German Peasant War - Martin Luther (1524)

by Lyndal Roper

A German Peasant War 1524-1525 was inadvertently initiated by Luther's "95 Theses" in 1517, and his translation of the Bible from Latin into German in 1522 (“Summer of Fire and Blood - The German Peasants' War”, by Lyndal Roper).

The German peasants swept across Germany with surprising speed. More than 100,000 peasants took control of vast areas of southern and middle Germany. Those peasants destroyed monasteries, convents, and castles.

It was the greatest uprising in Western Europe before the French Revolution. It swept across Germany with astonishing speed as thousands of people massed in armed bands. They demanded a system where everyone is fundamentally equal in moral value and deserve the same rights, treatment, and opportunities.

This war occurred because the rulers, of the various Germany regions, treated all peasants as slaves. The wealthy people, who owned the land, were Lords, Jews, and Catholics (Priests, Bishops, Monks, Nuns). Usuary (lending money at a high interest rate) was used by the Jews to confiscate money and property from the peasants.

The rulers owned all of the land, including the forests and the rivers. Peasants were not allowed to hunt or fish. Via multiple types of taxes, they confiscated a majority of the peasants’ money and property (cattle, sheep, etc.). The rulers also took the peasants’ kids and sold them to fight other countries’ wars.

Eventually, the German Peasant War proved no match for the Lords who hired soldiers. Those soldiers put down the revolt by slaying approximately hundred thousand peasants in just over two months.

But this did not stop the peasants from forming Lutheran churches. They did not want to be part of the Catholic church because the Catholic leaders owned most of the land, and because of the Catholic church rules.

Who would have guessed that a war was initiated because of Martin Luther’s reformation., which resulted in the origins of Lutheran churches.