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His Majesty's Rebels

Communities, Factions & Rural Revolt in the Black Forest, 1725–1745

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Preface

WHEN THIS PROJECT BEGAN, I ENTERTAINED THE MODEST HOPE THAT it would confirm some hypotheses about the communalism of political life among early modern European peasants and, with a little luck, impart to them the depth and richness of local detail that case studies can provide. From a wealth of writing by historians and folklorists, I knew that the documentation on the "Salpeter Wars," a series of early eighteenth-century peasant rebellions in the Black Forest county of Hauenstein, was exceptionally rich. With such resources at my disposal, I expected to find peasants actively organizing themselves communally in the defense of the legal autonomies and immunities of their villages against the predations of seigneurs bent on reducing their independence of action. I also expected to find the peasants driven to action by collectively held but unspoken notions of "moral economy." Within days of my arrival in Germany for a preliminary survey of these sources, however, several of my expectations were dashed: among the first documents I encountered were long and exhaustive lists, enumerating families known to the compilers either as "peaceable" or "rebellious." At the outset, it seemed that the principal categories of political self-classification revolved around questions of obedience and displays of deference. This in itself came as no great surprise. Instead, the surprise lay waiting in the proportions: upon totaling the lists, I discovered to my dismay that in most villages, the sum membership of each group, "peaceable" and "rebellious," was about equal. More lists yielded similar results; slowly but surely, geographical patterns and chronological fluctuations in the distribution of factional loyalties began to appear.

Something had divided these people deeply and evenly. Clearly, I would have to adjust my anticipation of peasant communalism. This

impression was confirmed as I read deeper. It became apparent to me that questions of obedience to authority were not, after all, the principal touchstone of political consciousness among these peasants. Rather, membership in one of two major political factions was decisive. Indeed, the very existence of my evidence reinforced this impression. In this connection, the survival of interrogation transcripts and other official records was not particularly revealing; but the fact that the rebels' correspondence and manifestos had been preserved suggested the snooping of factional rivals. Some set of eighteenth-century Hauensteiners had thought it worthwhile to intercept these letters, copy them down, and pass the copies along to the authorities. Peasants were denouncing other peasants; it was also surprising how many of these peasants could write, how much they wrote, and how dependent their activities were on writing. My first impulse was to attribute such espionage to opportunism or treachery, but it quickly became clear that this analysis merely took the rebels' view of factional politics at face value. Proof of this emerged from evidence that ostensibly "peaceable" peasants were also engaged in resistance, albeit by different methods. Finally, notions of "moral economy" seemed almost entirely absent from the political rhetoric of either of these groups. Thus commenced an inquiry into the political culture of factionalism among these Black Forest peasants, in which I eventually felt compelled to abandon many, if not all, of my original ideas. I returned from the archives of the Rhineland to Connecticut, tore up my initial prospectus for the book, and started over from scratch.

Fortunately, I received much encouragement along the way. I owe special thanks to Claudia Ulbrich, Wolfgang Ulbrich, Peter Blickle, and Renate Blickle, who extended their hospitality to me and offered invaluable advice on avenues of interpretation and the use of archival sources; Peter Blickle's doctoral students also gave my ideas an early, thoroughgoing, and constructive critique. In addition, I have profited greatly from the comments and suggestions of Thomas A. Brady Jr., Thomas Fox, Keith Luria, R. Emmet McLaughlin, Edward Muir, Thomas Robisheaux, David W. Sabean, Peter Sahlins, Winfried Schulze, James C. Scott, Robert W. Scribner, Peter K. Taylor, John Theibault, Henry A. Turner, Jr., Lee Palmer Wandel, Mack Walker, and Heide Wunder, all of whom took the time to read and critique my manuscript at various

stages in its evolution. Above all, I wish to acknowledge Peter Gay, my doctoral mentor, who nurtured this project with his wise advice and support through all of its phases.

This book is partly the product of many years of study in graduate school. By their interest, forbearance, and lively readiness to discuss, Ruthanne Deutsch, Carolyn Kay, Kenneth Mayer, Helmut W. Smith, and Kali Tal, fellow travelers all, contributed to it in more ways than they know. Marc Forster, Tina Forster, Hans-Jürgen Kremer, and Rupert Kubon were amiable companions both in and outside the archives; as a result, they know more about Black Forest peasant rebellions than they ever wanted to, and I owe them thanks for indulging my questions and endless storytelling. On more than one occasion, Jeffrey Paul Burds rescued me from the calamitous results of my own of my computer illiteracy. My colleagues at Bennington College offered invaluable stylistic advice.

