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## Agrarian Reform in Eighteenth -Century Denmark

Lawrence J. Baack

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Lawrence J. Baack

Agrarian Reform in  
Eighteenth-Century  
Denmark

new series no. 56

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1977

Agrarian Reform in  
Eighteenth-Century  
Denmark



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# Agrarian Reform in Eighteenth-Century Denmark

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For my mother,  
Frieda Baack

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## Preface

AGRARIAN REFORM can be one of the most complex tasks of government. It has immense consequences for the social, political, and economic structure of a society and for this reason often encounters resistance from traditional elites. In addition, the interrelated questions of land, labor, capital, education, and marketing require a comprehensive response and any single element in this matrix may be ignored only at considerable risk. Finally, the institutional and psychological characteristics of rural society have often proved remarkably impervious to change, yet if government is to be sensitive to the cultural and psychological needs of the rural community it has to exercise patience, tolerance, and ingenuity without at the same time losing the momentum of the reform effort. This is a balance that is difficult to achieve and maintain. The inherent obstacles to reform, therefore, are great, but this has not precluded success in some countries. One of the most interesting examples of effective reform occurred in Denmark during the eighteenth century. Its character has much to contribute to the continuing discussion of agricultural development, but unfortunately outside of Scandinavia, it has received little attention by scholars—a frequent problem with historical developments that occur in a less populous society whose language is not widely understood. This work, as a brief case study of the Danish movement for agrarian reform in the eighteenth century, is intended to partially fill this gap.



## Agrarian Reform in Eighteenth-Century Denmark

LAND TENURE in eighteenth-century Denmark was still based on a quasi-feudal arrangement and methods of cultivation were archaic; by the twentieth century the agricultural sector of the Danish economy was among the most advanced in Europe and the medium-sized, owner-operated farm dominated the countryside.<sup>1</sup> Denmark, one historian recently noted, "was the only country in western Europe which made a direct transition from serfdom to state-supported freehold farming, establishing a pattern of progressive agriculture and peaceful change which has persisted to the present day."<sup>2</sup> This agricultural transformation was started by the innovative policies of the Danish government in the late eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> In view of the mixed success of agrarian reform elsewhere in Europe in the same period, it is not only interesting to trace the course of reform in eighteenth-century Denmark, but it is also important to ask what were the characteristics of the new Danish arrangements that contributed to their positive impact on the rural community, and what were the characteristics of the Danish state that permitted constructive laws to be implemented, if the significance of this reform movement is to be understood.

Early in the eighteenth century large manors with varying systems of peasant tenancy dominated the agricultural community in Denmark. It is estimated that several hundred landlords, owning some eight hundred estates, controlled roughly 75 percent of the land; crown domains and church properties comprised most of the remainder. In most regions less than 1 percent of the peasantry were freeholders, although in a few areas as many as 7 to 8 percent owned their farms. The landlords farmed directly only 13 percent of their land; the rest was cultivated by peasants in return for various kinds of services and payments. Peasant farms conformed to the common- or open-field system of cultivation typical of many parts

of Europe at this time, and village land was usually divided into three fields, the fields into numerous plots, and the plots into a multitude of strips. Each peasant shared in the rich and poor land alike and his farm was composed of perhaps a hundred strips scattered throughout the fields.<sup>4</sup> This system normally ensured an equitable distribution of land among the villagers, but required common systems of cultivation that made the introduction of new methods difficult. By this time landlords had increasingly withdrawn from this traditional system of agriculture and were succeeding in the consolidation of their home farms. This was a continuation of a long trend that began in the sixteenth century and that slowly laid the foundation for the development of large-scale farming in Denmark. This consolidation often took place at the expense of peasant and village land and it contributed to the discontinuation of farms and villages.<sup>5</sup>

Although theoretically life tenancy existed for most peasants, less than half were able to stay on their farms until death or could ensure that a son or son-in-law would succeed them. When the title of a farm was transferred both the former and the new tenant were often exploited. For example, upon the death of a tenant the landlord usually took most of the peasant's inheritance under the pretext of having to provide draft animals, equipment, and seed necessary to operate the farm. Former tenants were also required to pay the cost of repairing damaged buildings and equipment, or of replacing lost stock. Yet despite these payments the new tenant often received the farm in poor condition and had to pay for the costs of repair himself. Since rents were relatively high and tenants frequently in arrears on their payments their dependence on the landlord grew. Peasant indebtedness was often used by the owner as a means to increase labor services. Fridlev Skrubbeltrang estimates that perhaps one-third of the tenants left their farms because of poverty or were evicted because of neglect of their holding; another third left because of old age or sickness. Usually these tenants became cottagers and agricultural laborers. But since few cottages included any land, and because of the prevailing system of cultivation and labor, poverty among these groups was considerable.<sup>6</sup> Many parish records indicate that perhaps 5 to 10 percent of the inhabitants were supported partially or entirely by begging or charity. This does not appear unusual for Europe in the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

Most tenants were subject to extensive labor services, the *Hoveri*.

An average-sized peasant-holding was liable for up to 300 days of farm hand and child labor per year including up to 100 days of plowing and hauling when the peasant had to provide a team of horses as well. The kind and extent of the *Hoveri* were generally unregulated and had tended to increase in the course of the century.<sup>8</sup> In addition, since the fifteenth century a limited form of serfdom, the *Vornedskab*, had been imposed on male peasants of the islands of Zealand, Lolland, and Falster. However, following the establishment of absolutism in Denmark in 1660, the monarchy attempted to reduce the power of the nobility over the peasantry, and as a result, on 21 February 1702, Frederick IV abolished the *Vornedskab*. This act, while serving as a useful precedent for reform-minded officials later in the century, had an only gradual and in the end non-lasting effect upon the condition of the peasantry, for it applied solely to males born since the king's accession to the throne (25 August 1699).<sup>9</sup> At nearly the same time Frederick also carried out important changes in the military institutions of the country. In an effort to move away from a mercenary army, he established the *Landmilits*, or militia, which made peasant males between the ages of fourteen and thirty-five liable for military service on a part-time basis. One recruit for approximately every three farms in a parish was required to serve six years in the militia; after the end of the Great Northern War, this was reduced in 1724 to one recruit for every five farms. This system tended to bind a sizeable number of male peasants to the parish and therefore continued to supply the manors with guaranteed labor. Nevertheless this source was steadily declining, for all males born since 1699 were free from the *Vornedskab*. Then in 1730, the *Landmilits* was also abolished by Christian VI; this allowed even greater freedom of movement among the peasantry and contributed it seems to a decline in the supply of labor for the landowning class.

The delayed effect of the lifting of the *Vornedskab* and the end of the *Landmilits* coincided with a serious drop in agricultural prices, an aggravation of the general depression condition that characterized European agriculture during the first half of the eighteenth century. The landlords became extremely fearful of losing their ready supply of labor in times that were already difficult economically, and their discontent together with the concern of government officials that Denmark's military strength would be reduced by the permanent end of the militia, led to the promulgation of a new system of enforced residence, the *Stavnsbaand*. This new ordinance,

which applied to all of Denmark, required that male peasants between the ages of fourteen and thirty-six were to be bound to their estates and provided that henceforth landlords would select the recruits for the army. Two years later, in a further effort to ease the economic crisis, the government, hoping to raise agricultural prices, forbid the importation of grain into Denmark and southern Norway.<sup>10</sup> Hans Jensen has called these developments a reinvigoration of feudalism under the absolute monarchy, and indeed after a steady decline in the power of the old aristocracy since 1660, the landowning class, reinvigorated by foreign nobility, chiefly German, a new nobility of service, and absentee bourgeois landlords succeeded in reasserting its influence over the next several decades.<sup>11</sup> Thus despite the development of absolutism, the position of the peasantry had tended to decline during the first half of the eighteenth century, and as a consequence the vast majority of the rural population continued to share in the bleak conditions that characterized the European peasantry in most areas during this period.<sup>12</sup> Oppressed by the prevailing hierarchical institutional arrangements and discouraged by a depressing psychological and physical environment, the peasantry in Denmark had little incentive and slight ability to increase production. Still its condition governed the cultivation of most of Denmark's arable land, and thus its situation lay at the heart of what came to be called the agricultural question or the land problem in the eighteenth century.

After 1750, when some Danes began to participate in the European discussion on agricultural innovation and when prices for agricultural products became more favorable, the impetus to change the nature of rural society increased.<sup>13</sup> As market conditions improved, landlords in Denmark began to show more interest in progressive methods of cultivation. One of the first was Count Adam Gottlob von Moltke, minister of state and lord high steward to Frederick V; in the 1750s, for example, he abolished the three-field system and introduced a new method of crop rotation on Bregentved, his estate in southern Zealand. Moltke's rotation was based on an eleven-field system: (1) fallow, (2) wheat, (3) barley, (4) rye, (5) oats, (6) oats, and (7) to (11) grass. This rotation, which had come to Denmark from Schleswig-Holstein, was subsequently applied to other estates in Denmark with good results.<sup>14</sup>

In 1755, Moltke was instrumental in getting Frederick partially to lift censorship of the press and to call for a public discussion of the social and economic problems facing Denmark. As a result

various writers analyzed the backward state of Denmark's agriculture and argued for an end to the *Stavnsbaand* and the *Hoveri*, the establishment of a more secure system of land tenure for the peasant, and the introduction of improved methods of cultivation. Many of these papers were published between 1757 and 1764 in the journal, *Danmark og Norges Økonomiske Magazin*.<sup>15</sup> About the same time the writings of the cameralist, Johann Heinrich von Justi, who visited Copenhagen in 1757, became well known in Denmark. One of the main themes of Justi's works was the importance of population development for increasing the strength of the state. He also advocated the abolition of the common-field system and of obligatory labor services and emphasized the benefits that could be expected from the consolidation of strips, the scattering of farmsteads, and the encouragement of independent peasant proprietors. His economic theories blended well with the mercantilist policies then followed by the Danish government and symbolic of this, his book *Vollständige Abhandlung von denen Manufacturen und Fabriken*, the first part of which was published in Copenhagen in 1758, was dedicated to the most influential statesman in Denmark, Count Johann Hartvig Ernst von Bernstorff, the minister for foreign affairs, first deputy on the Board of Trade, and president of the German chancellory.<sup>16</sup>

In fact many writers in Denmark interested in agricultural conditions knew Bernstorff and other leading figures in the government. One of these was the educator, Jens Schelderup Sneedorff, who from 1761 to 1763 published the journal entitled *Den Patriotiske Tilskuer*. Influenced by Montesquieu and Rousseau, Sneedorff emphasized the concept of "freedom and property" for the peasantry. "Give the peasant property," he wrote, "and he will no longer need the tutelage of other people."<sup>17</sup> Others were the botanist, Georg Christian Oeder, the philosopher, Tyge Rothe, and the court chaplain, Johann Andreas Cramer, who edited the journal, *Der Nordischer Aufseher*. In their writings rational philosophy and a pietistic sense of human responsibility served as the basis for a new attitude toward the peasantry.<sup>18</sup>

Theoretical arguments in favor of rural change influenced and in turn were buttressed by several important reforms carried out on private estates. One enlightened landowner, Count Christian Günther von Stolberg, lord high steward to the Queen Mother Sophia Magdalena, freed the serfs on Stedinghof bei Bramsted, his estate in Holstein, and in 1759, as administrator of Hørsholm, the

Queen Mother's estate in northern Zealand, commuted all labor services to cash payments and introduced copyhold.<sup>19</sup> Most influential of all were the reforms carried out on Bernstorff, the estate named after its owner, J. H. E. Bernstorff. These were primarily the work of Bernstorff's nephew, Count Andreas Peter von Bernstorff, later to be one of the most important figures in the reform movement in Denmark.

