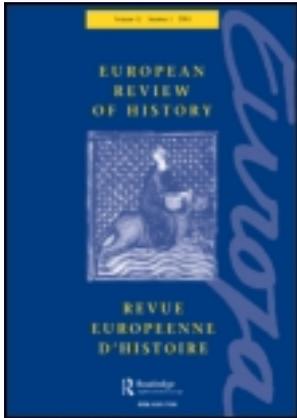


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Popular protest in Switzerland during the 1830s: Opposing models of political participation and citation of traditional ritual

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The article examines specific forms of popular protest and their political background in Switzerland during the liberal era after the French Revolution of 1830. In this era one finds two distinctive models of political participation: the older model of the so-called *Landsgemeinde* and the new liberal model. The Swiss protesters combined ideas, forms and symbols of both models. However the relation between the two models proved to be ambivalent and conflict-prone. This is demonstrated with a focus on several specific cases of popular protest. While the liberal leaders of the early 1830s mostly referred to the age-old *Landsgemeinde* to use it as a vehicle for their new aims, the protest action of the late 1830s against liberal governments encompassed a variety of forms and mixed symbolic references. We can observe a virtuoso mode of citation of protest rituals from different contexts and time periods. The primary function of the citation of old ritual was to provide the protestors' action with social acceptance. Thus, new and very different claims could also be made. Despite striking similarities, under the auspices of the post-revolution period one must avoid the assumption of a simple linear continuity of protest practice from the *Ancien Régime*.

Keywords: forms of popular protest; direct democracy; representative democracy; citation of ritual

Introduction

Eric Hobsbawm once stated: 'Liberalism prevailed in Switzerland – a much less pacific country than now.'¹ Indeed, the liberal movement was very successful in the Swiss cantons after 1830. However, it is also evident that the post-restoration period between the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, in Switzerland commonly referred to as the era of liberal 'Regeneration', was riddled by severe political and religious tensions. If the different size of population is taken into account, popular protest in the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland between 1830 and 1848 appears to be much more frequent than in the German Confederation ('Deutscher Bund') during the same time period. Against the backdrop of the international image of idyllic Switzerland, remote and the most peaceful place on Earth, which was cultivated from the eighteenth century onward by travel writers and philosophers, the amount and intensity of popular protest between 1830 and 1848 is indeed surprising.² In the era following the July Revolution in France, we find numerous conflicts about political ideas in a narrow sense. Much conflict was also created by social and religious frictions, which eventually led to a short civil war in 1847 between Catholic and reformed cantons and finally to the foundation of the Swiss federal state in 1848. Political conflict in the Swiss cantons during the liberal 'Regeneration' was not only a matter of liberal bourgeois elites and their conservative counterparts. Time and again, we find

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thousands of people assembling in mass rallies or in protest marches on the capital city of their canton. From different voices in the crowd we can interpret controversial constitutional conceptions. The practice of popular protest which combined certain well-known rituals for very different purposes is striking and specific to the Swiss situation.

In this article, we would like to contribute to an understanding of the extent and peculiarity of popular protest in the German-speaking Swiss cantons in the 1830s. Of course, popular protest always refers to its different political and social contexts in many ways, and there are always several reasons for the occurrence and success of protest action. In the case of Switzerland, it is important to mention that the governmental context was very different from all of the surrounding countries. After the Congress of Vienna, the Swiss republics serve in some respect as a unique model of state-building in a Europe which, after the Napoleonic period, had turned out to be more monarchical than before 1789. In the Swiss cantons we find neither monarchs nor a strong landed aristocracy. And despite the presence of some military force, Swiss protesters could take advantage from the absence of a standing army and a centralised bureaucracy. As will be highlighted in this article, another very distinctive feature was the competitive coexistence of two models of political participation in Switzerland. On the one hand, since the short Helvetic period (1798–1803), liberals throughout the country pursued the idea of a representative democracy, derived from the ideas of the Enlightenment and the first constitutional phase of the French Revolution. In this conception of freedom and equality, political participation was guaranteed by a written constitution and practised by elected deputies in a Parliament.³ On the other hand, we find the model of the so-called *Landsgemeinde*. The *Landsgemeinde* was the assembly of free men and the supreme power of the community. Once a year, its members met to decide on new laws and executive issues by an open vote by hand. On this occasion, they also elected their officials. Without the idea of a separation of powers, the *Landsgemeinde* could also function as a court of justice. In contrast to the ‘aristocratic’ urban cantons mostly under patrician rule like Basel, Bern, Lucerne and Zurich, this kind of self-government had a long history in the alpine cantons of central Switzerland, where it had been practised since the late Middle Ages. Traditionally, a *Landsgemeinde* was an open-air reunion of privileged men, who were considered equal and honourable. It was embedded in the society of estates, for the underlying ideas of certain privileges and particular old freedoms were clearly different from the new enlightened concept of both universal and individual freedom.⁴ The *Landsgemeinde* also served as a means of ruling over less privileged men and women and smaller towns and villages in the canton. However, this kind of institution offered a more direct means of political participation than parliamentary representation. As will be shown in this study, the old concept of the *Landsgemeinde* was still very vivid and referred to in several ways during the 1830s. This accounts for three aspects: an attractive model of political participation; a specific ritual to be cited in order to raise support for different claims; and a discursive label for commentators.

The friction-prone relation between the old and the new models of political participation shaped popular protest in the Swiss cantons in the 1830s to a considerable extent. Both parliamentary representation and ‘direct democracy’ as practised in the *Landsgemeinde* offered political freedom and a better form of participation to Swiss people than the very reduced constitutional life during the era of the *Restoration*. However, both models were far from being fully compatible, for liberalism, with its fundamental idea of natural law, also challenged the autonomy of local communities, traditional community rights and age-old privileges. Generally speaking, the mixture of different forms and languages of protest in the transitional period between 1750 and 1850

is not surprising. As has been shown first in the English and then in the German research on popular protest, the contents of the demands by the demonstrators in this era were highly ambiguous, in that they fluctuated between traditional notions and modern ideas.⁵

We will begin with a brief overview of Swiss political history from 1798 to 1848, followed by a close look at selected cases of popular protest during the 1830s. The case studies will show how popular protest in Switzerland combined aspects of both models of political participation. A final section will shed light on the ways in which the protesters used ritualised practice and symbols, well known from earlier time periods.

Recently, the persistence and change of the political culture in Switzerland during the first half of the nineteenth century has been the subject of very substantial work by historians.⁶ Surprisingly, however, in public debate and even more in the official memorial culture of the country, the founding phase of the modern federal state is not very much in evidence.⁷ Presumably, one reason is the fact that we are dealing with a rather non-integrative story of internal conflict, public protest, symbolic and sometimes also physical violence.