The research for this book was conducted at archives in the Federal Republic of Germany, mainly the Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe, but also the Stadtarchiv Freiburg im Breisgau, the Erzbischöfliches Archiv Freiburg im Breisgau, the Stadtarchiv Waldshut-Tiengen, and the Gemeindearchiv Dogern am Rhein. My deepest gratitude goes to the staffs of all these institutions for their generosity and eagerness to help me. Without the generous support of the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) and the Yale Council on West European Studies, the research for this book would never have been done.

Finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to my parents, Frederick C. Luebke and Norma M. Luebke, both of whom are all too familiar with the life a fledgling historian leads and whose moral support was inexhaustible. This book is dedicated to them.

Bennington, Vermont DAVID MARTIN LUEBKE

Abbreviations

Archives

EAF	Erzbischöfliches Archiv Freiburg im Breisgau
GAD	Gemeindearchiv Dogern am Rhein
GLA	Badisches Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe
StAFB	Stadtarchiv Freiburg im Breisgau
StAWT	Stadtarchiv Waldshut-Tiengen

Other

KK	Kaiserliche Kommission (Imperial Commission); Kaiserlicher Kommissar (Imperial Commissar)
NF	Neue Folge (Second Series)
OÖKR	Oberösterreichische Kammerregierung (Upper Austrian Provincial Government, Innsbruck)
OVA	Obervogteiamt (Abbatial High Steward's Bureau, Gurtweil)
RP	Rechnungsprotokoll (Account Ledger)
VÖRK	Vorderösterreichische Regierung und Kammer (Outer Austrian Provincial Government, Freiburg)
WGP	Wochengerichtsprotokoll (Weekly Court Protocol)
WVA	Waldvogteiamt (Forest Steward's Bureau, Waldshut)

Periodical journals

AESC	*Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*
ASG	*Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*
ARG	*Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*

CEH	*Central European History*
GG	*Geschichte und Gesellschaft*
HJ	*Historisches Jahrbuch*
HZ	*Historische Zeitschrift*
JMH	*Journal of Modern History*
JPS	*Journal of Peasant Studies*
MIÖG	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichte*
MÖS	*Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*
NBHK	*Neujahresblätter der Badischen Historischen Kommission*
NJLG	*Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*
PP	*Past and Present*
PS	*Peasant Studies*
PSN	*Peasant Studies Newsletter*
SVGBU	*Schriften des Vereins für die Geschichte des Bodensees und seiner Umbgebung*
VSWG	*Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*
ZAA	*Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie*
ZBLG	*Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte*
ZfG	*Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*
ZHF	*Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*
ZGO	*Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*
ZWLG	*Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*

Currency Equivalents

1 gulden (fl) = 60 kreuzer (xr) = 180 pfennig (d)

