it was assumed that the average size of a knight's demesne was six *mansi*, and that of a squire's, four.¹ But that was only about 50 to 100 per cent. larger than the average peasant farm which, in Brandenburg, comprised two to four *mansi*.² It has always been thought that a straight development led from this starting-point to the large demesnes of the sixteenth and later centuries.³ The main source for Brandenburg, the '*Landbuch*' of 1375, indeed shows widespread demesne farming. Their average size in the Old Mark amounted to only 3·7 *mansi*, in the Ucker Mark to 6·2, and in the Middle Mark to 7·6; in the latter, the demesnes covered less than one-tenth of the total cultivated soil.⁴ Although these figures were about the same as those of the previous century, it has been presumed that they represent a growth of the demesnes through the absorption of peasant land since the colonization,⁵ and that this process then continued into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, from the very beginning the whole development in the East would have been exactly opposite to that in the West.

It can be clearly shown, however, that the development in East and West, up to the fifteenth century, took place along parallel lines, and that, with the growth of the towns, the manorial system disintegrated in the East as well. It is only surprising that, apparently, all these proofs have not been noticed previously.

In the early colonization period demesne farming was undertaken not only by noblemen, but to a considerable extent also by the monasteries, in particular the Cistercian foundations. Their '*grangiae*' were frequently mentioned in the charters of Brandenburg and of Pomerania. The Pomeranian monastery of Eldena alone, in 1280, possessed seven granges.⁶ The monks even had the right to convert their villages into granges and to pull down houses for this purpose.⁷ Only a few decades later, however,

¹ 'Miles sub aratro suo habebit sex mansos, famulus vero quatuor, et hii erunt penitus liberi, et si plures quidem habuerint, de his dabunt census praelibatum . . .': Riedel, *op. cit.* C i, no. 9, p. 11.

² W. Gley, *Die Besiedlung der Mittelmark von der slawischen Einwanderung bis 1624*, p. 81. In the West, many demesnes were originally considerably larger than a peasant farm: cf. G. F. Knapp, *Die Landarbeiter in Knechtschaft und Freiheit*, p. 47. The *mansus* or *Hufe* was, like the English hide, a variable measure of land, originally considered sufficient to maintain a peasant family; in the colonization area, however, most peasants from the outset received several *Hufen*, as there was a surplus of land.

³ Thus G. von Below, *op. cit.* pp. 25 ff., and article 'Grundbesitz' in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, 4th edn., Supplement, p. 442; F. Grossmann, *op. cit.* p. 10; M. Weber, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 81; Eileen Power, *loc. cit.* p. 736; H. Aubin, *loc. cit.* p. 389. See further the literature quoted below in footnote 1, p. 154.

⁴ F. Grossmann, *op. cit.* p. 7; C. J. Fuchs, *loc. cit.* p. 21; H. Aubin, *loc. cit.* p. 388.

⁵ H. Aubin, *loc. cit.* p. 388; J. Schultze (editor), *Das Landbuch der Mark Brandenburg von 1375*, p. xviii.

⁶ *Pommersches Urkundenbuch*, ii, no. 1171, p. 430, no. 1221, p. 463.

⁷ Privileges for Eldena of 1295, and for Neuenkamp of 1285: *ibid.* iii, no. 1710, p. 228; ii, no. 1322, p. 545. One example: 'Kusiz et iterum Kusiz quae villae redactae sunt in grangiam Kusiz nominatam . . .': *ibid.* ii, no. 1233, p. 473 (1282).

the reverse process began. In 1326 the monks of Eldena acquired the right to convert two of their granges into villages; ¹ a 'curia' was transformed into a village in 1357, and a demesne in the immediate neighbourhood of the monastery in 1407.² Six granges of another great Cistercian monastery, Kolbatz in eastern Pomerania, were converted into villages about the middle of the fourteenth century.³ Two Cistercian foundations of the Ucker Mark, Chorin and Himmelpfort, were also granted the right to lease their 'curiae' or to transform them into villages.⁴ A 'grangia' of the Silesian monastery of Leubus in Brandenburg developed into a village; ⁵ the same happened to a 'curia' of the Benedictine nunnery of Spandau,⁶ and to a 'hoff' of the Hospitallers near Berlin.⁷

It could, of course, be argued that what applied to the monastic estates, did not necessarily apply to the demesnes of noblemen; for direct proofs of their conversion into peasant farms are almost entirely lacking.⁸ There are, however, many indirect proofs. First of all, there was widespread commutation of labour services in Brandenburg which went on from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. The labour services of the peasants were no longer needed, and the landlords found it more advantageous to receive quit-rents instead. This movement was particularly strong in the Old Mark, the part of Brandenburg to the west of the Elbe, where the colonization had started earliest, and where town life and trade were further developed than to the east of the river.⁹ It may be remembered that in 1375 the demesnes of the

¹ *Pommersches Urkundenbuch*, vii, no. 4152, p. 8, no. 4162, p. 16. Unfortunately, the Pomeranian documents have not been published beyond the year 1326.