Andreas Peter developed an interest in agriculture as a young man. On his grand tour he studied rural conditions in Italy, Switzerland, and France, and he observed with great interest the intensive methods of cultivation practiced on the estates of Norfolk in England. He was familiar with the works of Sneedorff, Oeder, and Cramer, all of whom were frequent visitors to his uncle's home, and he knew a great deal about the reforms of Hørsholm, for in 1762 he married Stolberg's daughter Henrietta.<sup>20</sup>

In 1764 the Bernstorff estate, which had been merely the country home of Johann Hartvig Ernst, was greatly enlarged by the addition of former crown lands, the parish of Gentofte, containing the three villages of Gentofte, Ordrup, and Vangede. The elder Bernstorff had little interest in managing the estate and assigned the responsibility to his nephew. The new lands comprised some 356 *tønder hartkorn* and were planted primarily in hay, rye, barley, and oats. There were no freeholders in the villages, only tenant farmers, and labor services were extremely high. Although located near Copenhagen, poor roads made it difficult for the tenants to market their goods. When the estate's new steward, Torkel Baden, first inspected the houses in the three villages he was struck by the poverty of the peasants. As he later wrote, "a lord with the mentality of Count Bernstorff required no further evidence in order to see that change was necessary." Andreas Peter also knew that the tenants were consistently in arrears on their taxes, which, as they had to be covered by the estate owner, naturally reduced the income from lands that were at best marginally profitable.<sup>21</sup> He, therefore, decided to embark on a comprehensive program of reform. Between 1764 and 1766 the land of the estate was surveyed and appraised; the old strips were combined and consolidated farms were distributed to the peasants of the parish. He had new farm houses built on the parcels located away from the old villages, improved the drainage system, and laid out a new road to Copenhagen, the Bernstorffvej. Altogether Bernstorff invested some seven thousand *rigsdalers* in these reforms. On 1 October 1767 all former tenants

became copyholders and received deeds of conveyance on generous terms. Labor services and tithes were abolished in return for an annual payment of two *rigsdalers* and three Danish *marks* per *tønne hartkorn*—a very moderate fee. Significantly, from the standpoint of the future, the fifty cottagers who also resided at Bernstorff were excluded from these reforms and therefore remained liable for labor services. In 1768 Andreas Peter wrote to his father, “because of the arrangements my Uncle has made with the farmers, the fields around Bernstorff are regularly productive. It is unbelievable how their work and industriousness has increased since they became the proprietors of their own land. Also it has made an impression and many people are imitating the example.”<sup>22</sup>

The reforms at Bernstorff were economically successful. In 1764 the peasants produced 732 barrels of rye, 1,540 barrels of barley, and 1,820 barrels of oats; in 1783 they produced 2,127 barrels of rye, 4,384 barrels of barley, and 3,733 barrels of oats. The production of hay more than doubled and wheat was introduced as a new crop. During the same period, the abolition of labor services led to a decline of draft horses kept by the peasants from 425 to 279, while the number of milk cows increased from 64 to 401. The financial advantages to the Bernstorffs were also considerable. In the years immediately following 1767 not a single farmer fell in arrears on his taxes. The income from leases and commutation fees made Bernstorff a profitable operation.<sup>23</sup>

The *Bernstorff Indretning*, or “Bernstorff Arrangement,” became a model for estate reform in Denmark. Because of its proximity to Copenhagen and the status of its owner, numerous officials, landowners, and interested citizens visited the estate and observed its operation.<sup>24</sup> Further attention was called to these reforms with the publication of Oeder’s *Zusätze über die Frage: Wie dem Bauernstande Freiheit und Eigenthum in den Ländern wo ihnen beides fehlt, verschaffet werden könne?* Strongly influenced by the success at Bernstorff and by the writings of James Steuart, Montesquieu, and the physiocrats, Oeder in his essay urged the abolition of the *Stavnsbaand* and the *Hoveri*.<sup>25</sup> More precise information on the reforms at Bernstorff was provided with the appearance in 1774 of Torkel Baden’s *Beskrivelse over den paa Godset Bernstorff iwerksatte nye Indretning i Landbruget*, which described in detail how the new system on the estate had been implemented.<sup>26</sup>

The widespread interest in reform resulted in the establishment of the Royal Agricultural Society of Denmark, *Det kongelige danske*

*Landhusholdningsselskab*, in 1769. Approximately 80 percent of its original 210 members were residents of Copenhagen, and government officials were by far the most numerous single occupational group.<sup>27</sup> Many of these officials were also landowners, but their orientation was primarily determined by the intellectual atmosphere of the capital and by their interest in the state as a whole. They represented the enlightened bureaucracy that would become the prime force behind the reform movement. By 1784, however, the number of those whose prime occupation was as a landlord had grown from 20 to 63; perhaps this is an indication that among the landowning class there was a growing willingness to support the progressive and socially responsible approach to agricultural problems advocated by the society. Its first president was J. H. E. Bernstorff, and Hans Jensen Bjerregaard, from the Bernstorff estate, was the only representative of the peasantry.<sup>28</sup>

The society awarded a variety of prizes worth up to 100 *rigsdalers* as a way to encourage agricultural innovation. In the first year seventeen medals were awarded for theoretical contributions and twenty-four for practical improvements. Three medals alone worth 100, 50, and 25 *rigsdalers* were awarded to peasant proprietors who abandoned most successfully the common-field system, and others were given for the introduction of clover, turnips, potatoes, and alfalfa.<sup>29</sup> In 1781, the society began to emphasize social improvements as well. In an effort to encourage greater freedom among the peasantry, it announced a new competition with three awards, for landowners who did the most to enable their tenants to become freeholders and copyholders.<sup>30</sup> From 1770 to 1808, the society paid out 94,000 *rigsdalers* in prize money in connection with its wide variety of competitions.<sup>31</sup> In its emphasis on better systems of land use, new kinds of cultivation, and more secure systems of land tenure the Royal Agricultural Society anticipated the chief characteristics of the great reforms.

It was only slowly, however, that the public discussion of agrarian policy and the private reforms began to affect the decisions of the crown. In fact early in the 1760s the position of the landlord was actually strengthened. The First Agrarian Commission, *Den første Landbokommission*, of 1757 to 1767, headed by Adam Gottlob von Moltke, drew up an ordinance, promulgated on 15 May 1761, which encouraged the enclosure of common fields but usually only in a way favorable to the landlord. A second ordinance issued on 13 April 1764 increased the age group for the *Stavnsbaand* from those



males fourteen to thirty-six years old to those four to forty years old. This increased obviously the number of individuals legally tied to the estates.<sup>32</sup> But with the accession of Christian VII in 1766, the policies of the government began to change.

The new king was interested in reforms similar to those carried out at Bernstorff and Hørsholm and was greatly influenced by the progressive ideas of his tutor, Elie-Salomon-François Reverdil. As a result Christian sold some of the land in the crown domains in the county of Copenhagen to his peasants, and in October 1767 he appointed a new, reform-minded agrarian commission, later called the Agricultural Department.<sup>33</sup> After analysing the problems of rural reform the commission issued an instruction on 16 March 1768 which discussed an end to the open-field system, the introduction of copyhold, the commutation of labor services, and the problems of overcultivation and land erosion. However, due to the opposition of the minister of war, Count Claude Louis de St. Germain, the abolition of the *Stavnsbaand* remained beyond the competence of the commission.<sup>34</sup> The only lasting body of law approved was a series of ordinances issued in 1769 which encouraged landowners to sell portions of their estates, or to grant rights of hereditary tenure, to their peasants. The landlords, however, would be allowed to retain their tax-exempt status even if the size of their holdings fell below 200 *tønder hartkorn*, the previous lower limit for tax-exempt status.<sup>35</sup> The new peasant proprietors, most of whom were copyholders, were also given special tax considerations and were protected against the imposition of arbitrary labor services and punishments by the landlord. Finally, and most important, the peasant was guaranteed secure title to his farm. He was allowed to sell or divide the farm, and could will his property and livestock to his heirs. Such ordinances it was felt were "for the country's general good and profit, for land must indeed be better cultivated when he who tills it is assured that the time, labor and energy he devotes to improving the farm and his land will benefit himself and his children and his heirs after him."<sup>36</sup> An additional law encouraged the abolition of the open-field system.

These laws were symptomatic of the growing concern for agrarian reform and Hans Jensen has asserted that in their emphasis upon the freeholder and the improvement of land use, they represented a dramatic break with the past and set forth the basic guidelines for Danish agrarian policy later in the century.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand it has been argued by Sigurd Jensen that they were the legal recog-

nition of a trend that already existed. Because of reforms on private estates, the sale of crown domains, and increased prosperity among some of the peasants as a result of rising agricultural prices, some tenants were able to become copyholders and in a few instances even obtained clear title to their lands in the course of the 1760s. While this trend did exist, it should not be exaggerated, and it varied in degree according to region. Altogether some 43,000 *tønder hartkorn* of crown domains were sold between 1764 and 1774. On Fyn and in southern Jutland most of the land offered was taken over by the peasants, and few new estates were established. However in east Jutland, Falster, and Zealand, little of the land was bought by the peasants. Between 1764 and 1774, fifty new estates were established out of the old domains and some older estates were enlarged; most of these were on the islands. The purchase of private land by peasants followed a similar regional pattern. In west Jutland a number of peasants bought land and were freed from the *Hoveri*. However, on the islands this kind of purchase rarely occurred. The regional pattern of this early trend toward peasant proprietorship and copyholding tended to be most successful in those areas where the *Vornedskab* had not existed, that is Jutland and Fyn, and was less successful elsewhere. Altogether the transfer of land to the peasantry during this period does not appear to have been substantial, but the trend as well as the body of laws promulgated in 1769 did indicate the direction which agrarian reform would take in Denmark over the next hundred years.<sup>38</sup>

This movement for gradual reform was interrupted by the short-lived radical and dictatorial regime of Johann Friedrich Struensee. By 1770 Christian VII was suffering from mental illness and Struensee, his physician, succeeded in forcing J. H. E. Bernstorff from office. In the following two years Struensee issued some 1,800 decrees that affected nearly every aspect of Danish government and society, including agriculture. This outburst of activity antagonized a wide spectrum of the Danish populace and in 1772 Struensee was overthrown by the tutor of the king's brother, the theologian Ove Høegh Guldberg. Few of Struensee's decrees survived his fall and his mercurial career had little positive impact upon rural society. Guldberg's government, which lasted until 1784, was highly conservative, and with one exception, introduced no progressive measures that concerned agrarian matters.

The exception, however, was of major importance for it concerned the abandonment of the open-field system. Several laws issued

in the 1770s dealt with this matter, but it was not until 23 April 1781, that a comprehensive law concerning the conversion of open field into consolidated farms was promulgated. This law provided that:

1. Any owner of land had the right to demand the consolidation of his parcels regardless of the attitude of other owners in the area.
2. The land of the village had to be surveyed by qualified surveyors, a comprehensive plan of consolidation was to be drawn up for the entire village and the cost of surveying had to be shared by all.
3. The distribution of consolidated land was to be as equitable as possible and compensation would be made where any unavoidable loss of land was incurred.
4. Each farm was to have the most rational shape possible; its length should not be more than three or four times its width. Where this was not possible, the farm and farm house should be relocated in a more favorable area—with a housing construction subsidy of 50 to 100 *rigsdalers* provided for building the farm house in its new location.
5. If disagreement on consolidation could not be resolved, government commissioners would decide the case.

This law laid the basis for the gradual end of the open-field system in Denmark, but did not lead to enclosure on a large scale until after 1784.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the conservative nature of the government and the imposition of strict press censorship, the discussion on agriculture remained lively into the 1780s. Some, such as Tyge Rothe, found a great deal of support for their arguments in the writings of Adam Smith and Arthur Young. Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* was translated into Danish in 1779; it became immensely popular for its discussion of general economic theory and especially for its analysis of the importance of agriculture. Young's description of progressive agricultural techniques and his emphasis on land ownership instead of tenant farming were well received in Denmark. The first volume of Rothe's major work, *Dansk Agerdyrkeres Kaar eller vort Landvæsenssystem, som det var 1783*, published in 1784, used a long passage by Young as its motto. Others, such as Christian A. Fabricius, were less influenced by foreign models and instead based their arguments for reform on a

close examination of Danish rural society. For them the emancipation of the peasantry, while important, was secondary to creating new, positive, and comprehensive social and political arrangements in the countryside. Those like Fabricius, who emphasized practical and detailed changes, probably had a greater influence on the final shape of the Danish reforms than did the more doctrinaire supporters of the English agricultural system or the teachings of the physiocrats.<sup>40</sup>

The period from 1750 to 1784, important though it was for the discussion of agriculture, and for the introduction of private reforms and several crucial laws, did not fundamentally transform the nature of Danish rural society and Danish agriculture. That transformation took place in the years 1784 to 1807. In fact, even the transition from tenancy to copyholding, which had begun during the 1760s, slowed dramatically after 1775. This was probably caused by the long period of relatively depressed agricultural prices and by the generally conservative policies of the government.<sup>41</sup>