1 pfund (lb) = 40 kreuzer

Ratio of imperial to provincial gulden = approximately 1:0.73

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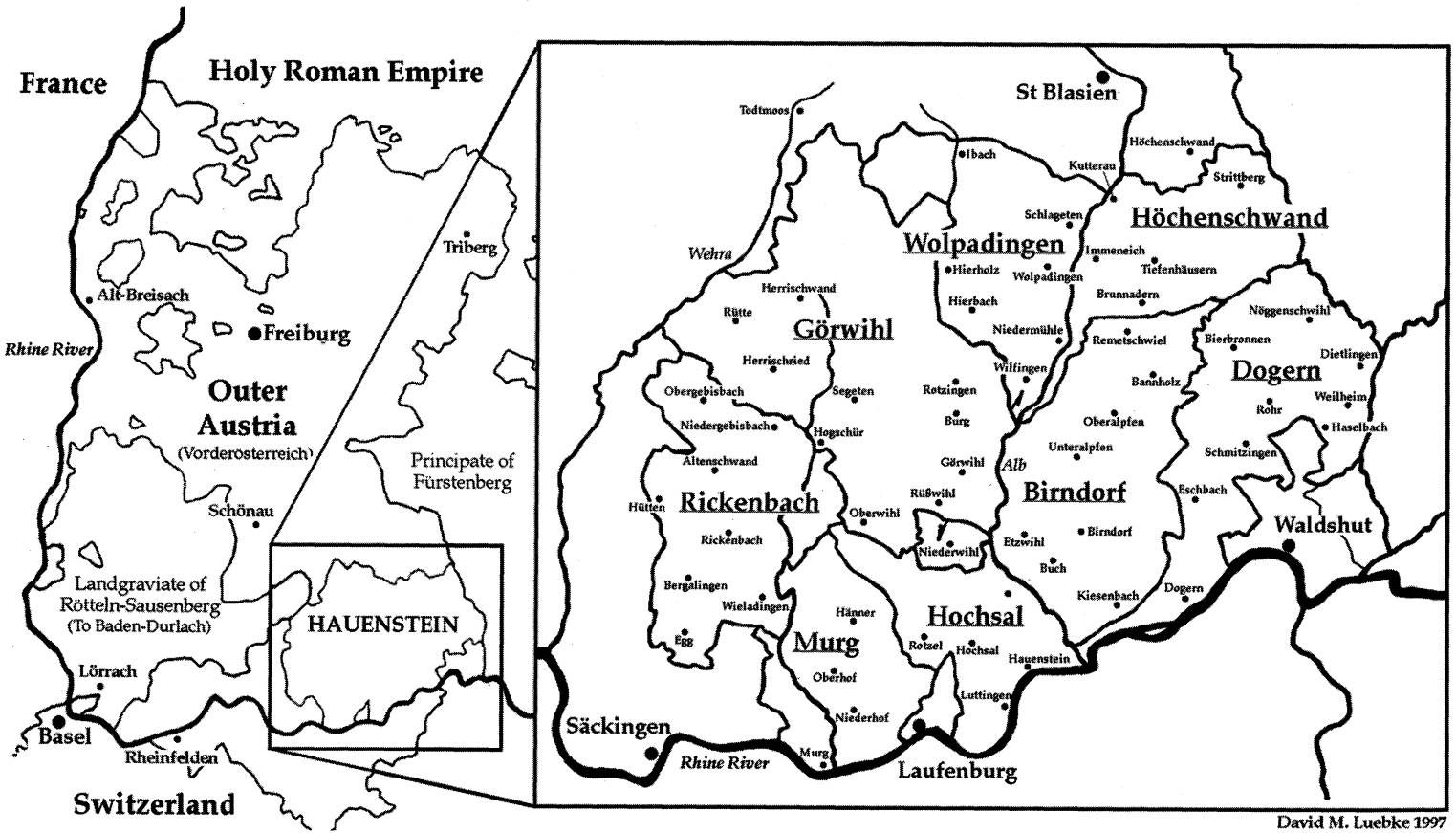

David M. Luebke 1997

Faction and Community in the "Salpeter Wars"

> However grievous the unrest [that rebels] foment may be, the poor and innocent must adhere to the others against their own will, and even contribute to it, otherwise they will banned from the barn and will be given no work, nor will anyone drink with them from the same jug. If they become recalcitrant, the village community will divide into two factions, and tumult, death, and murder will arise among them.
>
> *[Anon.] Der glückselige und unglückselige Bauernstand (Leipzig, 1711)*

ON A CHILLY FRIDAY IN EARLY NOVEMBER 1745, THE MILITIAS OF two peasant factions clashed near Schmitzingen, a tiny Black Forest village located just a few kilometers north of the Rhine River town of Waldshut. Several days before, the larger of the two forces had helped lay siege to Waldshut because its burghers had given refuge to leaders of the enemy faction. The smaller force—about seventy men—had marched through the previous night to relieve Waldshut and their leaders within its walls. As they approached the town, some two hundred of the besiegers ambushed, encircled, and routed them. Two members of the vanquished force died from wounds suffered in the melee, and many more were severely wounded.[1] These were only the latest casualties in a bitter internecine struggle that by 1745 was already two decades

1. GLA 113:260, 1491–150v, "Bitt wegen der Unruohigen verursachten Sterben des Michel Ebners seel. zu Immenaich, seiner hinderlassenen Witwee und Waissen betreffent," 23 December 1745.

old, and more fatalities were to come. Why were these peasants fighting each other? What had divided them so deeply that their differences had escalated to the point of bloodshed?