A short overview of the political history of Switzerland 1798–1848

From 1798 to 1813, Switzerland was under the direct or indirect rule of Napoleonic France. During the Helvetic Republic (1798–1803) the political landscape of the old *Eidgenossenschaft* was turned upside down. Napoleon disempowered the old elites and attempted to introduce a centralist state. One of the leitmotifs of Swiss political history is the rule of capital towns over other towns and the rural hinterland in the urban cantons. In this respect, the revolutionary turnover of 1798 provided the chance for a new beginning. In order to get rid of their age-old patrician authorities, some regions built new cantons. Thus, in the regions of Basel-Landschaft and Waadt, separatists held mass rallies and erected freedom trees.⁸ The supporters of the formation of new cantons mostly sympathised strongly with the ideals of the French Revolution. However, there was everything but unanimous support for the new ideas and the centralist rule of the Napoleonic type. Opposition against the new Helvetic state grew especially strong in the Catholic cantons of Schwyz and Nidwalden in central Switzerland.⁹ Military duties and new financial burdens, but first and foremost the anticlerical politics of the new government, provoked an uprising in these cantons which could only be oppressed by French troops in the autumn of 1798. In 1802, the victory of the federalists over the unionists in a short civil war (*Stecklikrieg*) brought an abrupt end to the Helvetic Republic.¹⁰ The new constitution (*Mediationsakte*), still monitored by Napoleon, weakened the central government and reintroduced a higher degree of sovereignty of the cantons. Thus, the old elites were partially allowed to regain political power.¹¹ Moreover, in the alpine cantons of central Switzerland, the *Landsgemeinden* were reintroduced after they had been banned during the Helvetic Republic. Although the constitution of 1803 had guaranteed the equality of all men in principle, the *Landsgemeinden* were henceforth again dominated by members of well-known local families. Besides the aspect of social inequality, in a rural canton with the tradition of the *Landsgemeinde* like Schwyz, certain 'old' privileged parishes dominated the others.¹² In the city cantons, the political situation was quite similar. Mostly old patrician families were again allowed again to dominate the town councils and send their sons into high offices. And perhaps most importantly, due to the electoral system, similar to the centuries before 1798, cities again ruled over the countryside (*Landschaft*).¹³

As in most countries in Europe, the period of the *Restauration* (1814–30) in Switzerland remained rather quiet and stable. The old elites were in charge again. This is

the case for the old cantons, but also for newly constructed cantons like the Aargau, where only a small number of wealthy men were able to participate in politics. Although the reintroduction of the old rule in 1814 had provoked several conflicts, namely in rural areas or provincial cities that had benefited from the reforms under French influence¹⁴, the 1820s saw hardly any protest action.

The French Revolution of July 1830 then triggered numerous political conflicts. It was in these days of *Regeneration* that, according to Hobsbawm, 'liberalism prevailed'. In many cantons, political leaders and committees, inspired by liberal ideas, called for political reform, especially for new constitutions and the democratisation of the electoral law. Not only the new bourgeois elites in the towns, but also the lower populace in the countryside entered a phase of high political mobilisation. Thus, mass petitions were sent to governments and rallies of tens of thousands of people demanded an end to the old aristocratic regimes. From autumn 1830 to February 1831, such mass rallies took place in at least seven different cantons. Interestingly, we find these political demonstrations exclusively in provincial towns or villages, thus not in the capital cities of the cantons, which had hitherto dominated the small towns and villages of their hinterland.¹⁵ The principal demand of the countryside (*Landschaft*) was equal representation in the parliaments. While the liberal leaders were mostly land- or factory-owning members of the newly emerging middle-class¹⁶, the rallies were also joined by a large number of ordinary peasants and little artisans. With regard to the social background of the supporters, early liberalism in Switzerland was not a purely bourgeois movement. These demonstrations in small towns or villages were called *Volkstag*, *Volkversammlung*, *Landesversammlung* or *Landsgemeinde*. The third and fourth term clearly referred to the traditional mode of political participation in the rural cantons of central Switzerland.¹⁷

As a result of the protest movements, by summer 1831 no fewer than 12 Swiss cantons introduced new constitutions. Hence, two thirds of the Swiss population lived under a constitution which guaranteed sovereignty of the people in the form of a representative democracy with periodic elections, separation of powers, partial freedom of the press and freedom of trade.¹⁸ The age-old political inequality between the capital cities and their hinterland in the legislature was mitigated or abolished. Above that, the new liberal governments of the Protestant cantons established a secularised, anti-ecclesiastical, educational system.¹⁹ Compared with the simultaneous developments in the German Confederation and other European countries in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1830, the liberal achievements in Switzerland were most outstanding.

Although none of the cantons with the tradition of the *Landsgemeinde* turned into a liberal state, central Switzerland was also affected by the revolutionary movement. In the central Swiss canton Schwyz, the hitherto underprivileged parishes first demanded access to the *Landsgemeinde* and then declared independence. Interestingly, the liberal elite of the separatist movement in the newly formed territory of Ausserschwyz established a new *Landsgemeinde* rather than the model of parliamentary representation. The liberals in this Catholic canton demanded equal rights, but neither the abolishment of the *Landsgemeinde* nor an anti-ecclesiastic policy was a viable option.²⁰ Another interesting case is the newly formed canton of St. Gallen in Eastern Switzerland. This canton knew the tradition of the *Landsgemeinde* only from neighbouring cantons. However, the popular movement in St. Gallen began in December 1830 with a series of improvised mass rallies that clearly copied the rituals of the *Landsgemeinde*.²¹ While liberal leaders rejected this model, a popular 'democratic' movement in this canton demanded its adoption as a central part of the new constitution. The path-breaking compromise encompassed a representative constitution of the liberal type with the right of a veto on laws for the *Volk* (the voters) of St. Gallen.²²

In spite of the victory of liberalism in many cantons, Switzerland did not settle down. While the protest after the July Revolution was primarily about questions of political participation, in a second wave of protest towards the end of the decade, both constitutional and religious matters caused severe conflicts; the debate about the secularisation of the school system particularly heated up. During the 1840s, tensions between liberal-Protestant and conservative-Catholic cantons increased and finally led to military campaigns. In 1847, a short civil war with victory for the liberal-Protestant cantons created the opportunity to set the foundation of the Swiss national state as a representative democracy.²³ In general terms, the liberal constitution of 1848, which was approved by more than two thirds of the male voters, is still valid today. However, the idea of direct participation of the *Volk* was not dead. In the 1860s, another protest wave with mass rallies, which among others constructed a line of tradition from the old *Landsgemeinde*, made a revision of the national constitution necessary. The federal constitution of 1874 then finally introduced the possibility of a referendum by the voters on federal law, which is still used frequently today by the Swiss people.²⁴

Liberalism and popular protest: Zurich and Aargau (1830/1)

We will now turn to two cases of popular protest in 1830 in urban cantons that did not have a history of *Landsgemeinde*. While the protest action was mostly led by bourgeois liberals and followed genuinely liberal ideas, the forms and perceptions of the protest show clear signs of the old practice of assembly in the central Swiss rural areas.