On 14 April 1784, Crown Prince Frederick overthrew the regime of Guldberg in a bloodless *coup d'état*. The change of government brought Andreas Peter von Bernstorff to power as minister for foreign affairs and president of the German chancellory; it marked the beginning of an important period of innovation in Denmark. Almost immediately reform-minded officials were elevated to positions of great authority inside the government. For example, on 6 August 1784 Count Christian Ditlev Reventlow became the first deputy in the *Rentekammer*, or Tax Office, the government department that looked after agricultural affairs and most matters of taxation. Few individuals in Denmark were as knowledgeable in the area of agriculture as Reventlow, and none would have a greater influence upon the shape of the agrarian reforms introduced by the new government.<sup>42</sup>

Of North-German noble lineage, Reventlow was well educated and had toured extensively in Europe. He, like Andreas Peter von Bernstorff, was impressed by English agricultural arrangements, but in contrast to the English pattern, he felt that the independent peasant, not the landlord, should be the prime benefactor of rural improvement. On Christiansæde, his estate in Lolland, he enclosed fields, commuted labor services to a modest cash payment, and introduced a new system of crop rotation. Teacher training and better schooling for the peasant were emphasized in the parish and

he took a special interest in introducing progressive methods of forestry. Extremely active in the Royal Agricultural Society, Reventlow was a well-informed and capable administrator who was a model of the progressive and disinterested aristocrat devoted to the service of state and society. Beginning in March 1785 Reventlow was ably assisted by the Norwegian jurist Christian Colbjørnson, chief legal consultant for the *Rentekammer* and president of the Royal Agricultural Society from 1788 to 1794. Colbjørnson saw the creation of an independent peasantry in Denmark on the model of the free Norwegian peasant as the major goal of government policy. He viewed the absolute monarchy as a mechanism for increasing individual freedom.<sup>43</sup>

Reventlow wasted no time in directing the attention of the government to agricultural matters. On 3 November 1784 the Little Agrarian Commission, *Den lille Landbokommission*, was established to examine conditions on the crown domains in Frederiksborg and Kronborg counties. Composed of Reventlow and his brother, J. L. Reventlow, as well as of several other reform-minded officials and landowners, its recommendations led to the enclosure of over 1,300 peasant holdings and the dispersal of over one-third of the peasant dwellings to outer fields. Copyhold and freehold were introduced and labor services and royal tithes were commuted to cash payments. Small plots were set aside for cottagers and provisions were made for an improved system of peasant education. In a gathering at Frederiksborg Castle in 1788, Reventlow distributed deeds of conveyance to the new copyholders and told the peasants:

I look forward to that happy time when, in the teaching of children, in all schools, the cultivation of the mind and of the heart will be considered of more importance than learning by rule of thumb. . . . I look forward to that time when the open field will resemble well-manured fields, sour meadows and pastures be transformed . . . useless scrub rooted out, useful forest and wood carefully preserved, all stones employed for permanent boundary walls—the time when decentralized farmsteads will all be encircled by large well-cultivated gardens, hop fields and orchards—when the growing of clover, potatoes and useful roots will no longer be a rarity.<sup>44</sup>

The work of the Little Agrarian Commission gave testimony to the land reform ideals of the new government and to its comprehensive approach to agricultural matters. These ideas were further supported by important changes in the general economic policies of the Danish government. The new government inherited serious

financial and commercial problems from the previous regime.<sup>45</sup> A report by the College of Finance of 28 June 1785 presented the basic policy for correcting the financial deficiencies of the state. It emphasized the need for increased production in the country, especially in the agricultural sector. Some economic historians have seen in this report and in the policies that followed it a basic shift away from a mercantile system, based on trade and especially monetary considerations, toward an "agricultural" system.<sup>46</sup> The desire on the part of the government for increased production served as a major stimulus for land reform and often, it is argued, determined the content of the new agrarian ordinances. In addition, it became, as we shall see, the policy of the government to "direct money first and foremost into agriculture, where it would compensate for the weak capital market in that sphere."<sup>47</sup> It has also been suggested that the government was strongly committed to the development of peasant agriculture, as opposed to landlord agriculture with its system of tax-exemptions, as a way to increase the tax base of the state. Sufficient research has not yet been done to delineate clearly the relationship between the government's economic and financial policies and the agrarian reforms, but most historians are agreed that the financial report of 28 June 1785 signaled a new interest on the part of the government in the role of agriculture in the state's economy.<sup>48</sup>

In the summer of 1786, Reventlow brought the matter of agrarian reform before the crown prince. Frederick was already sympathetic toward the problems of the peasantry and he agreed that the government should begin promptly to deal with the agrarian question.<sup>49</sup> Shortly thereafter, on 25 August 1786 the Great Agrarian Commission, *Den store Landbokommission*, was created. It was made up of sixteen government officials and landowners; Reventlow became its most important member and Colbjørnson was appointed its secretary. The commission examined nearly all aspects of rural life in the course of its discussions and on the recommendation of Reventlow its proceedings were made available to the public.<sup>50</sup> The work of the commission was at first hampered by the opposition of the military colleges, and its recommendations were also opposed by J. O. Schack-Rathlou and F. C. Rosenkrantz, two conservative members of the *Staatsraad*, the Council of State. They objected to significant change in the agrarian arrangements of Denmark and in particular disliked the abolition of the *Stavnsbaand*.<sup>51</sup> However this opposition was overcome. It was in the *Staatsraad* that

Andreas Peter von Bernstorff, who had been branded the *Bondevenne*, or "Friend of the peasant" by the conservatives, made his most important contribution to agrarian reform. He was greatly respected by the young crown prince and became in fact, if not in title, the leading minister of Denmark. He succeeded in dominating the *Staatsraad* and was able to force the agrarian laws through.<sup>52</sup> As a result Schack-Rathlou and Rosenkrantz resigned from the Council of State in early June 1788, and with their departure the reformers held predominant influence inside the royal government.

The agrarian laws implemented during the reform period fall into four general categories: first, those that regulated conditions of farm tenancy; second, those that abolished peasant bondage; third, those that encouraged freeholding and improved methods of land use; and fourth, those that defined or commuted obligatory labor services. The general purpose of the new ordinances, according to Colbjørnson, was "to reconcile the civil liberty of the people with the rights of the landlord and to combine the prosperity of both classes with the welfare of the state."<sup>53</sup> The interlocking nature of the Danish reforms is revealed in this succinct statement.

Both Reventlow and Colbjørnson felt that it was essential to have the tenure relationship of tenant farmers legally defined before the peasantry was released from the *Stavnsbaand*. They feared that landlords would take advantage of the uninformed peasant. Therefore, the first agrarian reform, the Act of 8 June 1787, regulated conditions of tenancy. It stipulated that when a peasant took out a lease, the landlord was required to have the farm legally surveyed and appraised. This report would serve as the basis for any subsequent settlement involving the property. If the landlord claimed that the tenant had damaged the farm in some way, the landlord could no longer assess the amount of compensation himself, but rather the law required that the district magistrate appoint two impartial surveyors to examine the condition of the farm and establish a just settlement. In addition, the eviction of a tenant because of gross neglect had to be sanctioned by a court ruling and the defendant was to be provided with free legal aid. Moreover, although failure to perform obligatory labor services was subject to penalty, the landlord could no longer impose corporal punishment, torture, or confinement. Furthermore, the landlord, when letting a farm was required to ensure that it was properly equipped with the implements, buildings, seed, and stock necessary for satisfactory

operation. The tenant, upon subsequent transfer of title, was to be compensated for any improvements he had carried out on his farm, and this right of compensation was transferable to his heirs. Finally, the rights of children and widows to the farm were safeguarded.

A second act, dated 9 March 1790, prohibited the leasing of farms for a period of years and stipulated instead life tenancy. Many landlords favored short-term leases, but Reventlow argued for as secure a form of tenure as possible. As he said, "ownership is better than long lease, long lease better than life tenancy, life tenancy better than short lease and three months notice is the ruin of the country."<sup>54</sup> The object of these laws is clear. They intended to make conditions of tenancy more stable and to encourage the improvement of farmsteads by both landlord and tenant.

The abolition of the *Stavnsbaand* was the second major achievement of the reform period. The ending of peasant bondage had become a nearly universal demand on the part of reform-minded Danes. The Act of 20 June 1788 abolished the *Stavnsbaand* and in its first paragraph made specific reference to the fact that in principle freedom of the peasantry had already been endorsed by Frederick IV with the lifting of the *Vornedskab* in 1702.<sup>55</sup> This act gave freedom to every peasant boy under fourteen and every man over thirty-six. Those between the ages of fourteen and thirty-six years would be released from its restrictions in the year 1800. This period of transition was intended to give landlords the opportunity to adjust to the new labor conditions without undue damage to the production of the estates. Of all the reform laws, the Act of 20 June 1788 was the most popular with educated Danes.<sup>56</sup> In 1792 the citizens of Copenhagen erected the *Column of Liberty* just outside the city. Its inscription read on one side: "The King knew that civil liberty, determined by just laws, provides prosperity for the Fatherland, and means for its defense, and creates a desire for education, the willingness to be diligent, and the hope of success." On the opposite side it read, "The King ordered that the *Stavnsbaand* should end, Agrarian laws brought order and strength so that the free peasant could become self-reliant and educated, diligent and good, an honorable and happy citizen."<sup>57</sup> Diligence, "a desire for education," self-reliance, and perhaps most important, "the hope of success," these were the attitudes that the reformers hoped the new laws would encourage among the peasantry.

A third feature of the Danish reforms reflected governmental



interest in developing a strong viable class of independent proprietors and in promoting more rational methods of land use. If progress was to be made in these areas, capital was needed. As a consequence of the financial report of 28 June 1785 the *Kongelige Kredittkasse*, or Royal Credit Bank, was established on 16 August 1789. It provided low cost loans for a wide variety of economic undertakings, especially mining and agriculture. It became government policy to give small loans to peasants to allow them to negotiate longer leases, copyhold tenure and especially the outright purchase of land. The *Kredittkasse* was quite cautious in dispersing loans, but nevertheless paid out 441,741 *rigsdalers* between 1786 and 1798 at 2 percent and later 4 percent interest purely for the purchase of freeholds. The *Kredittkasse* also loaned landlords 1,058,562 *rigsdalers* between 1786 and 1798 to finance agricultural improvements on their estates.<sup>58</sup> Its operation came to a standstill in 1807 as a result of the Napoleonic Wars, and it was abolished as an institution in 1816 following the bankruptcy of the Danish state three years earlier.<sup>59</sup> Reventlow, who was well connected with the major financial institutions in Denmark, also facilitated the flow of capital from private sources to landlords who wished to introduce progressive methods of agriculture. In 1797 the *Enkekasse*, or Widow's Pension Fund, began to provide credit to the peasantry and by 1807 it had loaned out 2,245,000 *rigsdalers* to assist in the purchase of freehold and copyhold. Most peasants wishing to buy their farms, however, had to turn to private financing, usually by the landlord.<sup>60</sup>

While hoping to strengthen the independence of the peasantry the Great Agrarian Commission felt that an increase in agricultural production was also necessary. This could only be brought about if changes in the methods of land use accompanied changes in the status of the peasantry. The elimination of the open-field system seemed most urgent; as the commission stated in one of its recommendations, "of all the measures which have the beneficial object of promoting arable farming and improving the lot of the peasantry none leads more quickly and more surely than the abolition of this system."<sup>61</sup> The Act of 23 April 1781 laid down the basic guidelines for ending the open-field system, but actual enclosure did not become widespread until the years of reform, and additional ordinances promulgated during these years encouraged the process. One law introduced on 8 June 1787 required the peasants to cooperate in the process of enclosure and decentralization. Another act of

25 March 1791 relaxed the prohibition against the abolition of vacant farms. However, provisions were made that out of every abolished farm, land had to be provided for propertyless cottagers in the form of two eight-acre plots on the site of the farm, and additional four-acre plots for landless cottagers in the village. A final law of 15 June 1792 permitted landlords to raise rents and required tenants collectively to pay a 4 percent annual payment on the cost of enclosure and decentralization; this corresponded roughly to the prevailing interest rate on loans taken out by the landlord to carry out improvements.

Aside from the abolition of the *Stavnsbaand* many reformers felt that the ending of obligatory labor services, the *Hoveri*, was the change most needed in the Danish countryside. In this fourth area, however, the commission moved rather cautiously. The desire to maintain agricultural production at a high level made it reluctant to regulate labor services in a way disadvantageous to the landowner. The central aim of the commission was to define contractually the nature and extent of labor services owed by the peasant to the landlord and above all to encourage commutation to cash payments. A series of acts and notices issued between 1791 and 1795 attempted to encourage the voluntary determination of labor services by contract and established royal commissions to adjudicate any differences between the contracting parties. Services were generally fixed at a fairly high rate, however, and were not especially favorable to the peasant. Between 1797 and 1799, the commission struggled with a more comprehensive ordinance dealing with labor services. Finally issued on 6 December 1799, this act made it mandatory that labor services between landlord and peasant be legally defined and stipulated that thereafter the services could not be increased without the permission of the *Rentekammer*. Additional instructions made it clear that the government felt that the commutation of labor services to cash payments was most in keeping with the new status of the peasant as a free man. Cottagers were excluded from the provisions of this act.