Peasants throughout Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries faced the difficult task of maintaining political cohesion against princes and seigneurs who, at the very least, seemed intent on expanding their powers at the expense of local leaders. For the most part, the large and relatively centralized polities of the Atlantic seaboard shared with the smaller states that made up much of the Holy Roman Empire a common determination to diminish the sphere of human activity traditionally regulated at the local level. The challenge to local autonomies came from many sources and could take many forms. Little by little, village institutions were transformed into tools of enforcement, just as village officials—headmen, jurors, elders—gradually became the supervised executors of state authority. Nowhere, to be sure, was this process simple, unbroken, or even complete. But on balance, state authority waxed as local autonomies waned. As one historian put it, a system of rule *with* peasants was replaced by one of rule *over* them.[2]

This book is about a group of Black Forest peasants who, roughly between 1725 and 1745, failed to stand together in opposition to such intrusions. They inhabited Hauenstein, a small county that straddled the exposed upland plateaus on the southeastern slope of the Feldberg massif in the southwestern corner of the Holy Roman Empire. Despite several points of widespread consensus, Hauensteiners debated every point of strategy and tactics; they formed political factions around competing visions of their collective past, present, and future; in time, each faction enlisted every available device to overcome the other. Luckily for the historian, their dissensions generated ample opportunities for village snoops to hoard politically damaging information on their enemies and pass it up the administrative ladder. The copious documentation produced by all this activity allows us to explore the inner workings of peasant politics and culture, topics for which historical evidence is often scant. These sources reveal a peasant society out of step with an increasingly authoritarian environment, and the behaviors this disorientation called forth cast new light on the political universe of rural Europeans

2. Heide Wunder, *Die bäuerliche Gemeinde in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 1986).

in the last preindustrial century, a universe that was in many ways as complex as our own.

These internecine quarrels played out in a harsh, mountainous environment in which agricultural pursuits occupied the lives of nearly all the inhabitants. Hauenstein was bounded to the north by dense forests, to the east and west by deep canyons cut by the Wehra and the Schwarza, and to the south by the Rhine. Its total area was small, about 360 square kilometers.[3] Although the peasants of Hauenstein shared an Alemannic dialect with their Swiss cousins across the Rhine, they were subjects of the Habsburg dynasty, denizens of a province in the hereditary Crown Lands called "Outer Austria" *(Vorderösterreich),* with its administrative seat in the city of Freiburg im Breisgau. But the Habsburg monarch was not the peasants' only lord: for centuries, they had fought off the encroachments of nearby St. Blasien, a powerful Benedictine abbey situated a few kilometers to the north which owned much of the land and many serfs within its borders and exerted numerous juridical prerogatives there as well. It was St. Blasien's slow encroachment on local autonomies that in the early eighteenth century divided the Hauensteiners into two opposed and often bloodily hostile camps.

Their discord is well known to folklorists and local historians as the Salpeter Wars, named for the founder of the rebellious faction, one Hans Friedle Albiez, an old and wealthy peasant in the village of Buch who supplemented his income by selling saltpeter, which he refined from manure smeared on livestock stalls. At the time of the Salpeter Wars, all parties to the conflict in Hauenstein recognized the centrality of factional divisions and developed a vocabulary to reflect it. For their part, provincial Austrian officials availed themselves of a set of ready-made political labels that arrayed peasants according to the measure of obedience they displayed: the more rebellious majority of Hauensteiners were described as *unruhig* ("restless" or simply "disobedient"), while the others were called *ruhig* ("peaceable" or "obedient"). This classification scheme oversimplified grossly the complexities of peasant politics, to the great annoyance of so-called restless Hauensteiners, who like their

3. Leopold Maldoner, "Aktenmäßige Beschreibung der Grafschaft Hauenstein," in Josef Bader, ed., "Nachträge zu den Mittheilungen über die Grafschaft Hauenstein," *ZGO* 12 (1861): 101–27; Alphons Johann Lugo, "Statistik der k.k. Vorlande (30 May 1797)," in Friedrich Metz, ed., *Vorderösterreich: Eine geschichtliche Landeskunde,* 2d rev. ed. (Freiburg, 1967), 797–818.