On 22 November 1830, a mass rally was held in the village of Uster in the Canton Zurich. The speakers were liberal leaders from Zurich's municipal towns. Most of the 10,000 participants at the rally were peasants and artisans. On this so called 'Ustertag' (Uster Day), more than 3000 men signed a mass petition, called the Uster Memorial. The majority of the points in the Memorial were genuinely liberal demands, such as a new representative constitution, equal representation of the city and the countryside in Parliament, separation of powers, public sessions of the Zurich town council and freedom of the press.²⁵ While the most relevant issues on the list of the Memorial had been discussed prior to the assembly, also during the rally demands from the crowd were noted and added in a separate section of the Memorial. The catalogue of demands thus became heterogeneous and mirrored multi-layered local grievances. Although the liberal organisers of the mass rally at Uster had never planned to install a regular or permanent assembly of the type found in the Alpine cantons, the demonstration reminded many commentators of a typical *Landsgemeinde*. Thus, the rally was called a *Landesversammlung* ('local gathering'). The *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, a liberal newspaper, spoke explicitly of a *Landsgemeinde*.²⁶ Another liberal newspaper, the *Schweizerischer Republikaner*, also used the term *Landsgemeinde*. According to this article, the protesters came together 'under free sky', in order to discuss, what 'God' had given to a 'free, reasonable people', and what every man's 'dignity and rights' demanded.²⁷ Three days after the rally, Paul Usteri, a member of the Zurich town council and leader of the city's liberal group, mentioned in a letter that this '*assemblée populaire*' had become '*un instrument qui a dicté la loi*'.²⁸ For another liberal commentator, the citizens of the assembly had turned into '*législateurs*'.²⁹

In fact, many aspects of the mass rally at Uster were reminiscent of the traditional ritual of a 'Landsgemeinde'. The location of the meeting was in the open in a rural setting. The assembled crowd claimed to be the *Volk* as such. The performance had a religious component, even though the protesters' demands were first and foremost non-religious.

To open the assembly, the crowd chanted hymns and proceeded into the Uster church. The following assembly outside the church took place to the sound of church bells.³⁰ One of the speakers referred to inherited divine rights; another compared the ambiance with a divine service.³¹ The assembled men could state their demands openly and orally. And the final memorial was not only signed by 3000 men but also approved by the assembly in an open roll call with a show of hands. The only traditional feature missing at this demonstration was the fact that the male participants apparently did not carry arms, which was originally a symbol of their free and honourable status. In addition, the role of priests at the Ustertag was reduced in comparison with the ritual in the Catholic alpine cantons.³²

The liberals' attitude on the traditional model of direct democracy was ambivalent and undecided. While the influential German immigrant and professor for constitutional law Ludwig Snell, like his source of inspiration Jean Jacques Rousseau, admired the Swiss *Landsgemeinde* in principle and at least included the idea of holding referenda in his draft of a new constitution, the overarching aim was to establish a system of parliamentary representation combined with modern state institutions. In their struggle against the 'aristocratic' constitutions of the Restoration period, popular assemblies with a well-known performance were an attractive way in order to organise protest and raise support. By using terms like *Landesversammlung* or *Volkstag*, the protesters claimed to represent the people's will. Furthermore, with visible reference to the *Landsgemeinde* they could claim to act as the supreme political power and thus take on the sovereignty of the people. Nevertheless, at the same time educated liberals had a deep distrust for the political maturity of the masses and in addition hesitated to use the street as a scenario for protest. Thus, one of the major purposes of the mass demonstrations was to impress the political opponents on the conservative side, who were still in power. The rejection of the old concept of 'direct democracy' clearly stands in a line of continuity with the modernist reform approach of the Helvetic Republic.³³ Accordingly, the conservatives suspected that their liberal opponents used the term *Landsgemeinde* only as a label in order to legitimise their protest.³⁴ Certainly, the aim of the Ustertag was not to establish the *Landsgemeinde* as a periodic form of participation. Instead, in March 1831 a large majority of Zurich voters approved a liberal constitution with a separation of powers, parliamentary representation and also improved rights for the municipalities in the *Landschaft*.

Another example of the striking success of the protest movements within a short time span after the July Revolution can be found in the new canton of Aargau. In early September 1830, upon the invitation of some educated men from the canton's elite – among them members of the Great Council – leading liberals met in an inn in the town of Lenzburg to send a petition to the government of the canton. As in the case of the Zurich liberals, their aim was a revision of the old constitution. The government's unsatisfactory answer to the petition was to deal with the constitutional question only after the next elections. In the Lenzburg petition we find one interesting detail. The petitioners emphasised the need for a representative democracy to serve the purpose of 'progress'. By doing so, the liberal notables explicitly opposed the model of the *Landsgemeinde*. In their opinion, the old model of direct participation was awkward and worked too slowly. Furthermore, it suffered from the 'crude outbursts' of the ignorant 'crowd' and its 'inability to deal with certain questions'.³⁵ Between the lines, this negative appraisal shows that the model of the *Landsgemeinde* provided a serious alternative to the representative model. Obviously, however, the canton's liberal notables did not value this alternative model highly. But in order to support their demand for a new constitution they organised an assembly of 3000–4000 people in the village of Wohlenschwil, which in some aspects resembled a *Landsgemeinde*. The tenor of the rally was that the people

themselves, thereby acting as the true sovereign, had the right to alter the constitution. Apparently, however, in contrast to the Ustertag in the neighbouring canton of Zurich, the term *Landsgemeinde* was not used in the Aargau.³⁶ Because electoral law in the Aargau strongly favoured the ruling elites, the following elections in November 1830 were partly boycotted. Subsequently, control over the protest action slipped out of the hands of the canton's liberal leaders. Adherents of the conservative government were threatened and insulted in public. As in the nearby canton of Basel, the protesters erected freedom trees and hoisted the tricolour flag of the revolutionary Helvetic Republic.³⁷ It seems that some former Swiss mercenary soldiers, who had just returned from their service in France, were especially active. On 26 November, the day of the legislative discussion of the claim for a new constitution, people of all strata came to the cantonal capital Aarau to wait for the government's decision. The physical presence of a mass of people in the streets of the capital increased the pressure on the old government to allow for change.

In spite of the government's promise to bring the constitutional issue to a conclusion, the reform took longer than expected by the crowd. As a direct consequence, rumours of an imminent *Landsturm* spread through the rural districts of the canton. A *Landsturm* was a military-like squad of all men from one town or village who were able to carry a weapon. During the early-modern period, the *Landsturm* was a means to defend the village against hostile soldiers or robber bands. Although the gendarmerie ('Landjäger') as a new type of trained and specialised police force was introduced in the Swiss cantons during the Napoleonic period, the governments had to count on the army if they wanted to expunge armed collective protest. However, to call in the army was highly unpopular and revealed a lack of general consent.³⁸ In the tense situation in Aargau in 1830, the rumours included the threat of a march on the capital town Aarau. While most liberal leaders refrained from armed action, Heinrich Fischer, an innkeeper and member of the legislative council from the Catholic district of Freiamt, advocated a march. At a meeting of local mayors and men from the peasant countryside in Fischer's house, the 'people in the tavern' (*Volk in der Wirtsstube*) decided to launch an armed march on Aarau.³⁹ For this purpose, Fischer called for an assembly with arms on the following day at the village of Wohlen. His circular letter went out to the 'Dear fellow citizens of the Aargau!' ('*Liebe Aargauische Mitbürger!*'). His letter was immediately distributed by messengers and probably read in the villages in public. The purpose of the assembly was explicitly a 'counsel' (*Berathung*) on 'our freedom and our right' (*unsere Freyheit und unser Recht*).⁴⁰ On 5 December, 5000–6000 people gathered to the sound of church bells on an open field. Although the term is missing, the rally to arms at Wohlen in the canton's Catholic region shows many features of a *Landsgemeinde*. All the citizens of the canton were invited to discuss their 'freedom and right', it was held open-air in the countryside, and the sound of the church bells gave the rally a religious connotation. In addition, the men at this mass assembly, like their older counterparts in Catholic central Switzerland, carried arms, but not only for symbolic reasons. Fischer himself led the following march on the capital. Within the crowd, there were also 2000 former mercenaries and militiamen, followed by men with light arms and the *Landsturm* at the end. Although the march faced the military in Lenzburg and again in the capital town Aarau, no blood was spilled because the governmental troops did not intervene in the end. Thus, in Aarau the protesters were able to occupy the arsenal and the seat of government. Except for Fischer the liberal notables had not participated in the march, but instead had tried to prevent it until the last minute. After the success of the protest action, however, they again supported the protesters' request for constitutional reform. Faced with double pressure from the streets and the liberals, the government could only withdraw and promise to fulfil all the wishes of the