² J. C. C. Oelrichs, *Verzeichniss der von Dregerischen übrigen Sammlung Pommerscher Urkunden*, no. 6, p. 113 (1407); C. J. Fuchs, *Der Untergang des Bauernstandes und das Aufkommen der Gutsherrschaften nach archivalischen Quellen aus Neu-Vorpommern und Rügen*, pp. 19, 287, 303, 309.

³ 'Annales Colbazienses', *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Script.* xix, 718 (ad annum 1347); J. C. C. Oelrichs, *op. cit.* no. 12, p. 91 (1356), no. 14, p. 93 (1360).

⁴ Riedel, *op. cit.* xiii, no. 64, p. 246 (1335), no. 32, p. 31 (1342).

⁵ W. Gley, *op. cit.* p. 110.

⁶ 'Quondam fuit curia': *Kaiser Karl's IV. Landbuch der Mark Brandenburg*, edited by E. Fidicin, p. 51.

⁷ Riedel, *op. cit.*, Supplement, no. 27, p. 238 (1360).

⁸ One exception: as early as 1289 the knight Lodewicus de Seiltberch sold his 'allodium' near Hardenbeck (Ucker Mark) to the peasants of Hardenbeck: Riedel, *op. cit.* xxi, no. 10, p. 7. This charter was only preserved because Hardenbeck was a monastic village. The lack of more proofs can partly be explained by the scarcity of non-ecclesiastical documents.

⁹ In 1375 a number of Old Mark villages paid quit-rents: *Landbuch* (edn. Fidicin), pp. 226-7, 233-4, 236-8. Riedel's *Codez* contains numerous documents according to which quit-rents were paid in the Old Mark: thus v, no. 353, p. 480, no. 361, p. 483, no. 387, p. 494, nos. 393-4, p. 497; vi, no. 435, p. 259, no. 454, p. 275; xvi, no. 626, p. 182, no. 650, p. 276, no. 651, p. 277; xvii, no. 239, p. 207, no. 142, p. 315, nos. 143-4, pp. 317-8; xxii, no. 177, p. 192, no. 179, p. 194; xxv, no. 394, p. 471; Supplement, no. 32, p. 380.

Old Mark were considerably smaller than those in the other parts of Brandenburg; out of a total of 317 villages, only 39 then had one or several demesnes. In the other parts of Brandenburg also, quit-rents were given instead of the services,¹ although it seems to a lesser degree than in the Old Mark; for these districts were economically less advanced and had few important towns. As late as 1540 the Brandenburg nobility complained to the margrave that their pressing need made it necessary to re-commute their peasants' quit-rents into services, but that the peasants refused, and that this attitude was backed by a decision of the margrave's court, the *Kammergericht*.² The Pomeranian nobles also demanded services from their peasants instead of the quit-rents which they had previously paid, as they stated themselves in 1585.³ In both principalities, the subject was so important that the nobles raised it during the negotiations between the estates and the prince. Thus the paying of quit-rents must have been very common as late as the sixteenth century. Even in the early seventeenth century the subject was mentioned several times in decrees, draft regulations, and legal discussions.⁴ This indicates a strong tendency towards the disintegration of the manorial system in Brandenburg and Pomerania. In Brandenburg, moreover, we can examine this question from a number of more direct sources.

For the central part of Brandenburg, the Middle Mark, we possess, apart from the '*Landbuch*' of 1375, a number of later surveys, the '*Schossregister*' of 1450, 1480, and 1624, the last of these not only giving data for that year, but also changes in the distribution of holdings during the past fifty years.⁵ It is, therefore, possible to examine more closely agrarian developments in this district during a period of 250 years. One of the most striking features of the fifteenth-century surveys is the large number of deserted peasant holdings. Of 6667 peasant *Hufen* in 157 villages

¹ In six Ucker Mark villages quit-rents were paid in 1375: *Landbuch* (edn. Fidicin), pp. 135, 142-3, 155-6, 158. Further Riedel, *op. cit.* x, no. 256, p. 358; xii, no. 67, p. 113, no. 46, p. 184; xxiii, no. 417, p. 404; xxi, no. 64, p. 515; xxv, no. 182, p. 148.

² *Kurmärkische Ständeakten aus der Regierungszeit Kurfürst Joachims II*, edited by W. Friedensburg (quoted as Friedensburg), i, no. 17, p. 96.

³ M. Spahn, *Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Herzogtums Pommern von 1478 bis 1625*, p. 125, n. 2.

⁴ See J. Schepplitz, *Consuetudines Electoratus et Marchiae Brandenburgensis*, i. 660 (edn. 1744); C. O. Mylius, *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum*, vi. 3, no. 3, col. 58; F. Grossmann, *op. cit.* p. 14, n. 3.

⁵ The '*Schossregister*' of 1450 and 1480 are printed as an appendix to Fidicin's edition of the *Landbuch* of 1375, the figures of that of 1624 as an appendix to F. Grossmann, *op. cit.* As Fidicin's edition leaves a lot to be desired, the *Landbuch* has recently been reprinted by J. Schultze, but unfortunately without the '*Schossregister*'. That of 1480 is very incomplete and can only be used as auxiliary evidence. As these '*Schossregister*' have been published for many years, it seems curious that, apparently, they have never been compared with each other: see Appendix, below.