ancestors during the Peasants' War of 1525, recoiled at the suggestion that their behavior was at all rebellious.[4] Instead, they described themselves as *salpeterisch,* the followers of "Salpeter-Hans" Friedle Albiez. Their least incendiary adjective for the other faction was *müllerisch,* a term that likewise referred to the profession of its leader, one Joseph Tröndle, a miller in the village of Unteralpfen. Each of these factions offered profoundly different responses to challenges posed by St. Blasien. Although most peasants could agree on the identity of their common foe—St. Blasien—the two factions hotly disputed almost everything else: the ultimate nature of their troubles, the peasants were responsible for them, and the best strategy for mastering their common afflictions. The *müllerisch* faction was broadly reformist in outlook and generally nonviolent; its members tended to seek redress of collective grievances through officially sanctioned channels of litigation and judicial appeal. By and large, the *salpeterisch* faction rejected the existing order as corrupt and offered more violent means to correct it. In time, the dispute between the *salpeterisch* and *müllerisch* factions grew to overshadow the common concerns that had originally provoked it into being.

An acrid scent of fraternal strife lingers over the documents of these unrests. Indeed, the pattern of factional conflict they reveal calls into question the very idea of rebellion. There were, to be sure, many occasions of violent confrontation between peasants and lords that resemble stereotypes of agrarian uprising. But Hauensteiners devoted at least as much energy to fighting each other as they did to resisting the predations of St. Blasien and military interventions by the Austrian state. The Salpeter Wars were at once a conflict between peasants and lords and a kind of civil war *among* peasants. Yet peasant politics in Hauenstein were even more complicated than that: between the two main camps sat an uncommitted group of fluctuating size, who were referred to as *nederal* ("neutral") and somewhat later as *Sparrengücksler* (roughly, "those who gawk from the rafters").[5] Moreover, differences of opinion eventually

4. See Article 2 of the Twelve Articles of the Peasants (1525), reprinted in translation in Peter Blickle, *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective,* trans. Thomas A. Brady Jr. and H. C. Erik Midelfort (Baltimore, 1981), 195–96. Among the rebels' complaints in 1743 was the charge that "one continually names and treats [us] as *unruhig* [rebellious]"; see GLA 65:11419 [Nachlaß J. L. Meyer], 601.

5. The latter phrase was reported by Joseph Viktor von Scheffel in youthful observations of a nineteenth-century aftershock of the "Salpeter Wars"; see his "Aus dem Hauen-

emerged within the two main factions as well. Although the factional divide cut deeper than these finer distinctions, their mere existence underscores the surprising complexity of political discourse among early modern peasants. Clearly, then, these tumults cannot be described as a binary confrontation between lords and subjects. In what sense, then, were the politics of the peasants of Hauenstein primarily "rebellious"?

The pattern of factionalism also calls into question the very nature of community, especially village community, in early modern Europe. Peasant rebellions in preindustrial Europe are often said to have been communal in nature, because institutions of village government were often used to enforce solidarity among peasants against a common threat, penalizing individuals who defied the consensus. This view owes much to the pathbreaking work of Peter Blickle on southern German and of René Pillorget on Provençal revolts.[6] To simplify their arguments greatly, they hold that as noble landowners withdrew from direct participation in agricultural production during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, village communes emerged to regulate the agricultural calendar and to distribute scarce resources, eventually acquiring formal jurisdiction over their members. At the same time, peasants acquired more secure legal claims to land through innovations like hereditary leasehold *(Erblehen).* The formal characteristics of late medieval and early modern agrarian rebellions can be traced to this transformation: peasant revolts were communal in the sense that village institutions were used as instruments of discipline against those who refused to participate actively. Because the recalcitrant were often punished with exclusion from the use of common pastures on the authority of communal assemblies of elders, villages are often described as the institutional "carriers" *(Träger)* of rebellion. Not all was coercion, however. The communal revolt hypothesis also holds that social distance from lords and the integrating tendencies of everyday village life combined to produce a communal ideology of freedom from seigneurial domination that offered a viable alternative to the aristocratic model of social order. This communalism also exerted a powerful integrating influence.

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steiner Schwarzwald (1853)," in *J. V. von Scheffels Gesammelte Werke,* ed. Johannes Proelß (Stuttgart, 1907), 3:144.