Taken as a whole the changes brought about in the countryside of Denmark as a result of the reform measures are impressive. As J. E. Clapham wrote, the series of laws "coinciding as it does with the implementation and ill-regulated completion of the enclosure movement in England, shows the enlightened despotism of the late 18th century at its best."<sup>62</sup> The work of the Great Agrarian

Commission was especially successful in stimulating the growth of an independent peasant proprietary class. However, despite the homogeneity of Denmark, the conditions of land tenure following the great reforms were not uniform. Conditions of tenancy were stabilized and made more secure throughout the kingdom, but the existence of freehold tenure varied greatly from region to region. By 1835, it prevailed in Jutland on 70 percent of the farms, in Fyn and Lolland-Falster on 40 percent or slightly less, and in Zealand on only 15 percent. These regional variations have been explained by the fact that the transition from tenancy to copyholding and then to freeholding discussed previously took hold in Jutland much earlier, i.e., in the 1760s and developed more strongly than in the eastern parts of Denmark, the old region of the *Vornedskab*, where the transition from tenancy to freeholding began only in the 1780s and was then interrupted by the agrarian crisis of the post-Napoleonic years.<sup>63</sup>

An examination of the prevalence of farms and cottages reveals a similar regional pattern. In Jutland, in 1805, peasant farms outnumbered cottages by a significant margin, whereas on Lolland-Falster, Fyn, and especially Zealand, cottages outnumbered farms. There was also a decline of some 6,000 farms from 1690 to 1805, nearly all of it taking place on Zealand and Lolland-Falster. A substantial amount of this land, however, went to cottages. For example, 86.5 farms were eliminated in forty-six Zealand villages; as a result 601 cottages received land, of which 131 were newly created. In 1801 for Denmark as a whole 37,154 cottages had some land, and 20,498 were without land.<sup>64</sup> Obviously there was a great decline in the amount of land held by landlords. Between 1786 and 1807, 226 manors, or over one-fourth of all the estates in Denmark, sold a majority of their land to peasants and fell below 200 *tønder hartkorn* in size. But because of the existing laws the estates remained tax-exempt.<sup>65</sup> For the entire country in 1835, 9 percent of the land was farmed directly by the landlords, 39 percent was leased out to tenant farmers, 40 percent belonged to peasant freeholders, and 10 percent to copyholders. The independent proprietors became the dominant group within the rural population of Denmark.<sup>66</sup> A remarkable shift in land ownership had taken place in the course of a century.

Significant progress was also made in the areas of controlling labor services and improving methods of land use. These two aspects were closely related. The reformers felt that with the re-

moval of burdensome labor services, the peasant farmer would take a greater interest in his own holdings and would increase its production. However, the encouragement of commutation and the strict regulation of labor services for farmers, together with the fact that cottagers were excluded from consideration under the tenancy acts and the *Hoveri* ordinances, meant that the burden of labor shifted increasingly from the farmers to the cottagers. Thus, although the reforms were successful in providing a majority of cottages with small parcels of land, they also contributed to the conversion of this segment of the population into a rural proletariat. Nevertheless, for the country as a whole, there was a dramatic decline in the prevalence of labor services. In 1784 the *Hoveri* had existed on 200,000 *tønder hartkorn* of farmland; by 1807 it existed on only 80,000 *tønder hartkorn*, or roughly one-fourth of Danish farmland.<sup>67</sup>

In addition, by 1807 the vast majority of all farmland was consolidated, and although probably only 10 to 20 percent of the farms on Jutland and Fyn had been moved outside the villages, approximately one-third of Zealand's farms were scattered.<sup>68</sup> Reventlow estimated that 18 million *Kroner* were invested in the process of consolidation, most of it by the landowners themselves.<sup>69</sup> Simultaneously the three-field system was abandoned and various kinds of rotations, usually fairly short in duration were introduced on nonmanorial land. Although progressive agricultural techniques were slow to be adopted, rape, potatoes, and clover were introduced, manuring increased, and grain production grew during the reform period. Skrubbeltrang has estimated that the yield increased by one to two times the amount sown, or roughly 12 to 25 percent over earlier years. For the entire country the production of grain increased from barely 6 million barrels in 1770 to 8.4 million barrels in 1803, or approximately 40 percent. It is estimated that between 1750 and 1807, the harvest doubled and the export of grain tripled growing from 300,000 barrels to over 1,000,000 barrels.<sup>70</sup>

Similar improvement occurred in animal husbandry. Between 1774 and 1804, the number of cattle increased from 280,000 to 560,000. In 1788, the strict regulations governing the export of beef cattle, which in essence had meant a monopoly of the cattle trade by the nobility, were lifted. Thenceforth the peasant farmer was able to produce for a larger market.<sup>71</sup> However most of this increase in cattle was in milk cows on peasant farms; with the decline of labor services, the peasant kept fewer horses and was

able to support more livestock. Sizeable growth also occurred between 1800 and 1837. In these years the number of cattle grew from 560,000 to 834,000; the number of sheep from 800,000 to 1,647,000 and the number of pigs from 150,000 to 235,000. During the same period the number of horses declined from 400,000 to 325,000.<sup>72</sup>

A final change, and perhaps the one most difficult to document, was in the attitude of the peasant. Despite the inherent elusive nature of this kind of transformation, the evidence of increased commitment by the peasant to the development of his farm seems strong. When Thomas Malthus visited Copenhagen in 1799 a well-informed Dane told him of the "rapid increase in agriculture within the last ten years," and of the dramatic rise in the price of land. This he "attributed to the emancipation of the peasants which has rendered them so much more industrious." On another occasion, he learned from an estate owner outside of Copenhagen that "before their emancipation the farmers were still more oppressed than the labourers, as the Seigneurs had their horses and cattle at command as well as themselves. This was in general so disheartening that they exercised no kind of industry. . . . The farmers would then have parted with their farms for almost nothing—now they valued them most highly."<sup>73</sup> Skrubbeltrang's description of the village of Vejen and his discussion of the rural community in general after the great reforms reveals similar attitudes. The peasant often was suspicious of new agricultural techniques, especially if they were costly, yet as one clergyman said, the peasant farmer knew how to make a profit, "he reflects carefully whether an enterprise is worth its while before he enters upon it, and he takes care . . . not to try new methods till he is convinced they will be useful."<sup>74</sup> The interesting diary of Christen Andersen, a tenant farmer in northern Jutland, provides additional evidence. Obviously a capable individual in the first place, he purchased small plots of land in the 1790s, paid greater attention to methods of cultivation and field arrangement and expanded his livestock operations.<sup>75</sup>

Peasant attitudes were no doubt affected by the new emphasis on general and agricultural education. In 1789 the government set up the *Kommission for de danske Skolers bedre Indretning*, or School Commission. Reventlow was a member and played a leading role in its discussions. The work of the commission went very slowly and it was not until 29 July 1814 that the Elementary Edu-

cation Act, the *Almueskoleloven*, was issued.<sup>76</sup> Thereafter all children between the ages of six and fourteen were required to attend school; unexcused absences were subject to fines. The schools offered instruction in religion, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and natural history. Schoolmasters were encouraged to demonstrate new agricultural methods on the plots of land set aside for their homes. The high hopes of the reformers were not met in all areas, but in general the Elementary Education Act was a great success. Skrubbeltrang cites the following report turned in for the village of Vejen in 1830: "The children of Vejen school read, on the whole, very well, save that they had to be enjoined to speak louder and more distinctly. In religion their answers showed understanding and knowledge, and their writing was quite good, especially that of the girls. In arithmetic, however, they were not good."<sup>77</sup>

Agricultural education was also encouraged on a limited basis by the Royal Agricultural Society. It continued to award prizes for progressive methods of agriculture, and in 1830 the society set up a program whereby ten peasant youths under the age of twenty-one received instruction for three years from progressive agriculturalists, usually landlords, but sometimes enterprising farmers. These model farms were selected on the basis of their owners' answers to a questionnaire sent out by the society:

How large is the acreage of the farm where the apprentices will be brought?  
 What is the method of farming on your farm?  
 Are root crops grown? If so, which and how much?  
 What implements are used?  
 Is marling carried on?  
 Is stall-feeding practised? Completely or only partially?  
 What is the stock of horses, cows, pigs, and sheep?  
 Of what breeds are the cows, sheep and pigs that are kept?  
 Are the fields enclosed (fenced), and are there hedges?  
 Are the boundaries respected?<sup>78</sup>

Local agricultural associations, established in most parts of Denmark between 1809 and 1812, aided in the dissemination of agricultural information. Few peasants joined these groups in the early years, but they were the beginning of the famous co-operative associations that took hold later in the century, and they did encourage "farm diligence" by rewarding initiative and by demonstrating new agricultural methods.<sup>79</sup>

All of these efforts, beyond the major reforms themselves, slowly succeeded in transforming the attitudes and methods of cultivation

among the peasantry. Sigurd Jensen concluded when referring to the agricultural crisis in the late 1870s, which caused a shift away from the cultivation of grain and toward animal husbandry in Denmark, that "until nearly the end of the 18th century the Danish peasant was not free; he was economically a minor and was cowed. A hundred years later he was able to show an initiative during a severe economic crisis which was admired at the time and since. He and his associates had joined together as members of cooperative societies in joint enterprises; they did so as fully independent farmers and upon a fully democratic foundation."<sup>80</sup>

Returning to the first question posed at the outset, the Danish reforms were successful because they emphasized improving the status of the peasantry and simultaneously encouraged more progressive methods of land use. The desire to give freedom to the peasantry was naturally of paramount importance, but what is significant in Denmark is that by 1800 the freed peasant had a body of law that protected his position and he had a government that was willing to enforce the law.<sup>81</sup> This contrasts with Prussia, for example, where the peasantry was freed legally, but no corresponding body of legislation existed to provide the rural population with security and with a realistic chance of improvement.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, in Denmark the reformers' encouragement of freeholding was a way in which the position of the peasantry was strengthened. The granting of special tax exemptions to the landlord and the provision of credit for the peasant aided the spread of freeholding. Thus during a period of agricultural innovation, the Danish peasantry increased its share of the land. This was not the usual pattern in Europe. In Prussia, commercial agriculture did develop in the course of the nineteenth century as a result of the reforms of 1808 to 1816, but over one million hectares of peasant land went to the landlord class.<sup>83</sup> In England, during the period of the agricultural revolution, there was also a gradual trend toward larger holdings, although it is now felt that the decline of the freeholder in the course of the eighteenth century has been greatly exaggerated. Nevertheless, one agricultural historian has written that in England it is doubtful "whether since the early part of the eighteenth century it has profited the man of middle acres to own the land he farms."<sup>84</sup> Many small farmers did survive into the nineteenth century, but some freeholders and copyholders could not afford the improvements necessary to compete successfully and therefore they

fell sometimes into the group of agricultural laborers.<sup>85</sup> In France, a large class of independent proprietors did not develop in the course of the eighteenth century and despite the great revolution significant innovations did not occur on a widespread basis in the countryside. The policy of the revolutionary government during the 1790s was not to encourage the growth of a large class of modern freeholders. As one politician wrote in 1794, "in a republic of 24 millions it is impossible for all to be agriculturalists; . . . it is impossible for the majority of the nation to be proprietors, for if this were so, everyone being obliged to cultivate his field or vineyard in order to live, commerce, arts and industry would soon be annihilated."<sup>86</sup> Those who were already proprietors prior to 1789 tended to benefit from the revolutionary changes; however, the bulk of the peasantry did not gain a great deal of land and therefore clung to the traditional agricultural system in order to survive. The percentage of land held by the peasantry did increase somewhat, but the productivity of French agriculture nevertheless suffered.<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, the Danish government not only made a conscious effort to protect the peasant and to provide him with land, but also attempted to improve methods of cultivation. In trying to achieve its objective of increased production in the agricultural sector of the economy, the government struck a balance between the interests of the landlord and the interests of the peasantry. For instance, the nature of the enclosure laws made it difficult for the peasant to resist the introduction of more modern methods of land use. However, there were numerous safeguards to ensure that the new arrangements were equitable and housing subsidies helped to defray the cost of establishing scattered or decentralized farms. On the other hand, the provision of credit and the sharing of some of the costs of enclosure by the peasantry, encouraged landowners to participate in the reforms and to pour capital into agricultural improvements. As in England, the funneling of money by the landlords into agriculture proved to be of great importance in improving the productive capacity of the countryside.<sup>88</sup> This contrasts with France where the landed nobility did not generally reinvest much of their income, which came from fixed payments and dues, in agricultural improvements, but rather consumed it. In this way the privileges and attitudes of the French nobility constituted one of the major factors contributing to the "immobilization" of French agriculture.<sup>89</sup>