Volk. Subsequently, like nine other Swiss cantons, the Aargau obtained a representative constitution, which in May 1831 was approved by 70% of all voters.⁴¹

In spite of differences in detail, both cases, Zurich and the Aargau, show a two-stage development. At first, members of the educated elite, often members of political bodies under the Restoration regime, assembled in small circles and wrote petitions, thus demanding constitutional change. In the second stage, the liberal leaders called for mass rallies, using traditional forms and certain well-known discursive labels. The language and symbols of protest in the aftermath of the July Revolution are only partly derived from liberal theory. In the case of the armed march on the capital of Aargau from the rural hinterland of the Freiamt, we find a third stage of protest action. As will be shown later in this article, the armed march was by no means a unique form of popular protest.

The cases of Zurich and the Aargau shed light on the ambivalent, two-fold relationship between elite liberalism and popular forms of protest. Liberal leaders formed societies and wrote petitions. They also organised mass assemblies. Nevertheless, protest marches and threats of violence were regarded most sceptically. Then again, when the protest march had turned out to be successful, members of the liberal elite took the lead again. Interestingly, after the collective action, villagers and former mercenaries were not bothered by the fact that liberal notables again took over to negotiate with their government. Hence, the protest appears to have been a joint venture of the educated elite and the lower populace.⁴²

Generally speaking, in 1830/1 the new concept of parliamentary representation was not only supported by liberal intellectuals and their societies in the towns, but also by peasants and other villagers. The march from the municipalities of the Freiamter on the city of Aarau clearly pursued the aim of a representative democracy. Certainly, in both cantons the lower strata also hoped for the immediate improvement of their economic situation. Thus in Zurich, the rural weavers had their protest against new mechanical looms recorded in the Uster Memorial. In Aargau the winegrowers protested for their old right to sell wine in their own little taverns. This custom had recently been banned by the government. However, when the crowd erected freedom trees and carried flags of the Helvetic state, they directly referred to symbols of the Revolution. While in the cantons of central and eastern Switzerland, the *Landsgemeinde* was regarded as an alternative model of participation, tried and tested over centuries, in the cases under review here, improvised *Volkstage* with a clear reference to the *Landsgemeinde* served primarily as a vehicle of protest. Remarkably, in St. Gallen, the coalition between liberals and democrats broke up, when the latter wanted to install elements of the old form of direct democracy in the new constitution.⁴³ With the victory of the liberal movement in 1830/1, popular protest in Switzerland did not come to an end. The following years showed that collective protest action could be used for very different motives and soon turned against the new liberal rule.

Popular protest against liberal rule: Zurich in the 1830s

After the liberal victory of 1830/1, the political situation in many cantons remained tense, and the new liberal governments faced opposition from their former supporters. Only two years after the liberal 'Ustertag', disappointed impoverished weavers set fire to a mill in Uster. The actors in this single case of Luddism reported in Switzerland during the time period observed came from the lowest strata of the countryside. The new liberal constitution had not improved their situation at all.⁴⁴ With the so-called *Stadlerhandel* of 1834 another issue became urgent, which was to have a strong impact on popular protest until the foundation of the federal state in 1848. The question of education and the

relationship between the new state and the churches divided liberals and conservatives. Again, the protest started in a little village, called Stadel, in the canton of Zurich. The object of the protest was the introduction of new schoolbooks by the liberal government, as well as the 'unchristian spirit' in the new governmental teacher seminar⁴⁵ and the tax-financed construction of new schoolhouses. Reformed-church pastors and the pious peasant population regarded the contents of the new books as non-religious or even atheistic. Prior to 1830, the local priests had monitored schooling. Again, the first spark of protest came from a public assembly of the traditional kind. When the liberal government of the canton of Zurich ignored the petition of the assembly, the crowd broke into three schoolhouses and threw the despised, allegedly atheistic books out of the windows. As in the case of Luddism at Uster, the liberal government suddenly found itself in a position to oppress protest action. Hence, the gendarmerie was sent into the villages.⁴⁶ Both cases revealed a split between the educated urban liberals and the pious and, to a large extent, poor population of the countryside, who viewed the effects of the accelerated liberal state-building sceptically.⁴⁷

The new broad movement against liberal rule in Zurich peaked in 1839, when several thousand armed men marched on the city of Zurich to protest against the liberal government. Different from the case of the *Freiämtersturm* in the Aargau, the confrontation of the protesters with the military in Zurich ended with a bloody skirmish.⁴⁸ The conflict had originally been triggered by the liberal government's call for the German Hegelian theologian David Friedrich Strauss to become Professor of Theology at the new University of Zurich in January 1839. Strauss had written a controversial book in which he applied the concept of myth to the life of Jesus. Immediately, protest rose from church officials and the local parishes. In order to avert Strauss's inauguration, a 'central committee' was founded. Their protest against the new rationalist theology proved to be successful, when the government retired Strauss before he had even begun to teach at the University of Zurich.

However, the 'central committee' did not leave it at that. New protest arose against the secularised teacher seminar and the 'unchristian spirit' of the primary schools.⁴⁹ Zurich's liberal government reacted with an assembly ban for the pious committees in the parishes and accused the 'central committee' of conspiracy. It also mobilised troops for a few days. Not surprisingly, the new protest against liberal politics, like the one of the liberals in 1830/1, showed signs of traditional direct democracy. On 2 September 1839 some 10,000–12,000 people came to the village of Kloten to listen to the speech of the president of the 'central committee', the textile-factory owner Johann Jakob Hürlimann-Landis. This first, and illegal, mass assembly in the canton of Zurich since the *Ustertag* adopted well-known forms of public assembly and had a strong religious component. However, at first the idea had only been to organise a meeting of the district delegates of the pious movement. On its announcement, a large crowd came, turning the meeting into a mass demonstration or rather a *Volksversammlung* in church and in the open. Hürlimann-Landis welcomed the crowd from the balcony of a village inn. In a kind of dialogue, the assembled mass answered him with a cheer ('*allgemeiner Jubelruf*'), thus showing their approval.⁵⁰ The sound of church bells accompanied the delegates on their way into church. In his sermon-like speech, the speaker condemned both the current atheism and political fanaticism of the day, which he exemplified with the immorality of infidel French youths. Most of the crowd was waiting outside the church. Hürlimann-Landis's long speech was read to them from the balcony. In addition, a reformed pastor kept them informed about the decisions of the assembly inside the church. The assembly closed with the blessing of

the mass by the committee's president. In some of today's research, the crowd outside the church is described with the almost mythical label of 'the *Volk*'.⁵¹

In his speech Hürlimann-Landis questioned the representative model of the liberals. For him, the current government did not rule within the constitutional framework. Instead, he welcomed the participants of the assembly as 'witnesses of an entire people'.⁵² He criticised the government for their ignorance of the 'central committee's' petition, which had been signed by 40,000 men, and added that 'nothing can be denied to such a people'.⁵³ This argument matched both the liberal constitutional concept and the underlying idea of the *Landsgemeinde*. However, the argument was clearly raised against the liberals, who were seen as small elite, governing over the heads of the common people. Similar to the *Landsgemeinde* in central Switzerland, the protest rally in Kloten positioned itself as being superior to the body of a government. Hürlimann-Landis also drew a line of continuity to the *Landesversammlung* at Uster in 1830, although that rally had marked the beginning of liberal rule in the canton. He praised the 'freedom' that was achieved in 1830. However, at the same time, the conservative speaker attacked his liberal opponents for having turned from 'friends of the people' into 'foes of the people' after they had gained power.⁵⁴ In the end, the demands of the rally on the government were moderate and unspectacular. The petition asked for the withdrawal of both the assembly ban and the accusation of rebellion as well as for a better control of the use of the freedom of the press. Interestingly, the authorship of the petition stressed the communal aspect.⁵⁵ More impressive than the demands were the size and the performance of the mass rally itself.