6. See Peter Blickle, *Deutsche Untertanen: Ein Widerspruch* (Munich, 1981), and René Pillorget, *Les mouvements insurrectionnels de Provence entre 1596 et 1715* (Paris, 1975).

But political cohesion was perhaps the *first* casualty of the unrest in Hauenstein. In what sense, then, can the "rebellion" there be regarded as communal? How did Hauensteiners conceive of community when traditional solidarities were collapsing all around them? Factional divisions are often explained away as manifestations of social conflicts between well-to-do, officeholding peasants and others who defied these oppressors. But in Hauenstein, the leaders of the *salpeterisch* faction were just as wealthy, just as heavily employed as agents of domination as their more "peaceable" enemies were. By the same token, *müllerisch* peasants seem to have been almost as allergic to official encroachments on local autonomies as their *salpeterisch* foes. In what sense, then, can peasant factions be seen simply as the by-product of a collision between incompatible interests?

Finally, with respect to communalism, even a cursory glance at the evidence shows that virtually all peasants, regardless of factional stripe, identified first and foremost with the "Whole County" *(Landsgemeinde)* of Hauenstein, a concept that underscored the county's status as a corporate entity with distinctive origins, traditions, and relationships to the House of Habsburg.[7] Moreover, all but the most militant Hauensteiners were united in viewing themselves as loyal subjects of the Habsburg monarch and obedient to his true wishes. In view of the fact that this "naive monarchism" and allegiance to the "Whole County" coexisted with sharp factional rancor, can communalism be said to have had integrating power? If not, how can peasant unrest be seen as the clash of competing social ideals? Further, in what way was their monarchism consistent with resistance to abbatial and Austrian officialdom?

The list goes on and on. In the chapters that follow, I attempt to answer some of these questions through an investigation of the various forces—social, economic, cultural, political, geographical, and ideological—that caused and shaped the Salpeter Wars, as they relate to broader structures and transformations in popular politics throughout early modern Europe. That said, this book is not an exercise in iconoclasm: my main concern is to show that early modern peasants were political beings in every sense of the phrase: that they were conscious of the possibilities

7. Claudia Ulbrich, "Der Charakter bäuerlichen Widerstands in vorderösterreichischen Herrschaften," in Winfried Schulze, ed., *Aufstände, Revolten, Prozeße: Beiträge zu bäuerlichen Widerstandsbewegungen im frühneuzeitlichen Europa* (Stuttgart, 1983), 203.

and limitations of their environment and, conversely, that they were no more or less the slaves of such forces than are we moderns. As political beings, they were possessed of something resembling public opinion and were fully capable of articulating their own interests in diverse ways and of translating those articulations into a wide variety of strategies and tactics—even if, in the end, they were losers in the game of history. To view them as anything less, I believe, is to participate in what E. P. Thompson once called the "enormous condescension of posterity."[8]

This means taking these peasants—all of them—at their word. As a practical matter, it also demands treating the two factions as evenhandedly as possible. There is solid empirical reason for doing this. It is obvious that had the autonomist dreams of *salpeterisch* militants been realized, the peasants' hand against predatory seigneurs would have been strengthened. But leaders of the *müllerisch* party, too, achieved some notable successes in the collective interest, including the manumission of all serfs resident within the county. Moreover, they understood that the constant threat of renewed *salpeterisch* unrest could be put to good diplomatic use. *Müllerisch* leaders often claimed to be acting in the interest of the common good, and there is little reason to doubt them.

But there is a deeper theoretical issue at stake here. Because of the great complexity of political discourse in Hauenstein, I tend to shy from the view of agrarian revolt that organically links rebellious activity with the interest of all peasants in preserving a maximum of self-rule through communal institutions. An implicit (though certainly not inevitable) corollary of the communal revolt hypothesis is the proposition that non-rebels opposed these objective, collective interests. Andreas Suter, for example, defines non-rebels as officeholders and others "in the entourage of the state" and *its* interests, who were "integrated vertically" into state channels of command and who opposed their "horizontally integrated" fellows, whose interests lay in preserving the values and institutions of the village against the intrusions of the state.[9] It is easy to imagine situations in which personal allegiance and action flowed smoothly from individual relationships to the state. But if circumstance matters at all, then complex power relationships forbid so mechanistic

8. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1966), 12.