The Danish reformers also attempted to improve production in other ways. For example, they encouraged the commutation of labor services in the belief that without this burden the peasant farmer would devote more attention to his own farm. However, in those cases where the *Hoveri* continued to exist, the Act of 6 December 1799 stipulated that labor provided by the peasant should be efficiently utilized; also the landlord could not be prevented from introducing technical improvements on his lands. The landlord had to provide the new implements, but the peasants were obligated to use them.<sup>90</sup> To that extent the *Hoveri* ordinance may have functioned in a way similar to the covenants of leases in England; by the omission of commitments to maintain the traditional system of cultivation, it helped to promote more advanced agricultural techniques.<sup>91</sup> This same emphasis on production, however, also contributed to the main deficiency of the reform movement; the failure of cottagers to share in the benefits of reform. They became the labor pool for Danish agriculture. Their low standard of living was not intended by the reformers, however, for at the time agricultural wages were high, and it was hoped that small plots of land, if farmed intensively, would support the cottager and his family satisfactorily. This proved not to be the case, in part because the cottagers were required to provide so much labor for other farms that they had little time left for their own; they suffered as a result.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless one should not conclude that their position declined in comparison with earlier in the century. J. L. and Barbara Hammonds wrote in regard to England that "before enclosure the cottager was a laborer with land, after enclosure he was a laborer without land."<sup>93</sup> This was not the situation in Denmark for a majority of cottagers received land as a result of the reforms. Rather the problem was that in relation to other groups who benefited from the reforms, they were not equipped to compete successfully in the new century, and this problem was compounded by the rise in the population of Denmark and by the notable increase in the size of this group.

Finally the emphasis on education, the growth of rural associations, and the dissemination of agricultural information served to point Denmark in the direction of modern agriculture, even if it did not produce major technical innovations on the peasant farms in the years immediately after reform. As Robert Forster has pointed out: "The secret to sustained agricultural growth in Japan, Egypt, and Mexico has been institutional follow-up with

social overhead capital, including governmental information services, farm credit, cooperative processing and marketing and experimental farms, all supported by a comprehensive program of public education."<sup>94</sup> Just such a movement was set in motion in Denmark by the work of the reformers.

To provide an answer to the second question is more difficult, but it is reasonably clear that certain characteristics of the political and social environment in Denmark during this period made the introduction of progressive measures possible. First of all, the Danish agrarian reform movement was not carried out in isolation from the rest of Europe. Its strength and shape were greatly influenced by developments on the Continent and in England. As one reformer said, "the whole of Europe is turning its attention to agriculture."<sup>95</sup> But there were also other factors peculiar to Denmark that may account for the successful implementation of the reform program in a relatively short period of time. The most important was the nature of government in Denmark from 1784 to 1797. From 1660 the Danish kingdom had been an absolute monarchy; the power of the crown was in theory unrestricted, although in the early years of absolutism, the Danish kings had not made much use of this power to reform the state.<sup>96</sup> During the period 1784 to 1797, however, the king, Christian VII, was insane; although he signed all royal ordinances he exerted no influence on government policy. The crown prince, Frederick, was only sixteen years old at the beginning of the reform period, and while he took an active interest in political affairs, the making of policy was left to others. Thus royal power in the person of the monarch was virtually nonexistent. Reform-minded ministers of independent means dominated the government and benefited from the fact that no legal residual political power lay in the landed aristocracy and that no intermediate political bodies existed in Denmark to block the execution of the government's policies. When in 1790, 103 landlords from Jutland protested against the agrarian reforms, their objections were quickly rejected by the government, and the leader of the protest was fined 2,000 *rigsdalers* for insubordination by the Supreme Court. Thereafter they had no recourse.<sup>97</sup> By contrast, in Austria, where the aristocracy still met in provincial assemblies and was able to enunciate its class interests, and in Prussia, where the local aristocracy had similar, although less visible means of expressing its concerns, the opposition of the nobility was able to defeat or to change significantly the course of agrarian reform.<sup>98</sup>

Likewise in France the aristocracy by using the *Parlements* and the provincial estates was often able to blunt efforts at agricultural innovation or legal reform.<sup>99</sup>

In Denmark it is conceivable that the Jutland landlords could have influenced the crown prince in a similar direction. However, overwhelming power in the government lay in the hands of men like Bernstorff and Reventlow, enlightened aristocrats who were representatives of a bureaucracy that had increased in strength since 1660 and of a growing body of progressive landlords. These individuals had participated in efforts at reform since the 1760s, they had a detailed knowledge of local affairs, and in some instances they had assimilated important aspects of the European enlightenment.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore they were supported by the opinion of literate Danes. In the Danish case, the initiative of enlightened landowners and careful attention to the main currents of public opinion resulted in innovative government policy.<sup>101</sup> This combination was sufficient to overwhelm the objections of a sizeable but weakly organized group of more conservative landlords. As Hans Jensen concluded: "More than in other lands it was possible for the Danish government to remain independent of narrow class interests and egotistical forces. The great agrarian reforms were not just a social and economic transformation but were a breakthrough in the strength of the absolute state system."<sup>102</sup> But it should be added that it was a system of ministerial, not royal absolutism, that existed in Denmark during the reform era. It is significant that the pace of reform slowed after Andreas Peter von Bernstorff's death in 1797. From that time on there was no leading minister, and Frederick assumed an ever increasing role in the running of the government; after 1808, when he was crowned king, the ministerial system disappeared and royal absolutism returned. The melding of public interest and government policy was never again as close until after the introduction of the liberal constitution in 1848.

Three additional factors also favored the course of reform in Denmark. The first is that Denmark was a small country. Although agricultural and social conditions varied somewhat from region to region, the degree of uniformity appears high when compared with other countries. This made the task of devising and implementing a program of agrarian reform easier.<sup>103</sup> Certainly in eighteenth-century France it sometimes seems that efforts at agrarian reform and agricultural improvement were overwhelmed by the diversity of the country. As Marc Bloch said, "French rural society under

the *Ancien Régime* was so complex a structure that attempts to overthrow the ancient customs inevitably came up against a multiplicity of obstacles, all the more difficult to anticipate and overcome because their nature varied with the region."<sup>104</sup> The same statement, based upon different considerations, could also be made for the Austrian Empire. A second factor that aided reform in Denmark is that prices for agricultural products were generally favorable during the second half of the eighteenth century, and especially during the years 1784 to 1807.<sup>105</sup> Strong prices enabled landlords to invest in their estates and an accompanying dramatic rise in the price of land encouraged them to sell off some land to the peasants.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, high prices for agricultural products also helped the new peasant proprietors to pay off debts incurred by the purchase of land or the commutation of services at a fairly rapid rate. The serious inflation that set in from 1807 to 1813 also enabled some well-informed peasants to dissolve their debts. The timing of the reforms was therefore propitious when compared with the price trend.<sup>107</sup> A third factor was the advantageous position of Denmark internationally during the period. Until 1807, Denmark remained free of the great European conflict brought on by the French Revolution and Napoleon. The military needs of the state were not great from 1784 to 1807, and Bernstorff in particular assiduously maintained Denmark's neutral status. As a result, Danish trade prospered and overseas markets for agricultural goods were especially strong. When the government abandoned its position of neutrality in 1807, much of its energy and resources were thenceforth tied up with military concerns and foreign policy, and the momentum of the reform movement was lost.

Thus, many elements contributed to the ultimate success of rural reform in Denmark during the eighteenth century. Favorable political and economic conditions together with a remarkably rational yet sensitive approach to agrarian matters account for the government's achievements. Above all it was the comprehensive nature of the reform legislation which attempted to deal with the different interlocking facets of agricultural development that produced such striking results. The transformation of rural society in Denmark meant that whereas in the eighteenth century Danish agriculture was backward by European standards, after the reform period its agrarian arrangements had become a useful model for the rest of Europe.<sup>108</sup> This achievement in a comparative sense is testimony to the success of agrarian reform in Denmark.

## Notes

1. Compared with England and the Netherlands, Danish agriculture in the eighteenth century was backward. See B. H. Slicher van Bath, *The Agrarian History of Western Europe A.D. 500-1850* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1963), pp. 280 and 335. For the twentieth century see Einar Jensen, *Danish Agriculture, its Economic Development* (Copenhagen: J. H. Schultz forlag, 1937). Interesting comparative information is provided in Folke Dovring, *Land and Labor in Europe in the Twentieth Century* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), and idem, "The Transformation of European Agriculture," in H. J. Habakkuk and M. Postan, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1965), vol. 6, pt. 2, pp. 603-72. This study is only concerned with developments in Denmark proper, not in Schleswig-Holstein, Norway, or any of the other territories that were part of the Danish kingdom in the eighteenth century.

2. Frank E. Huggett, *The Land Question and European Society since 1650* (London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 97.

3. For many years the standard works on agrarian reform in Denmark during the eighteenth century were Edvard Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne I Danmark* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1888); and V. Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne set fra Nationaløkonomiens Standpunkt*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1888). These studies should be supplemented by the more recent works of Hans Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik 1757-1919*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel. Nordisk forlag, 1936), vol. 1; Sigurd Jensen, *Fra Patriarkalisme til Pengeøkonomi* (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel. Nordisk forlag, 1950); and the relevant sections of the comprehensive study of Danish agriculture commissioned by the Royal Agricultural Society of Denmark, *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, ed. K. Hansen. Its five volumes, some of which appeared as pamphlets, were published between 1925 and 1945 under the following titles: vol. 1, *Danmarks Jord* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1925); vol. 2, *Planteavlen* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1936-43); vol. 3, *Husdyrbruget* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1924-32); vol. 4, *Bygninger, Mejeri, Redskaber* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1925-33); and vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1934-45). A useful summary of agricultural developments during the reform era is also contained in Svend Aage Hansen, *Økonomisk vækst i Danmark*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1972-74), 1: 39-42, 62-69, and 103-12. The best account in English is the handbook for developing nations commissioned by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations entitled *Agricultural Development and Rural Reform in Denmark*, Agricultural Studies no. 22 (Rome, 1953). Written by Fridlev Skrubbeltrang, an

eminent historian of rural Denmark, it covers agricultural developments in Denmark through the twentieth century, but unfortunately it has no notes and no bibliography. Also useful among non-Danish materials is Axel Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Jena: Verlag von Gustav Fischer, 1933), and the introductory parts of E. Jensen, *Danish Agriculture*.

4. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, pp. 7-8; idem, "Developments in Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Denmark as a Move towards Peasant Proprietorship," *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* 9 (1961):165. Of the approximately 377,000 *tønder hartkorn* that comprised Denmark, exclusive of Bornholm, in the middle of the eighteenth century, a little less than 4,200 *tønder hartkorn* belonged to freeholders. See Axel Linvald, "Hvem ejede Danmarks Jord omkring Midten af det 18. Aarhundrede?" *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 8th ser., 4 (1913):148. One *tønede hartkorn*, or barrel of hard grain, was a unit of tax valuation indicating productivity and thus land area. In the survey of 1688 it was equal to:

1. The area of land that could be sown with 2 to 3 *tønder* of barley or rye. A *tønede* of grain is equal to 4.5 cubic feet or 139.1 liters.
2. Meadowland that gave twenty-four to forty-eight cartloads of hay. The cartload is extremely difficult to define as a unit of measure. The best approximation is 480 lbs.
3. Grazing land for twenty-four to forty head of cattle.

In actual area the *tønede hartkorn* varied from 6,300 square meters to 94,500 square meters according to the quality of the soil. In the soil survey of 1802 to 1826 approximately 15 acres equaled one *tønede hartkorn* on the islands, whereas in Jutland, where the soil is light and sandy, the equivalent was approximately 36 acres. For all of Denmark the average was roughly 24.5 acres to one *tønede hartkorn*. See Viggo Hansen, *Landskab og bebyggelse i Vendsyssel* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels forlag, 1964), p. 211; E. Jensen, *Danish Agriculture*, p. 126. For an excellent discussion of Danish weights and measures other than those for area, see Astrid Friis and Kristoff Glamann, *A History of Prices and Wages in Denmark 1660-1800* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958); 1:114-40.