The political situation in the days after the rally at Kloten remained uncertain. Rumours spread that the government of Zurich had asked other liberal cantons for military support. Rumour also had it that 'radicals' planned to march on the capital in order to force the government to take rigorous measures against the *Volk* and also to make use of the guillotine against its pious leaders.⁵⁶ As the situation heated up, the 'central committee' circulated messages around the villages to prepare for an armed march on the city. The agreed sign for the start of the march was the sound of the church bells of Pfäffikon, followed by the church bells of the surrounding parishes. Bernhard Hirzel, the priest of the reformed parish of Pfäffikon was to lead the march. Hirzel was the descendant of an old established family from the city of Zurich. Other members of the Hirzel family were also involved in the *Züriputsch* of 1839, though on the side of the liberals.⁵⁷ So, in this case we find pastors and reformed believers using public space as a scenario for mass protest, thus not leaving this stage for the lower populace only.

On the evening of 5 September, some 2000 men, mostly peasants from the Zurich Oberland, led by Bernhard Hirzel, started to walk to the capital city. Some of them were armed with guns or clubs. Their aim was to defend their allegedly threatened faith and old communal rights against radical conspiracy and illegitimate liberal rule. Women also joined the march. The crowd chanted hymns as they marched through the night.⁵⁸ By the next morning, when the protestors reached Zurich, their number had doubled. In contrast to the case of the *Freiämtersturm* in Aargau, things did not end peacefully in Zurich. When the march encountered government soldiers in the narrow alleys of the town, nervousness and anxiety increased on both sides. Apparently, one accidental shot led to the confrontation. Finally, 15 protesters were killed and many others severely wounded. In spite of the tragedy, the *Züriputsch* was successful in political terms. As a consequence of the disaster the liberal government resigned and the conservatives won the upcoming election.

The march on Zurich was not just a single incident at the end of the liberal 1830s. The so-called *Septemberputsch*, which was actually not a plan to overthrow the government, triggered a new and partly successful protest wave in the Swiss republics.⁵⁹ Some of the

protesters' demands, but not all of them, can be called 'conservative'.⁶⁰ However, a close look at these local movements shows that the frequent demand for the preservation of traditional church rights was connected with constitutional questions. In many cantons, the representative model of the liberal governments with their centralising policies was challenged with the community-based wish of protest movements for a right of veto for the *Volk* – i.e. the male voters – on laws and edicts. As has already been mentioned, such a right of veto had been established first in the canton St. Gallen in 1831. The *Volksveto* referred to the traditional model of direct participation. Interestingly, though, the new protest crowds even in Catholic regions also used the symbol of the freedom tree, well known from the French Revolution and the Helvetic Republic.⁶¹ In the Catholic canton of Lucerne, a popular protest movement brought the peaceful replacement of the liberal government and the revision of the representative constitution. New protest in the Aargau, Basel-Landschaft and in Solothurn could be suppressed only by the military or imprisonment of the leaders. In Aargau, another march on the capital by the *Landsturm* from the Catholic districts, following the model of December 1830, was stopped by the military. In Basel-Landschaft, after a series of assemblies and rallies a similar plan of the so-called 'friends of the fatherland' (*Vaterlandsfreunde*) was in the long run not realised.⁶²

The liberal movement did not lose all its strength. In the canton of Ticino, it was the liberal opposition which, in the autumn of 1839, organised an armed march on the capital Locarno and forced the conservative government to resign.⁶³ In the Canton of Zurich, the liberal opposition against the newly elected conservative government continued to organise protest rallies and won the election of 1845. Thus, just one year after the *Züriputsch*, 5000 people met outside the city to commemorate the Uster rally of 1830. In another assembly of that type in August 1841, 20,000 liberals and radicals demonstrated against the conservative government.⁶⁴ Conspiratorial meetings in village inns, popular assemblies of the *Volk* in the countryside and marches on capital towns had become a common social practice of protest. Obviously, this practice worked well for very different purposes, both for liberals and other movements.

Citation of traditional forms and symbols

The Swiss protesters combined certain well-known practices and symbols in their action. We can observe a virtuoso mode of citation of traditions, albeit traditions from different time periods and of different origins. It would be too easy and also misleading to speak simply of a continuity of traditions from the early-modern period.⁶⁵ Nor can we observe a complete 'invention of tradition', although the aspect of construction is evident in some cases. Since 1789 the world had changed in many ways, and by 1798, even more so by 1830, these changes had definitely arrived in the Swiss republics. With regard to both political participation and popular protest, this all-encompassing transformation implied that old-age rituals had always been interrupted at least for some time and were, in addition, challenged by new forms and practices. Moreover, inevitably the new political context of *Regeneration* and the post-Revolution period in general had an impact on the message conveyed by any such protest action. Thus, the *Landsgemeinde* had been banned during the years of the Helvetic Republic. While in some regions it was still, or rather again, perceived as the most convenient model of participation, both liberal and conservative leaders in other regions used it more as a vehicle to organise opposition. In both cases, the detailed awareness of tradition and symbols is amazing. For example, the leaders of a protest rally in the Rhine valley in late 1830 fetched the old rostrum and the president's chair from a 'Landsgemeinde' that was held as a protest against the Helvetic

Republic in 1802 to provide the right scenery for the assembly and hence to declare it to be a 'Landsgemeinde' once more.⁶⁶ Following the march on Aarau, the triumphant Heinrich Fischer was received in his home village by a large crowd and the sound of church bells. Three men with crossbows and his little son, equipped with an apple and an arrow, welcomed the popular leader, thus celebrating him as the new Wilhelm Tell.⁶⁷ Such citations of Wilhelm Tell and other heroes of the Swiss 'old freedom' could include self-fashioning of the actors with 'traditional' clothes and musical instruments, also frequent in other cantons in the 1830s.⁶⁸ However, the historical reference appears to be multi-layered. A freedom tree in front of Fischer's house, erected for the homecoming innkeeper, also referred to the new ideas of the Helvetic Republic, which under French influence had used the figure of the freedom fighter Tell as one of their chief political symbols.⁶⁹

While it is not so easy to differentiate between a 'real' *Landsgemeinde* and other, more improvised forms of popular assembly, we may conclude that several protest rallies were perceived to be or were explicitly called a *Landsgemeinde*, and many more included performative aspects of that institution. The use of forms that resemble the traditional form of assembly continued beyond the conservative backlash of 1839 and was not reserved only for constitutional demands. In October 1846, for instance, a food riot took place in the city of Berne. Prior to the tumult, a petition, signed by more than 1000 inhabitants of the city to stop usury and pre-emption had been turned down by the government. Subsequently, a crowd destroyed the market stands of some despised sellers from the countryside in the local market. According to a report of the *Intelligenzblatt*, the official newspaper in Berne, the crowd then decided spontaneously to hold a *Volksversammlung* (popular assembly), first in the riflemen's field outside the town, then on a square next to the Kornhaus in the old town.⁷⁰ Their intention was to deliberate on a new petition to the government. However, the assemblies were dissolved by soldiers. The crowd, evidently mostly from the city's lower strata, still managed to elect a deputation to go to the council in order to ask for a ban on usury. Though rather improvised, the practice of popular protest in this case is clearly structured, for it follows certain well-known steps and includes the traditional form of an assembly taking a decision on a matter of public grievance. Even the *Intelligenzblatt*, which has to be seen as the mouthpiece of the radical-liberal government of Berne used the quasi-constitutional term of *Volksversammlung* instead of denouncing the popular protest only as the work of a mob.