9. Andreas Suter, *"Troublen" im Fürstbistum Basel (1726–1740): Eine Fallstudie zum bäuerlichen Widerstand im 18. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1985), 107–8.

a connection between public personae and political loyalties. And in Hauenstein, circumstances muddied simple distinctions between "vertical" and "horizontal" forms of integration.

Chapter 1 surveys the institutional context in which factions formed and reveals a complex tug-of-war between forces of domination and peasant autonomy that played out in the behaviors of peasant officeholders. On the one hand, peasant elites were involved at almost every stage in the process of domination: as jurors, village headmen, annually elected cantonal magistrates, constables, or rent collectors, their services were vital to the smooth functioning of sovereign and seigneurial rule. On the other hand, they worked within a customary institutional framework constituted to maximize self-rule and to prevent the formation of an officeholding peasant oligarchy beholden to seigneurs and other non-peasants.

This mixture of roles suggests that it is misleading to distinguish all too strictly between "vertical" and "horizontal" integration; the lines of obligation simply were not so cleanly drawn. It is far more useful, I think, to see these officeholders as brokers of power between rulers and subjects.[10] Briefly stated, the interpretation offered here operates from the twin propositions that peasant societies, given the spatially diffuse character of agricultural production and of rural settlement patterns, are difficult to govern and that the organizational forms of peasant political life are, to some extent, a function of attempts by the state (in the broadest sense) to overcome that difficulty.[11] The point is not simply that Hauensteiners were an ungovernable people, although contemporary Austrian officials would have regarded this a truism. Rather, it is to suggest that in Hauenstein as elsewhere in Europe, state and seigneurial authorities could extend bureaucratic controls beyond the village fence into the everyday lives of individual peasants only by involving them in the process of their own domination. But this is not to suggest that peasant institutions were simply tools of oppression. On

10. On "brokers" as managers of meaning, see Anthony P. Cohen and John L. Comaroff, "The Management of Meaning: On the Phenomenology of Political Transactions," in Bruce Kapferer, ed., *Transaction and Meaning: Directions in the Anthropology of Exchange and Symbolic Behavior* (Philadelphia, 1976), 87–107.

11. Gerd Spittler, "Staat und Klientelstruktur in Entwicklungsländern: Zum Problem der politischen Organisation von Bauern," *Archives européennes de sociologie* 18 (1977): 77.

the contrary, the tendency of early modern states to make demands not of individuals but of geographically defined polities, while leaving those polities otherwise to regulate themselves, *encouraged* the emergence of unions *(Verbände),* with their own, cooperative political structures.[12]

Chapter 2, a chronicle of the revolt, shows how patterns of factional politics flowed from just this complex interplay of forces. At certain crucial intervals, for example, *salpeterisch* candidates were elected to public office throughout the county. If the relationship between officeholding and loyalty had ever been simple, events like this turned it upside-down: *salpeterisch* peasants found themselves in the awkward position of managing the county fisc *while in a state of open rebellion.* Similarly, *müllerisch* leaders found themselves allying with one legitimate authority (the imperial government) against another one (the peasant magistracy). Yet when the Austrian government proposed abolishing elective office and installing *müllerisch* leaders as salaried officials with lifelong tenure, the latter protested vigorously, fearing that such a move would deprive them any vestige of legitimacy. Clearly, the obligations of officeholding were multifaceted.

The evidence presented in these first two chapters recommends a view of peasant interest as having not one, but several possible, valid articulations. I believe that there is good empirical reason for this, too. Chapter 3 presents aggregate data on factional loyalties as they changed over time and space, and the variations that emerge from them show that the population tended to split its allegiances almost evenly. However one interprets the politics of *müllerisch* peasants, it is difficult to imagine a minority so large as this acting contrary to communal interests in any meaningful sense. Does all this mean we must jettison the idea of communal interest because of the quarrels of a few thousand Black Forest peasants? Not if one accepts the proposition that class interest can have multiple articulations and that it may be promoted in a variety of ways.