5. See Gunnar Olsen, *Hovedgård og Bondegård. Studier over stordriftens udvikling i tiden 1525-1774* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1957); and *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 1, *Danmarks Jord*, pp. 142-43.

6. Fridlev Skrubbeltrang, *Den Danske Husmand*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: Det Danske Forlag, 1952-54) 1:10-11. This is a marvelous study of the Danish cottagers and later small holders in the modern era.

7. One Zealand clergyman described some of his elderly parishioners as "all of the peasantry and formerly farm tenants, but, as is generally the case in the infirmity of old age, now starved laborers and beggars." Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 25; for rural conditions generally prior to the reforms see pp. 7-27; and Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 136, 186-93. It is interesting that in England at the same time there was evidently little problem with the security of tenure for tenants and the passing of farms on to sons, daughters, and widows. English landlords also tended to keep rents low out of a desire to keep good tenants and to be reasonably popular in the community

for political purposes. See G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Routledge and Paul, 1963), pp. 53, 170-71. On the question of poverty in Europe during this period I consulted Jerome Blum, "The Condition of the European Peasantry on the Eve of Emancipation," *Journal of Modern History* 46 (1974): 418-20; Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, 2d ed. (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1973), p. 47; Olwen H. Hufton, *Bayeux in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 85-89; and Cissie C. Fairchilds, *Poverty and Charity in Aix-en-Provence 1640-1789* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

8. For a good description of the characteristics of the *Hoveri* see *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie*, pp. 45-67. For a useful table showing the labor services typical of a Zealand manor, see Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 19.

9. The *Vornedskab* and its gradual abolition is examined in *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie*, pp. 37-45; Johannes C. H. R. Steenstrup, "Vornedskabet hos den Danske Bonde," *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 5th ser., 4 (1886): 339-462; Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 56-58; Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, pp. 20-21; and J. A. Fridercia, ed., *Aktstykker til Oplysning om Stavnsbaandet Historie* (Copenhagen: Rudolf Klein, 1888), pp. 1-26.

10. The promulgation of the *Stavnsbaand* is discussed in *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie*, pp. 68-76; H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:12-19; and in Fridercia, *Aktstykker*, pp. 26-89. For the text of the decree of 4 February 1733, see Fridercia, *Aktstykker*, pp. 86-89. A convenient recent summary of the relationship of the *Stavnsbaand* to the problems of the landowners is found in Svend Aage Hansen, *Økonomisk vækst i Danmark*, 1:42-43. On the agricultural depression in Europe see Wilhelm Abel, *Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunktur in Mitteleuropa* (Berlin: Paul Parey, 1935), pp. 79-102. In Denmark the average prices per barrel for rye, barley, and oats from 1691-1750 were:

	Rye	Barley	Oats
1691-1700	8.66 Kr.	6.06 Kr.	3.68 Kr.
1701-10	6.95	5.10	2.83
1711-20	7.33	5.45	3.25
1721-30	6.41	4.81	2.79
1731-40	6.20	4.75	2.47
1730-34	4.68	4.00	2.16
1741-50	7.00	4.62	2.70

From Falbe Hansen *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:1. For more detailed tables on agricultural prices in Denmark see Friis and Glamann, *A History of Prices and Wages*, 1:195-350. However, full listings for Danish rye, oats, and barley only begin with 1723. For this period the exchange rate was approximately sixteen *Kroner* per English pound, Friis and Glamann, *A History of Prices and Wages*, 1:66-68. See Edvard Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie fra den store nordiske Krigs Slutning til Rigernes Adskillse*, 7 vols.

(Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1891-1912), 6, pt. 1, 114, for the prohibition on the import of grain.

11. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:12-16. The increased severity of landlord-peasant relations not only reflected economic conditions but also the fact that the nobility was interested in a more systematic exploitation of the soil. See Linvald, "Hvem ejede Danmarks Jord omkring Midten af det 18. Aarhundrede?" p. 155. For the background to the changing composition of the Danish nobility see E. Ladewig Petersen, "La crise de la noblesse danoise entre 1580 et 1660," *Annales Economies, Sociétés, Civilisation* 23 (1968): 1237-61; and especially the excellent study of Svend Aage Hansen, *Adelsvældens Grundlag* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1964).

12. For the position of the European peasantry in the eighteenth century see especially Blum, "The Condition of the European Peasantry on the Eve of Emancipation," pp. 195-424. Referring to this rural population he writes: "The lowly status of these millions of peasants before their emancipation had its parallel in the misery and poverty of their lives. The backwardness of agricultural techniques and the consequent low yields and frequent crop failures, the ignorance and sloth of the people, the splintering of holdings, insecure tenures, and the ravages of war all conspired to make rural life an unceasing struggle to survive. Above all else, however, the payments the peasant had to make to lord, state, and in some lands church, compelled most villagers to live at the margin of subsistence" (p. 396). For additional comparisons see idem, *Lord and Peasant in Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), esp. pp. 219-76 and 414-74; Friedrich Lütge, *Geschichte der deutschen Agrarverfassung* (Stuttgart: Verlag Eugen Ulmer, 1963), pp. 100-68; Pierre Goubert, "The French Peasantry of the Seventeenth Century: A Regional Example," in *Crisis in Europe 1560-1660*, ed. Trevor Aston (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1967), pp. 150-76; and Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, pp. 113-34.

13. See Marc Bloch, *French Rural History, An Essay on Its Basic Characteristics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 216-19; and Werner Conze, "Die Wirkungen der liberalen Agrarreformen auf die Volksordnung in Mitteleuropa im 19. Jahrhundert," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 38 (n.d.): 4, for brief summaries of the essential aspects of the European movement for rural reform.

14. In 1776 Moltke reported that in twenty-five years he had increased his production of grain by 4,000 barrels a year, with only a small increase in the land under cultivation, and the amount of hay harvested had grown by 1,200 cartloads. On Moltke see Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 337; Wilhelm Abel, *Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft vom frühen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Verlag Eugen Ulmer, 1962), pp. 200-2; and *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, s.v. "Moltke, Adam Gottlob von."

15. The public discussion on the status of the peasantry and on agrarian matters in general is reviewed in Albert Olsen, "Samtidens Syn paa den danske stavnsbundne Bonde," *Scandia* 21 (1939): 99-139; H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:20-35; and in Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, pp. 28-33. Brief descriptions of some of the figures active in the agrarian movement are given in H. L. Bisgaard, *Den Danske Nationaløkonomi I det 18. Aarhundrede* (Copenhagen: A. Hagerup, 1902).



16. Abel, *Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft*, pp. 258–60; John G. Gagliardo, *From Pariah to Patriot, the Changing Image of the German Peasant* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), pp. 34–36; and Aage Friis, *Die Bernstorffs und Dänemark*, vol. 2 (Bentheim: A. Hellendoorn, 1970), p. 200.

17. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:29; and *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, s.v. "Sneedorff, Jens Schelderup."

18. For a similar development in Germany see Gagliardo, *From Pariah to Patriot*, pp. 24–90.

19. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:45; *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie*, pp. 95–96; and Johan Hvidtfeldt, *Kampen om ophavelsen af livegenskabet i Slesvig og Holsten 1795–1805* (Århus: Dansk Boghandlers Kommissionsanstalt, 1963), pp. 44–45.

20. For Andreas Peter Bernstorff's early life see Aage Friis, *Die Bernstorffs*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Weicher, 1905), pp. 353–487. His impressions of England are described on pp. 476–78. Also see A. P. Bernstorff to A. G. Bernstorff, London, 13 October 1757, and A. P. Bernstorff to J. H. E. Bernstorff, London, 14 October 1757, in Aage Friis, ed., *Bernstorffske Papirer*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel. Nordisk forlag, 1904–13), 1:192–94. The progressive agricultural methods of Norfolk, which dated from the seventeenth century, became an important model for England and Europe. The "Norfolk System" according to Arthur Young involved: first, voluntary enclosure; second, use of marl and clay; third, crop rotation; fourth, the growing of turnips, hand-hoed; fifth, use of clover and ray grass; sixth, long leases; and seventh, large farms. See Naomi Riches, *The Agricultural Revolution in Norfolk* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1967), esp. pp. 76–121; R. A. C. Parker, "Coke of Norfolk and the Agrarian Revolution," *The Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 8 (1955): 156–66; and J. H. Plumb, "Sir Robert Walpole and Norfolk Husbandry," *The Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 5 (1952): 86–89.

21. This was not unusual. Skrubbeltrang describes similar conditions in the years 1760–84 among the peasants in the village of Vejen in southern Jutland. See *Agricultural Development*, p. 35.

22. A. P. Bernstorff to A. G. Bernstorff, Copenhagen, 21 May 1798, *Bernstorffske Papirer*, 1:402–3. Six marks equalled one rigsdaler. The rate of exchange for these years was approximately 5.2 rigsdalers to the English pound. Friis and Glamann, *A History of Prices and Wages*, 1:85–88.

23. The reforms at Bernstorff are covered in Friis, *Die Bernstorffs und Dänemark*, 2:306–27; Lauritz Peder Gotfredsen, *Bernstorffs Bønder* (Hellerup: Aug. Olsens Bogtrykkeri, 1965); and Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, pp. 45–46.

24. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:45; and Friis, *Die Bernstorffs und Dänemark*, 2:326–27. The following landowners, Knuth on his estate Raunstrup, Holstein on Ledreborg, Glydenchrone on Wilhelmborg, Schak on Giesegaard, Ryberg on Frederiksgave, and Lange on Røkilde as well as several others soon followed the example of Bernstorff. See Kontorchef H. Hertel, *Det Kgl. Danske Landhusholdningsselskabs Historie*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: August Bangs Boghandel, 1920), 1:96–97.

25. Bisgaard, *Den Dansk Nationaløkonomi*, pp. 103-4; Skrubbeltang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 31; and Gagliardo, *From Pariah to Patriot*, p. 56. Oeder was a German brought to Copenhagen by J. H. E. Bernstorff. Friis, *Die Bernstorffs und Dänemark*, 2:316.

26. Hvidtfeldt, *Kampen om ophævelsen af livegenskabet*, p. 47.

27. According to the membership list of 29 January 1770, the areas of residence for the members of the society were as follows:

Copenhagen .....	164	Jutland .....	9
The rest of Zealand ....	9	Slesvig .....	1
Fyn .....	5	Norway .....	20
Lolland-Falster .....	1	Dependencies .....	1

Their occupations were as follows:

Cabinet ministers .....	3	Landowners .....	20
Administrative officials ..	81	Peasants .....	1
Officers .....	15	Merchants .....	25
Clergy .....	13	Manufacturers .....	17
Scholars .....	27	Not Indicated .....	8

See Hertel, *Det Kgl. Danske Landhusholdningsselskabs Historie*, 1:42-43. At least ten similar societies were established in Germany from 1762-1800. Abel, *Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft*, p. 254.

28. Hertel, *Det Kgl. Danske Landhusholdningsselskabs Historie*, 1:43. Bjerregaard became a legend in his own time. He was known variously as "the Bernstorff peasant," "the Sneedorff peasant," or "the learned peasant." In 1771 he published a small book entitled *Brev fra Hans Jensen, Selvejerbonde paa det Bernstorff'ske Gods, til sine Landsmand, de øvrige Bønder, om de nye Indretninger til Landvæ senets Forbedring i Danmark*, or "Letter from Hans Jensen, Proprietor on the Bernstorff estate, to his fellow countrymen, the other peasants, about the new arrangements for the improvement of agriculture in Denmark." See *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie*, pp. 112-15; and *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, s.v. "Bjerregaard, Hans Jensen."

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-84, 125, and 141.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

32. For the work of the First Agrarian Commission see H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:36-47; Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, p. 21; and Fridercia, *Aktstykker*, p. 161.

33. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:49; Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, p. 98. For Reverdil's ideas on agrarian reform see his memoir to the king, dated 1 September 1767, printed in Fridercia, *Aktstykker*, pp. 182-92. In it he cites England, Holland, and Switzerland as models for reform, mentions the reforms at Hørsholm, and calls for the freeing of the peasantry and an end to the *Hoveri*.

34. However, the commission did draw up a draft proposal for the abolition of the *Stavnsbaand*. See "Udkast til Frdg. om Stavnsbaandets Afskaffelse m.m. 1767," Fridericia, *Aktstykker*, pp. 202-6.