We find another spectacular type of citation in the practice of armed marches on capital towns or seats of government. The cases of Aarau 1830 and Zurich 1839 are just two examples of this type of protest action, which has to be seen against the backdrop of the early-modern rule of the town over the hinterland in the Swiss city republics. Following the July Revolution, similar armed marches, albeit sometimes without great effect, were reported from towns in seven cantons between Lake Geneva and Basel.⁷¹ A report of the local official from Muri in the Aargau, 5 December 1830 reveals that the governments were without the means of power in the countryside if the villagers decided to organise a *Landsturm*: 'The people of Muri stand around with or without weapons. Reprimands to stay calm are fruitless.'⁷² A second official report indicates 'a general fear' of the 'well-minded citizen', faced with the frequent threats of the angry 'mob'.⁷³

As mentioned above, a wave of armed marches on towns took place following the Züriputsch in 1839/40, one of them very successful with the overthrow of the conservative government of the Ticino in Locarno. This kind of protest action did not just copy the startling incident of Zurich, but has rather to be seen as the actualisation of a long historical memory of popular protest. For during the early-modern period and then again in the

uprisings against the Helvetic Republic in 1802, we already find many examples of peasants or villagers launching military attacks on or even regular sieges against towns, often the capital towns of their cantons. The sieges of Berne and Lucerne during the Swiss Peasants' War of 1653 and the 'Chenaux-Handel' of Fribourg in 1781 are the most significant.⁷⁴ Conversely, in order to erase the protest of rural elites against their rule, the council of Zurich in 1795 ordered troops to occupy the community of Stäfa.⁷⁵ Towards the end of the Helvetic Republic we can observe a heyday of marches by the *Landsturm* or other military-like formations of peasants against towns. Thus, some 200 villagers from two valleys in the Ticino attempted in vain to overthrow the republican government of Lugano in 1802 by an armed march.⁷⁶ In the same year, armed peasants of the Waadt burnt the archives of their manorial lords and occupied the capital town Lausanne for a few days.⁷⁷ In 1802, several towns of the German-speaking Mittelland were also occupied by federalist opponents of the Napoleonic Regime, again mostly peasants.⁷⁸ We find another example of a *Landsturm* in St. Gallen in 1814, after three leaders of the popular movement for the *Landsgemeinde* had been arrested.⁷⁹ Evidently, the aims of these uprisings were very different and the political situation after the July Revolution can, of course, hardly be compared with the Peasants War of 1653. Moreover, most liberals clearly disliked any such action. On the other hand, in the rural hinterland the conditions of state administration and policing had not yet changed much from the eighteenth century.⁸⁰ The fact that in some cases several thousand men followed the call for an armed march or a *Landsturm* speaks for itself. Obviously, this kind of citation of an age-old practice was well known and successful. At first sight, the armed marches of 1830 and 1839 also seem to anticipate the future scenarios of 1844/5, when Protestant *franc-tireurs* marched twice on the Catholic city of Lucerne and brought Switzerland to the brink of a civil war. However, in contrast to the uprisings of the early-modern and the Helvetic period and also from the military actions of the 1840s, in the armed marches of 1830 and 1839 we find a rather spontaneous and symbolic type of violence, instead of a clear will to make use of weapons. Very clearly, the tragic end of the Züriputsch was an accident. The innkeeper Fischer and the reformed priest Hirzel can by no means be called military leaders. Furthermore, the idea of the actions was primarily to register the presence in the capital town, to demonstrate power for a short time and thus to increase pressure on the government.⁸¹ In this respect, the performance of armed marches – which in the case of Zurich included chanting sacred songs – resembled more a ritualised mass rally with arms than real military action.

In addition to evident citations of traditional rituals from the early-modern period, we can also observe that some of the protest events following the July Revolution were henceforth cited. Thus, the triumphant march in the Aargau of 1830 was copied in 1841. And just as the great rally of the Ustertag on 22 November 1830, reminded contemporary commentators of the old *Landsgemeinde*, it also started a new tradition. Impoverished weavers from Zurich's Oberland deliberately chose the day of commemoration on 22 November 1832 for their protest action against the new liberal government.⁸² In addition, the conservative leader Hürlimann-Landis explicitly commemorated the first Ustertag in his speech at the Kloten rally of the pious movement in 1839. Finally, on 15 December 1867, a crowd of some 6000 men of all strata assembled on the same ground, where the first liberal Ustertag of 1830 had taken place. The rally demonstrated in favour of a set of democratic reforms. On top of their list was the introduction of the right of the referendum. With their arrangement of music, flags, the sound of church bells and so on the organisers deliberately cited both the first Ustertag of 1830 and the tradition of the *Landsgemeinde*. Above that, newspaper commentators again saw a *Landsgemeinde* at work. In their call for the assembly of 1867, the organisers had stated: 'It is an indispensable right of free men, to hold open

assemblies in the open air.’⁸³ In addition to that, by the end of the nineteenth century historicist stagings of the *Landsgemeinde* had become part of the Swiss cultural memory.⁸⁴

The chief function of the citation of ritual was to provide the protesters’ action with social acceptance and legitimacy. With the means of well-known ritualised performances, crowds could also be mobilised and integrated for new claims. With flexible references to the *Landsgemeinde*, very different demands were made. While the *Landsturm* was the traditional way to defend the community against any evil from outside, it could also be used to make new constitutional demands.

Conclusion

In the Swiss cantons, two different models of political participation existed simultaneously. On the one hand, the liberal model offered a concept of universal and individual freedom with parliamentary representation. On the other hand, the model of the *Landsgemeinde*, based on the concept of traditional freedoms, stood for a more direct type of political participation and emphasised the local community. Both models had a significant impact on the protest movements in the Swiss cantons in the 1830s. While forms and symbols on both sides were mutually transferred and received, the underlying contradiction of the two models was also responsible for several conflicts.

In 1830/1, when liberal revolutions introduced representative constitutions in the cantons of Zurich and Aargau, the well-known practice of the *Landsgemeinde* played a crucial role. Although the liberals were against direct political participation of the old, pre-revolutionary kind, they still organised mass rallies that implied features of the *Landsgemeinde*. With symbolic references to the traditional form of political participation, the protest movement became popular and finally successful. In the eyes of the speakers and commentators, the mass rallies symbolised the sovereignty of the entire people and could therefore claim supreme power. However, the coalition of liberalism and *Landsgemeinde* only worked well for a transitional period, the reason being that the liberals did not intend to replace their model of a representative democracy by the age-old type of direct democracy. A leitmotif of the protest wave in 1839/40 was the threat which the new secularised state posed to local communities and pre-modern institutions.