12. Karl S. Bader, "Grundlagen dörflichen Verfassungslebens im südwestdeutschen Raum," in Wolfgang Müller, ed., *Landschaft und Verfassung: Beiträge zur ländlichen Verfassungsgeschichte im deutschsprachigen Südwesten* (Bühl, 1969), 261–81; see also Peter Blickle, *Landschaften im alten Reich: Die staatliche Funktion des Gemeinen Mannes in Oberdeutschland* (Munich, 1973).

The reader might legitimately wonder how one explains the depth and ferocity of factional strife if most peasants were so committed to preserving the common good of the "Whole County." An answer, I think, may be found in the intersecting effect of changes in the structure of domination and social transformations on peasant political culture. In the first place, the transition from a system of rule *with* peasants to one of rule *over* them altered the complexion of agrarian social relations. Admittedly, this was a long process, spanning many centuries in most places, and Hauenstein was no exception. St. Blasien's attempts to undermine local autonomies went back at least as far as the mid-sixteenth century, but the ravages of the War of Spanish Succession (1698–1714) had temporarily halted the process. As the war wound down, however, the abbey revived its efforts. Beginning in the 1710s and 1720s, St. Blasien strove to centralize its juridical bureaucracy by removing decision-making authority from local tribunals to courts higher up the appellate ladder, to increase its exactions from serfs, tenants, and juridical subjects in Hauenstein, and to obstruct the influence that peasant magistrates could exert within its jurisdictions. At the same time, however, neither St. Blasien nor the provincial government possessed the personnel to govern at the village or cantonal level without the active cooperation of peasant elites. These elites therefore faced difficult choices: if they accommodated St. Blasien, they might benefit personally, but at the risk of alienating their electors. If they resisted centralization, St. Blasien or the provincial government might retaliate against the security of their tenancies. Worse, they risked the personal dangers of open rebellion. Factions formed around the horns of this tactical dilemma.

Second, the economic upswing of the early eighteenth century encouraged factionalism by exacerbating social stratification among peasants. Chapter 4 presents a social profile of the peasant elite in Hauenstein and shows how expanding markets, rising grain prices, and improved harvest yields mainly benefited lineages that could protect their holdings against fragmentation in an era of rapid population growth and in a region where partible inheritance customs prevailed. Their solution amounted to a subversion of inheritance customs: wealthier peasants devised a system of preferential endowment designed to circumvent the custom of egalitarian partibility. In matters of inheritance, the peasant

elite subverted custom without much difficulty. By the same token, their efforts to preserve the county's *political* autonomies were a matter of economic self-preservation: in opposing St. Blasien's attempts to wrest control over real-estate exchange, peasant elites defended their own independence of action in matters of sale, trade, and inheritance. As wealth and prestige converged, the economic upswing enhanced the dominance of this peasant oligarchy. As power compressed within it, the St. Blasien's flint struck the iron of village friendship and alliance, enmity and vendetta. When their tactical dispute deepened and became more ideologically charged, peasant elites hauled their kin groups and clienteles into the factional struggle.

A third influence on the development of factions was political culture, a rather more slippery historical quantity. Both the centralizing tendencies of states and seigneurs and the social disruptions of economic expansion contrasted jarringly with certain organzining myths of peasant polity, among them a medieval vision of reciprocal obligation between sovereign and subject, a strong sense of corporate unity embodied in the notion of the "Whole County," and a stiff dose of social egalitarianism. St. Blasien's efforts were widely interpreted to veil an attempt to annex Hauenstein, or at least dismember it, which in turn threw into question the nature and meaning of community. Chapter 5 describes how the debate over tactics quickly transformed into acrimonious name-calling over suspect loyalties, which in time produced habits of factional allegiance as compelling as loyalties to the county as a whole. A succession of Austrian military interventions to suppress the tumult only drove the factional wedge deeper.

The point here is that the political culture of peasants offered a rich vocabulary for the construction of symbolic barriers between factions. *Salpeterisch* peasants proved particularly adept at using old corporate identities to erect a new, factional one in their place. To some extent, this was old wine in new bottles. But where the old myths served to unite, the new identities were meant to define and divide. The differences between them were more than functional as well. In time, militants in the *salpeterisch* cause carried Hauenstein's organizing myths to their logical extreme and elaborated a vision of "Swiss" freedoms in a future world without lords. Not all *salpeterisch* leaders went this far. But the mere fact that a few *did* also highlights the persistence of anti-aristocratic dreams