35. These measures were primarily the work of the jurist Henrik Stampe, who had long been interested in promoting the growth of an independent peasant proprietary class. His ideas and the ordinances of 1769 are discussed in a thorough fashion in H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:48-86. For the period 1750-84 in general, see *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie*, pp. 77-122.

36. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 30.

37. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:77.

38. S. Jensen, *Fra Patriarkalisme til Pengeøkonomi*, pp. 15-32; Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 319-20; Skrubbeltrang, "Developments in Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Denmark," pp. 165-72; and *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 1, *Danmarks Jord*, pp. 154-56.

39. Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 328; H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:103-9; and Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, pp. 53-54.

40. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:110-16; Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, pp. 64-73; Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 28; and *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, s.v. "Rothe, Tyge." For Adam Smith's slight connections with Denmark and for the reception of his work in Copenhagen see Niels Banke, "Om Adam Smiths Forbindelse med Norge og Danmark," *Nationaløkonomisk Tidsskrift For Samfunds Spørgsmål, Økonomi og Handel* 93 (1955): 170-78; and Hans Degn, "Om den Danske Oversættelse af Adam Smith og Samtidens Bedømmelse af den," *Nationaløkonomisk Tidsskrift For Samfunds Spørgsmål, Økonomi og Handel* 74 (1936): 223-32.

41. Skrubbeltrang, "Developments in Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Denmark," p. 172; H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:110-16; and Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, pp. 66-73.

42. On Reventlow see the excellent study by Hans Jensen, *Chr. D. Reventlows Liv og Gerning* (Copenhagen: Frederiksberg Bogtrykkeri, 1938).

43. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:129-35; Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 38; *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon*, s.v. "Colbjørnson, Christian"; and Hertel, *Det Kgl. Landhusholdningsselskabs Historie*, 1:64-67.

44. H. Jensen, *Chr. D. Reventlows Liv og Gerning*, pp. 101-2, translation from Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 39. Also see H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:118; and Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, pp. 98-99. By 1793 the state had invested 279,575 *rigsdalers* in the new arrangements in the two counties.

45. For an excellent discussion of the economic and financial problems facing the new government see Hans Chr. Johansen, *Dansk Økonomisk Politik I Årene Efter 1784* (Århus: Universitetsforlaget, 1968).

46. See Knud Erik Svendsen's review article on "Danish Economic Policy in the 1780's," *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* 18 (1970): 190-96.

47. Knud Erik Svendsen, "Monetary Policy and Theory in Denmark, 1784-1800, Part II," *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* 11 (1963): 26.

48. Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie*, 6, pt. 1, 49, 100; and S. A. Hansen, *Økonomisk væsk i Danmark*, 1:61-62.

49. C. U. D. von Eggers, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben des Königlich Dänischen Staatsministers Andreas Petrus Grafen von Bernstorff* (Copenhagen: Prost und Storch, 1800), pp. 167–68. It is worth adding that although Frederick was sincerely interested in the condition of the peasantry, he also wanted to develop a stronger, national army, based on a free citizenry. He wanted to control the process of recruitment which had been dominated by the landlords under the *Stavnsbaand*. Naturally they had been reluctant to select their best peasants for service. Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie*, 6, pt. 1, 64.

50. The establishment of the Great Agrarian Commission and the opinions of its members are described in H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:117–38; and in Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, pp. 110–19. The proceedings of the commission were published under the title *Den for Landbovæsenet nedstatte Kommissions Forhandling*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1788–89). For the text of the royal directive establishing the commission see *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie*, pp. 137–39.

51. For the discussions between the military and the commission see K. C. Rockstroh, "Den store Landbokommission og de militære Kollegier 1786–1788," *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 9th ser., 6 (1929): 96–111. The opposition of Schack-Rathlou is covered in Th. Thaulow, *En Dansk Staatsminister Fra Sidste Halvdel af det 18. Aarhundrede. Gehejmeraad J. O. Schack-Rathlou* (Copenhagen: H. Hagerups forlag, 1932), pp. 237–50. For additional details see the letters of protest written by Schack-Rathlou and Rosenkrantz printed in Fridercia, *Aktstykker*, p. 289–96.

52. On the role of Bernstorff in the *Staatsraad* and on his power in the government see H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:127; Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie*, 6, pt. 2, 219–27; Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, p. 150; and Axel Linvald, "Comment sur le depotisme éclairé s'est présenté dans l'histoire du Danemark," *Bulletin of the International Committee of Historical Sciences* 5 (Paris, 1933): 714–26. A Swedish diplomat reported that Bernstorff was the "leader of the peasant party," and conservative opponents of Bernstorff called him a "sans-culottesminister." See H. Jensen, *Chr. D. Reventlows Liv og Gerning*, p. 135; and Edvard Holm, *Den offentlige Mening og Statsmagten i den dansk-norske Stat i Slutning af det 18de Aarhundrede (1784–1799)* (Copenhagen: J. H. Schultz forlag, 1888), p. 147.

53. Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, p. 110, translation from Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 44. The reform laws are explained in H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:139–205; Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, pp. 120–45; Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 323–32; and Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, pp. 40–60.

54. Skrubbeltrang, "Developments in Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Denmark," p. 174.

55. The Ordinance of 20 June 1788 is reprinted in Fridercia, *Aktstykker*, pp. 297–302.

56. Although it is interesting that Christen Andersen, a tenant farmer in northern Jutland, did not even mention the abolition of the *Stavnsbaand* in an otherwise detailed diary. See Jens Holmgaard, ed., *Fæstebonde i Nørre Tulstrup. Christen Andersens Dagbog 1786–1797* (Copenhagen: Landbohistorisk Selskab, 1968), p. 18.

57. John Danstrup and Hal Koch, eds., *Danmarks Historie*, 14 vols. (Copenhagen: Politikens forlag, 1962-66), vol. 10, *Reform og Fallit 1784-1830*, Jens Vibæk, p. 101.

58. From 1786-98, 47 percent of all loans by the *Kreditkasse* were in areas related to agriculture. For the *Kreditkasse* see H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:155; S. Jensen, *Fra Patriarkalisme til Pengeøkonomi*, pp. 35-39; and Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie*, 6, pt. 1, 103.

59. *Det Danske Landbrugs Historie*, vol. 5, *Danske Landboforholds Historie*, p. 167.

60. Reventlow was a high official on the Board of Finance and was especially concerned with bank matters. Banks loaned 1.5 million *rigsdalers* to peasants in the 1790s and private investors provided in excess of another million. For this as well as the operation of the *Enkekasse* see Axel Linvald, *Kronprins Frederik og Hans Regering 1797-1807* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1923), p. 229, S. Jensen, *Fra Patriarkalisme til Pengeøkonomi*, pp. 35-39; and Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie*, 6, pt. 2, 494.

61. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 51.

62. J. E. Clapham, *The Economic Development of France and Germany 1815-1914* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1928), p. 41.

63. Skrubbeltrang, "Developments in Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Denmark," pp. 174-75; and Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:80-81.

64. Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:128-29; Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 64; and especially Skrubbeltrang, *Husmand og Inderste, Studier over Sjællandske Landboforhold I Perioden 1660-1800* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1940), pp. 318-23.

65. Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:65.

66. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 92. In 1835 there were 41,695 freehold and copyhold farms, and 24,795 tenant farms in Denmark. Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:80. The development of freeholding in the village of Vejen went as follows: "One would have thought that the transition to farm ownership would have been a quite natural continuation of the earlier reforms; in fact the peasants who were free from labor services were already fairly independent. The landlord (Lautrup), being short of working capital, had a greater economic interest in selling the land than they had in buying it. The interest on a fair sales price would be worth more than the annual rent and the labor services put together.

"But the peasants could not resist the prospect of securing full ownership of their farms, especially since agricultural prices continued to rise and there was a possibility of recovering some of the purchase price by reselling part of the land later. The sale took place in 1798 after Lautrup had been granted continued exemption from taxation on his home farm. But he was not allowed to retain shooting and fishing rights; the Government decreed that the peasant's right of property must be unrestricted. . . .

"Most of the Vejen peasants obtained their holdings for 750-800 *rigsdaler*; a few paid a little more, and the small farms only 100-250 *rigsdaler*. The majority were able to pay only 50-100 *rigsdaler* outright, the balance being covered by

a mortgage deed. The average purchase price was equivalent to the value of 500–700 bushels of rye (about five bushels to the acre, or the value of 80–90 cows).

"The peasants obtained loans from the landlord, the Widow's Bank and other private sources . . ." (Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, pp. 71–72). The farms in Vejen were approximately 55 acres in size.

67. Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:66. Between 1791 and 1795, 600 of the 759 manors in Denmark voluntarily defined or commuted labor services. After 1795, government commissioners were obliged to determine the services on only 37 estates. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

68. Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:70–72. For Vejen, "Consolidation . . . was difficult. The village lay at the edge of the parish and so it was necessary to decentralize half the dwellings—no fewer than nine farms and seven cottages—though much less had sufficed in most other villages. . . .

"In the spring of 1785, the entire village field was surveyed. In the subsequent redistribution, all the decentralized farms received an equal portion of land comprising  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tønnder hartkorn each. The cottages obtained  $\frac{1}{4}$  tønnder hartkorn each, equivalent to at least 2.2 hectares ( $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres), some much more. Cottages were not so numerous in Jutland as in the islands and they usually received more land.

"At Vejen there were also four small-holdings of  $\frac{3}{8}$  tønnder hartkorn each. Two of them were decentralized, because consolidation had left over some land which could best be utilized in this way. Four of the farms had to accept uncultivated land and heath and so were granted 60 rigsdalers each in building aid. Each of the five farms which were decentralized to the pasture land received 40 rigsdalers, and each of the seven cottages 12 rigsdalers" (Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 69).

69. Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, p. 330.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 105; Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 67; and Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:77, 91.

71. Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie*, 6, pt. 1, 132–33.

72. In Århus County the number of milk cows nearly doubled as a result of the reforms. Falbe Hansen also cites a peasant farm in south Jutland that had four horses, four or five milk cows, and four young cattle before the reforms, and two to three horses, six to seven cows, and five to six young cattle after the reforms. See his *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:96–98.

73. Patricia James, ed., *The Travel Diaries of Thomas Robert Malthus* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1966), pp. 61, 64.

74. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, pp. 67, 69–73, and 81.

75. Holmgaard, *Fæstebonde i Nørre Tulstrup*.

76. School reform is discussed in Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie*, 6, 2:511–36; and the work of the school commission is described in H. Jensen, *Chr. D. Reventlous Liv og Gerning*, pp. 187–201.

77. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 100. Before the reforms one country school was described as "a miserable, low dirty building where still dirtier children of both sexes pass a few hours daily, mumbling a catechism

or a scriptural passage. If there are one or two out of 40 who can read it is rare; it is seldom that there are any who can write" (ibid., p. 11).

78. The entire questionnaire is reprinted in Hertel, *Det Kgl. Danske Landhus-holdningsselskabs Historie*, 1:255-56; also see Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 88, for an abridged version.

79. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 89; and Henning Ravnholt, *The Danish Co-operative Movement* (Copenhagen: Det Danske Selskab, 1947), pp. 45-46.

80. S. Jensen, *Fra Patriarkalisme til Pengeøkonomi*, p. 9.

81. Albert Olsen argues that the desire for human freedom was the prime force behind the reforms. He considers Hans Jensen's analysis of the reform movement as a "social-political phenomenon" as incorrect. The desire for legal freedom for the peasantry was basic, but the existence of that desire does not alone explain the precise reasons for the nature of the reform acts. The motives of the reformers were more complicated than he suggests. See Olsen, "Samtidens Syn paa den danske stavnsbundne Bonde," pp. 118, 134, and H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:132-33.

82. See the classic work by George Friedrich Knapp, *Die Bauern-Befreiung und der Ursprung der Landarbeiter in dem älteren Theilen Preussens*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1887; and Conze, "Die Wirkungen der liberalen Agrarreform auf die Volksordnung in Mitteleuropa im 19. Jahrhundert," pp. 17-24. The importance of protecting the peasantry was pointed out to Freiherr vom Stein in 1807 by Freiherr C.U.D. von Eggers, Bernstorff's chief assistant for agrarian matters. Eggers wrote in an open letter to the Prussian minister, "It is not enough—as I once thought—just to dissolve personal bondage. The government must absolutely ensure that the mode of living of the liberated peasant will also not be disarranged. One must secure them sustenance even as one gives them back their freedom; one must therefore ensure that they remain proprietors and do not become day laborers. We have been able to do this. Our decrees combine for the good of all unavoidable force with all possible forbearance" (ibid., p. 159). Stein did not need Eggers's suggestion for he already believed in the promotion of a class of peasant proprietors. However his approach was never implemented owing to the melding of liberal economic theory and aristocratic class interest. For an introduction to this complicated subject, see Walter Simon, *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement, 1807-1819* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955), pp. 88-104; and Marion W. Gray, "Schroetter, Schön, and Society: Aristocratic Liberalism versus Middle-Class Liberalism in Prussia, 1808," *Central European History* 6 (1973):60-82.