Popular protest in Switzerland during the 1830s used older forms and symbols of different origins in various ways. Certainly, the citation of pre-modern ritual and practice that could be easily recognised by the actors increased their willingness to take their demands to the street and thus their chances of success. However, traditions were no longer unchallenged and self-evident as such. Under the auspices of modernity, the meaning of ritualised popular protest inevitably changed. In spite of the striking similarities, it is thus problematic to assume a linear continuity. On the other hand, there was obviously no simple ‘invention of tradition’ in the Swiss cantons. We can rather observe a mix of citations for different purposes. New symbols of the revolutionary era could be used along with age-old ritual. And with the *Ustertag* the protest movement of 1830/1 launched its own tradition, which was henceforth cited throughout the nineteenth century.

Notes

1. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, 139.
2. Hentschel, *Mythos Schweiz*.
3. Böning, *Das Ende der Alten Eidgenossenschaft*; Schläppi, *Umbruch und Beständigkeit*.

4. Adler, *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*, 21–8, 42, 207; Blickle, “Friede und Verfassung;” Graber, *Zeit des Teilens*, 435–40; Kästli, “Freiheitsbegriffe – Freiheitsvorstellungen;” Möckli, *Die schweizerischen Landsgemeinde-Demokratien*; Stauffacher, *Herrschaft und Landsgemeinde*; Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die “reine Demokratie,”* 157.
5. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd;” Gailus, *Strasse und Brot*; Husung, *Protest und Repression im Vormärz*; Wirtz, *Widersetzlichkeiten, Excesse, Crawalle, Tumulte und Skandale.*
6. Adler, *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*; Maissen, *Geschichte der Schweiz*; Schaffner, “Direkte Demokratie;” Tanner, “‘Alles für das Volk;’” Weinmann, *Eine andere Bürgergesellschaft*; Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die “reine Demokratie.”*
7. Sarasin, *Sich an 1848 erinnern*; Schaffner, “Direkte Demokratie,” 189.
8. Freedom trees were a symbol of freedom during, both, the French Revolution and the Helvetic Period (1798–1803). See Fankhauser, *Freiheitsbaum.*
9. Adler, *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*, 93; Graber, *Zeit des Teilens*; Holenstein, “Rekonstruierte Erinnerung und konservatives Geschichtsdenken;” Kälin, “Innerschweizer Widerstand gegen die Helvetik;” Vogel, “Eine Gemeinde in Aufruhr.” For a general account of the Helvetic Republic see Böning, *Das Ende*; for the state of the research, see the articles in Schläppi, *Umbruch und Beständigkeit.*
10. Stüssi-Lauterburg, *Föderalismus und Freiheit.*
11. Maissen, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, 156–70.
12. Adler, *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*, 94.
13. Maissen, *Die Geschichte der Schweiz*, 171.
14. Arlettaz, *Libéralisme et société*; Graber, *Zeit des Teilens*, 301; Pfiffner, *Der Verfassungskampf*; Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die “reine Demokratie.”*
15. See the incomplete list in Schmid, “Volkstage;” see the *Landsgemeinden* in Basel in Blum, *Die politische Beteiligung*, 55.
16. Maissen, *Die Geschichte der Schweiz*, 186; Tanner, “Bürgertum und Bürgerlichkeit in der Schweiz,” 217.
17. Tanner, “‘Alles für das Volk’,” 66–8.
18. Adler, *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*, 96; Schaffner, “Direkte Demokratie,” 201.
19. Maissen, *Die Geschichte der Schweiz*, 187–9.
20. Adler, *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*, 97–101, 140.
21. Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die “reine Demokratie,”* 154–7.
22. Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die “reine Demokratie,”* 461; Schaffner, “Direkte Demokratie,” 198–201.
23. Maissen, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, 191–202.
24. Möckli, *Die schweizerischen Landsgemeinde-Demokratien*, 51; Schaffner, “Direkte Demokratie,” 220–1.
25. Das “Uster-Memorial”. Ehrerbietige Vorstellung der Landesversammlung des Kantons Zürich, abgehalten zu Uster, Montags den 22. November 1830, in Dändliker, *Der Ustertag und die politische Bewegung.* See also: Weinmann, *Eine andere Bürgergesellschaft*, 196–203; Schaffner, “Direkte Demokratie,” 196–7.
26. *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 24. November 1830, in *Ustertag-Komitee, Der Ustertag im Spiegel*, 77.
27. “Unzufrieden über den Beschluss der vom grossen Rathe niedergesetzten Commission hinsichtlich einer Umänderung der Verfassung, strömten am letzten Montag den 22. Nov., auf Veranlassung einer Bürgerversammlung in Stäfa, wie durch einen Zauberschlag über zwölfthausend Bürger ab der Landschaft nach Uster hin, um in der freyen Natur, im Angesichte der ewig freyen Alpenkette, unter dem Gezelte des immer freyen Himmels, dasjenige zu berathen, was einem freyen, vernünftigen Volke von Gott verliehen worden, was eines jeden Menschen Würde und Rechte fordern. Ohne Leidenschaft, mit Würde und Ruhe trat das Volk zusammen.” *Schweizerischer Republikaner*, 26 Nov. 1830, in *Ustertag-Komitee, Der Ustertag im Spiegel*, 78.
28. Paulus Usteri (to Frédéric César de La Harpe), 25 Nov. 1830, in *Ustertag-Komitee, Der Ustertag im Spiegel*, 28.
29. David von Wyss der Jüngere to Niklaus Friedrich von Mülinen, 28 Sep. 1830, in *Ustertag-Komitee, Der Ustertag im Spiegel*, 35.
30. Weinmann, *Eine andere Bürgergesellschaft*, 197.
31. Johannes Hegetschweiler to Paul Usteri, 23 Nov. 1830, in *Ustertag-Komitee, Der Ustertag im Spiegel*, 24.

32. For the different performative elements of the original ritual see the contemporary report of the *Landsgemeinde* of Schwyz in 1838, cited in [Adler](#), *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*, 173–5.
33. [Holenstein](#), “Die Helvetik,” 93, 99.
34. Hans von Reinhard vor dem Grossen Rat, 24 Nov. 1830, in [Ustertag-Komitee](#), *Der Ustertag im Spiegel*, 13.
35. “In einer auf dieses Prinzip gegründeten Verfassung werden die Schleichereien auf der Landsgemeinde, die rohen Ausbrüche der Menge und die Unbehülflichkeit derselben bey Beurteilung mancher Fragen vermieden.” *Ehrerbietige Bitte an den grossen Rath*, 8–9.
36. Staatsarchiv des Kantons Aargau, CH-000051-7 GR.1830/0040.
37. [Blum](#), *Die politische Beteiligung*, 55; [Stahelin](#), *Geschichte des Kantons Aargau*, 15.
38. The history of the police force in Switzerland in the period under observation remains a subject for future research. See for the Canton of Zurich Suter, *Kantonspolizei Zürich*.
39. Bericht des Oberamtmanns von Muri, 5 Dec. 1830, CH-000051-7 GR.1830/0040.
40. Heinrich Fischer, *Liebe Aargauische Mitbürger!*, 4 Dec. 1830, CH-000051-7 GR.1830/0040.
41. [Kästli](#), *Die Schweiz – eine Republik in Europa*, 278; [Stahelin](#), *Geschichte des Kantons Aargau*, 29.
42. The situation can be compared to the one in Ireland in the 1820s and 1830s where an elitist nationalist movement and great masses of ordinary people joined to protest against the British rule. See Colantonio, *Mobilisation national, souveraineté populaire et normalisations en Irlande*.
43. [Wickli](#), *Politische Kultur und die “reine Demokratie,”* 77.
44. [Lukas](#), *Der Maschinensturm von Uster*.
45. A teacher seminar was a secondary school for ongoing teachers. See Grunder, “Lehrerseminar.”
46. [Dändliker](#), “Der Stadler Aufruhr,” 168–9.
47. [Weinmann](#), *Eine andere Bürgergesellschaft*, 273.
48. *Antiquarische Gesellschaft Pfäffikon, Zürichputsch*.
49. [Peter](#), “Die Glaubensbewegung und ihr Führer aus Richterswil,” 227.
50. [Aerne](#), “Pfarrer [Bernhard Hirzel](#),” 90.
51. *Idib.*, 90–1.
52. “als Zeugen eines ganzen Volkes.” Anrede an die am 2. September 1839 versammelten Bezirks-Comités der vereint petitionierenden Gemeinden des Cantons Zürich, gehalten von dem Präsidenten H. J. J. Hürlimann-Landis, von Richterswil, Druck der Schulthess’schen Offizia in Zürich, 3.
53. “Einem solchen Volk ist nichts zu versagen.” Anrede an die am 2. September 1839 versammelten Bezirks-Comités der vereint petitionierenden Gemeinden des Cantons Zürich, gehalten von dem Präsidenten H. J. J. Hürlimann-Landis, von Richterswil, Druck der Schulthess’schen Offizia in Zürich, 14.
54. “Volksfreunde” und “Volksfeinde.” Anrede an die am 2. September 1839 versammelten Bezirks-Comités der vereint petitionierenden Gemeinden des Cantons Zürich, gehalten von dem Präsidenten H. J. J. Hürlimann-Landis, von Richterswil, Druck der Schulthess’schen Offizia in Zürich, 14.
55. The demands of the petition are listed in [Peter](#), “Glaubensbewegung und ihr Führer aus Richterswil,” 230.
56. “Niedertretung des Volkes, Guillotine für seine Führer.” [Bernhard Hirzel](#), *Mein Antheil*, 4.
57. [Aerne](#), “Pfarrer [Bernhard Hirzel](#).”
58. “Tausendstimmiger Gesang frommer Lieder.” [Hirzel](#), *Mein Antheil*, 7; see also [Gubler](#), “Der ‘Züriputsch’ in Schilderungen;” [Koller](#), “Demonstrating in Zurich,” 197.
59. [Blum](#), *Die politische Beteiligung*, 167–7; [Bucher](#), “Die Auswirkungen des ‘Züriputsches.’”
60. See for a different appraisal [Weinmann](#), *Eine andere Bürgergesellschaft*, 270.
61. [Schaffner](#), “Direkte Demokratie,” 203–10; [Weinmann](#), *Eine andere Bürgergesellschaft*, 274–6.
62. [Blum](#), *Die politische Beteiligung*, 172; for Solothurn see [Walliser](#), *Der Kampf um demokratische Rechte*, 19–40.
63. [Bucher](#), “Die Auswirkungen des ‘Züriputsches,’” 10.
64. [Koller](#), “Demonstrating in Zurich,” 197.
65. For continuities and traditions of protest in the late medieval and the early modern period see [Blickle](#), *Unruhen in der ständischen Gesellschaft*, 45–50; for the Helvetic Republic see [Graber](#), *Zeit des Teilens*, 42–48; for the canton of St. Gallen see [Wickli](#), *Politische*

Kultur und die 'reine Demokratie', 188; Würgler, Unruhen und Öffentlichkeit. Würgler emphasizes the innovative aspect of protest movements in the 18th century. Between 1848 and 1853, political conflicts in Savoy contained traditional protest activities from villagers and small town dwellers. The same can be said for the peasants revolts in the French region of the Doubs in the aftermath of the 1848 revolution. See for comparison with Switzerland Milbach, *L'éveil politique de la Savoie*, 43–91; Mayaud, *Les secondes Républiques du Doubs*, 181–199.

66. Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die "reine Demokratie"*, 157; Schaffner, "Direkte Demokratie," 201.
67. Staehelin, *Geschichte des Kantons Aargau*, 25.
68. Adler, *Die Entstehung der direkten Demokratie*, 173; Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die "reine Demokratie"*, 269–80.
69. See the flag of the Helvetic Republic on the cover of Schläppi, *Umbruch und Beständigkeit*.
70. "Endlich beschloß ein Theil der versammelten Menge sich auf die Schützenmatte zu begeben, um eine Volksversammlung abzuhalten; ein anderer Theil begab sich nach dem Kornhause und beschloß dort das Nämliche." *Der Lebensmittel-Auflauf in Bern*. *Intelligenzblatt für die Stadt Bern*, vol. 250, 19 Oct. 1846, 1424.
71. Blum, *Die politische Beteiligung*, 62; Schaffner, "Direkte Demokratie," 194–5.
72. "[D]as Volk steht in Muri mit und ohne Waffen umher. Ermahnungen zur Ruhe sind fruchtlos." The official explicitly mentions his expectation of a *Landsturm* for the day of his report. Bericht des Oberamtmanns von Muri, 5 Dec. 1830, CH-000051-7 GR.1830/0040 (Staatsarchiv Aargau).
73. "Eine allgemeine Beängstigung hat sich neuerdings aller Gemüther der gutgesinnten Bürger bemächtigt", angesichts des "in Wuth gebrachten Pöbel." Bericht des Oberamtmanns von Bremgarten, 5 Dec. 1830, CH-000051-7 GR.1830/0040.
74. For a short account of the events see the articles in HLS: Suter, "Bauernkrieg (1653)"; Andrey, "Chenau-Handel;" for the Peasants War: Suter, *Der schweizerische Bauernkrieg von 1653*.
75. Graber, *Zeit des Teilens*, 164.
76. Guzzi-Heeb, "Logik."
77. Pahud, "L'insurrection au village."
78. Stüssi-Lauterburg, *Föderalismus und Freiheit*, 1994, 130–1 (Baden), 134 (Brugg), 138, 167–70 (Berne).
79. Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die "reine Demokratie"*, 59–60, 180–2.
80. See, even for a German territory with a modernised bureaucracy, adjacent to Switzerland Eibach, *Der Staat vor Ort*.
81. "Weil wir bloß durch eine moralische Demonstration, nicht durch Waffengewalt, die Regierung zur Erfüllung der Volkswünsche bewegen wollten." Hirzel, *Mein Antheil*, 7.
82. Die gewaltsame Brandstiftung von Uster am 22. November 1832 von Dr. F. L. Keller, Zürich, bey Orell Füssli und Compagnie 1833; see also HLS, Bürgi and Schmid, "Usterbrand."
83. "Es ist ein unveräusserliches Recht freier Männer, in offenen Versammlungen unter freiem Himmel zu tagen." Cited in Schaffner, "Direkte Demokratie," 217.
84. Wickli, *Politische Kultur und die "reine Demokratie"*, 278–80.

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