83. Lütge, *Geschichte der deutschen Agrarverfassung*, p. 232; and idem, *Deutsche Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1966), pp. 443-44.

84. R. Trow-Smith, *English Husbandry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 128.

85. Ibid., pp. 251 and 261. The decline of the small farmer has been the subject of a great deal of disagreement. However, if we understand the agricultural revolution to encompass a lengthy period of time from the late seventeenth century on into the nineteenth century, then a gradual but decided decline of the freeholder seems clear. In the course of the eighteenth century the

number of small farms between twenty-one and one hundred acres in size was cut in half, and the percentage of acreage cultivated by small farmers declined to between 10 and 20 percent of the total by the end of the century. This trend continued into the nineteenth century. In Denmark the average freehold farm was approximately fifty to one hundred acres in size, and between 1805 and 1835 the number of farms over twenty-two acres increased by a significant amount. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 92. A good introduction to the question of the decline of the small farmer in England is the pamphlet by G. E. Mingay, *Enclosure and the Small Farmer in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 1968). Also see G. E. Mingay, "The Size of Farms in the Eighteenth Century," *The Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 14 (1961-62): 469-88; B. A. Holderness, "The English Land Market in the Eighteenth Century: The Case of Lincolnshire," *The Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 27 (1974): 557-76; and J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), pp. 88-96.

86. A. Soboul, "The French Rural Community in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Past and Present*, no. 10 (1956), p. 89.

87. Ibid. Before the revolution Labrousse says the peasantry owned approximately one-third of the landed property in France. He hypothesizes that only 10 percent of French agricultural land changed ownership as a result of the revolution and that by 1815, the peasantry had increased its share of the land to under 40 percent. In the nineteenth century the vast majority of all peasant farms in France, say 75-85 percent, were under ten hectares in size, i.e., less than the equivalent of one *tønde hartkorn* in Denmark. See Ernest Labrousse, "The Evolution of Peasant Society in France from the Eighteenth Century to the Present," in *French Society and Culture Since the Old Regime*, ed. E. Acomb and M. Brown (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1966), pp. 44-64. In France from the first half of the eighteenth century down to 1840 there appears to have been no significant increase in yield. In terms of averages, it may be that the yield held steady for three to five centuries. See Michel Morineau, "Y a-t-il eu une révolution agricole en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle?" *Revue Historique* 239 (1968): 326. Marc Bloch writes: "Neither the reforms introduced during the last three decades of the century nor the advance of technical innovation appreciably affected the appearance of the countryside" (*French Rural History*, p. 232).

88. For the role of capital investment by English landlords in agriculture see G. E. Mingay, "The Agricultural Revolution in English History: A Reconsideration," *Agricultural History* 26 (1963): 126; H. J. Habakkuk, "Economic Functions of English Landowners in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Essays in Agrarian History*, ed. W. E. Minchinton, 2 vols. (Plymouth: A. M. Kelley, 1968), 1:189-201; and Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 177-78.

89. Albert Soboul, "Le Révolution française et la 'féodalité.' Notes sur le prélèvement féodal," *Revue Historique* 240 (1968): 56; and Robert Forster, "Obstacles to Agricultural Growth in Eighteenth-Century France," *American Historical Review* 75 (1970): 1612.

90. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, p. 48.



91. See Habakkuk, "Economic Functions of English Landowners in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," p. 191. In Norfolk the covenants of leases seem to have had a much more direct and positive effect upon the implementation of modern methods, but this appears to have been an exception. See Parker, "Coke of Norfolk and the Agrarian Revolution," pp. 160-61; and Chambers and Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880*, pp. 44-46.

92. Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, pp. 94 and 67-68. For agricultural wages at the time of the reforms see Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 2:112. Malthus recorded in his diary in 1799 that "the great demand for labour has placed the lower classes in a good state." Later he records that the "rapid rise in the price of labour has placed the lower classes in a very good state, and it is expected that there will be a very rapid increase of population" (James, *The Travel Diaries of Thomas Robert Malthus*, pp. 60-62).

93. Chambers and Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880*, p. 97.

94. Forster, "Obstacles to Agricultural Growth in Eighteenth-Century France," p. 1602.

95. Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, p. 160.

96. On the origins and early years of Danish absolutism, see Joh. Steenstrup et al., *Danmarks Riges Historie*, 6 vols. (Copenhagen: Det Nordisk forlag, n.d.), vol. 4; Edvard Holm, *Danmark-Norges Historie under Enevælden fra 1660 til 1720*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads forlag, 1885-86); K. Fabricius, *Kongeloven* (Copenhagen: H. Hagerup forlag, 1920); and especially the excellent study by Dietrich Gerhard, "Probleme des Dänischen Frühabsolutismus," in *Dauer und Wandel der Geschichte, Aspekte Europäischer Vergangenheit, Festgabe für Kurt von Raumer zum 15. Dezember 1965*, ed. Rudolf Vierhaus and Manfred Botzenhart (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1966), pp. 269-92.

97. Little is known about this case. The protesting landowners were mostly bourgeois; however, the leadership was provided by aristocrats, some of whom were associated with the conservative group around Ove Høegh Guldberg. The rural situation in Jutland around 1790 was much more dynamic than on Zealand, and some landowners in that area felt especially threatened by the new reforms. Conversion to peasant proprietorship had begun earlier in Jutland, and the peasantry appears to have been much more active in the wake of the first reforms. Labor unrest was common, and the peasantry in some districts were presenting numerous complaints to the government. Conservative landowners were fearful that they were losing all control over the rural population and that the traditional structure of society was disintegrating. Their fears, of course, were well-founded. On Zealand, on the other hand, landlords had converted to a greater extent to large scale agriculture prior to the reforms and were able to accommodate themselves more successfully to the new reforms without disrupting the essential characteristics of their estate operations. The peasantry appears to have been more passive on Zealand. Thus it was the expectation that dramatic change was about to occur as a result of the reforms which seems to have stirred some of the peasantry and landowning class in Jutland at this time. I am indebted to Dr. Claus Bjørn of the *Historisk Institut* of the University of Copenhagen for this information. One should also consult

Holm, *Kampen om Landboreformerne*, pp. 202–25; H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:172–78; and Skrubbeltrang, *Agricultural Development*, pp. 45–46.

98. See Jerome Blum, *Noble Landowners and Agriculture in Austria, 1815–1848* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1948), pp. 56–61; William E. Wright, *Serf, Seigneur, and Sovereign, Agrarian Reform in Eighteenth Century Bohemia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), pp. 151–64; Robert M. Berdahl, "The *Stände* and the Origins of Conservatism in Prussia," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 6 (1972–73): 304–11; Otto Hintze, "Zur Agrarpolitik Friedrich des Grossen," *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte* 10 (1898): 275–309; and Simon, *Prussian Reform Movement*, pp. 88–104.

99. Bloch, *French Rural History*, pp. 222–24.

100. Their attitude can be compared with that of the landlords of England, of whom Mingay writes, they had "a breadth of outlook, a basic liberalism, which was often lacking in the continental aristocracies." Although "primary interest was in local matters—the landowners who dominated Parliament could and did think in national terms, to the benefit of the nation as a whole, and not merely in terms of their own narrow class interests" (*English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 283–84).

101. On the important role of public opinion in Denmark in the late eighteenth century and on the government's ability to meet the essential interests of the literate society, see Holm, *Den offentlige Mening og Statsmagten*; and Kare D. Tonnesson, "Problèmes d'Histoire constitutionnelle en Scandinavie à l'époque de la Revolution et de l'Empire," *Annales Historiques de la Revolution Française* 39 (1967): 236–41. From 1784 there was virtual freedom of the press in Denmark; Bernstorff, in particular, thought it was essential for sound government. Government censorship was reimposed in 1799, after his death.

102. H. Jensen, *Dansk Jordpolitik*, 1:247.

103. Skrubbeltrang writes: "Compared with the rest of Scandinavia Denmark has fairly uniform conditions of nature and settlement, and this fact has through the ages left its stamp on the structure of the agricultural community. This relative uniformity made it possible to carry through for the most part within one single generation, the redistribution of land and the abolition of the open field system in Danish villages" ("Developments in Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Denmark," p. 165). The population of Denmark in 1801, exclusive of Schleswig-Holstein and Norway, was 926,000. Aksel Lassen, "The Population of Denmark, 1660–1960," *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* 16 (1966): 137.

104. Bloch, *French Rural History*, pp. 222–23.

105. In Denmark the average prices per barrel for rye, barley, and oats from 1751–1809 were:

	Rye	Barley	Oats
1751–60	7.14 Kr.	5.22 Kr.	3.41 Kr.
1761–70	9.04	6.02	3.45
1771–80	8.87	5.87	3.66
1781–90	9.75	7.56	4.89
1791–1800	11.33	7.72	5.31
1801–9	16.85	9.66	6.54

The average prices per pound of beef, pork, and butter from 1735-1804 were:

	Beef	Pork	Butter
1735-44	17 Øre	13.0 Øre	17.2 Øre
1745-54	19	14.6	22.5
1755-64	19	19.0	23.4
1765-74	22	20.6	25.8
1775-84	19	19.6	26.5
1785-94	19	22.3	27.7
1795-1804	27	30.3	37.7

From Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaand-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:83. This rise in prices seems to be fairly typical of Europe as a whole, where prices rose generally for the period 1755-1817, see Slicher van Bath, *The Agrarian History of Western Europe*, pp. 221-39.

106. The average prices for estate land in Zealand between 1731 and 1806 were:

1731-40	98 Kr. per tønde hartkorn
1741-50	147
1751-60	245
1761-70	267
1771-80	301
1781-85	370
1786-90	425
1791-95	415
1796-1800	715
1801-5	958

From Falbe Hansen, *Stavnsbaands-Løsningen og Landboreformerne*, 1:83. This rise would appear to be greater than in France, Spain, or England, where the price of land also increased, but it seems fairly typical when compared with the rise in the price of land in northern Germany. See Slicher van Bath, *The Agrarian History of Western Europe*, p. 225; Abel, *Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft*, pp. 303-4; Holderness, "The English Land Market in the Eighteenth Century: The Case of Lincolnshire," p. 562; and Christopher Clay, "The Price of Freehold Land in the Later Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *The Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 27 (1974): 173-89.

107. In Prussia the reforms of the early nineteenth century occurred just as European agriculture entered a period of depression. Thus it was difficult for the freed peasant to obtain capital. See Abel, *Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunktur in Mitteleuropa*, p. 145.

108. European observers in the early nineteenth century already recognized the merits of the Danish agrarian reforms. For example, in Prussia Hardenberg wrote, "No state has better regulations in this area than Denmark; in addition no state has made greater progress in these things than this one." See Olaf Klose and Christian Degn, *Die Herzogtümer im Gesamt-Staat, 1721-1803*, vol. 6 in *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins*, ed. Volquart Pauls (Neumünster: Wachholtz,

1959–60), p. 264. Later in the twentieth century agriculturalists in other countries also looked to Denmark. For instance in France during the 1930s, a “number of agronomists and agricultural economists in French universities and advanced agricultural schools saw the Danish and Dutch systems as possible models for France.” Later after the liberation Pierre Tanguy-Prigent, the minister of agriculture, asserted that his model for agrarian reform “was the rural structure of the Dutch or the Danes.” In 1949, the virtues of the Danish example were argued in Jean Chombart de Lauwe’s *Pour une agriculture organisée: Danemark et Bretagne* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1949). See Gordon Wright, *Rural Revolution in France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 48, 113, and 218. Finally the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations appreciated the importance of the Danish experience. In the foreword to its commissioned work by Fridlev Skrubbelttrang (*Agricultural Development*), it stated: “Danish agriculture underwent a marked evolution from about 1784 down to the first half of the present century. These evolutionary changes have resulted in a marked increase in agricultural production and in the general welfare of the rural people of Denmark, and have been the subject of much discussion in other countries.

“As a result of this interest, and the possible applications of the Danish experience in other countries, FAO has arranged for the preparation and publication of the material contained in the Agricultural Study.”

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