

Current Concerns

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Diversity, Competition and 'Resilient Dynamism'

Address by President Ueli Maurer at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2013, 23 January 2013 in Davos



President Ueli Maurer

Dear Professor
Schwab
Excellencies
Ladies and Gen-
tlemen

Welcome to Swit-
zerland, welcome to
Davos. I would
like to welcome
you in each of our
four national lan-
guages:

B a i n v g n ü
quia a Tavo, in
quista cuntrada alpina da bellezza. Eu
m'ingrazch per Lur visita e giavüsch a
tuots ün bel temp e bun divertimaint.

Benvenuti a Davos in questo splendi-
do paesaggio alpino. Vi ringrazio della
visita e vi auguro un piacevole soggior-
no.

Soyez les bienvenus à Davos et dans
son magnifique écriin de sommets alpins.
Je vous remercie de votre visite et vous
souhaite un agréable séjour en Suisse.

Herzlich willkommen hier in
Davos, in dieser wunderbaren Berg-
welt. Ich bedanke mich für Ihren Be-
such und wünsche Ihnen einen schönen
Aufenthalt.

You can see from the various national
languages just how diverse Switzerland is.
This diversity is what gives the country its
cultural wealth. And it also enriches our
society and shapes our politics.

That is why Switzerland is a federal
state with twenty-six cantons.

One could perhaps think that to have
twenty-six small states in an area as
small as Switzerland is not terribly effi-
cient. However, for our country, this di-
versity has proven to be a blessing.

It is also the reason for the "resilient
dynamism" of the Swiss economy, as di-
versity stimulates competition. That is
not only the case in business, but also in
politics.

Competition exists between the com-
munes and between the cantons. Loca-
tional competition exists within our own
borders. This leads to good infrastruc-
ture, to restraint in creating red tape
and to low taxes. And individuals bene-
fit just as much from all of this as busi-
nesses.

In addition to federalism, we have a
system of direct democracy: the people
determine how high taxes should be. This
helps to keep the tax burden at a compar-
atively low level. And because politicians
cannot always be trusted where spending
is concerned, we have a "debt brake" an-
chored in our constitution. This requires
us to balance out revenue and expendi-
ture.

Competition – economic as well as be-
tween locations – vying diversity, a liber-
al system and direct democracy – these are
Switzerland's recipes for success.

You may be wondering why I am
speaking about Switzerland at an inter-
national forum? It is because I believe in
diversity, and in competition. Both with-
in states and between them.

Progress and prosperity are not only
achieved through competition in the pri-
vate sector, but also through competition
among systems of government and busi-
ness locations. But this is not always the
case. Competition is hard work. Improv-
ing a country's economic framework is a
tough political challenge. Large states in
particular can be tempted to forgo such
efforts, choosing instead to place pres-
sure on smaller competitors, thereby
forcing them to adjust their own frame-
work for the worse.

The fact that Switzerland is in good
economic shape in international com-
parison is due in no small part to our
liberal system of government. I ask my-
self if it wouldn't be better if other states
were to draw inspiration from this suc-
cess, rather than criticise and lambaste
our system.

It is somewhat worrying when pow-
erful states exert pressure on small but
successful competitors. The result is that
competition, the catalyst of progress, is
stifled. Ultimately, everyone suffers a
decline in prosperity. Even large states
only benefit temporarily. For when there
is a lack of competition among systems
and locations, states become increasing-
ly sluggish until the last will to reform
fades.

I firmly believe that the resilient dy-
namism to which this year's Annual
Meeting is dedicated cannot be achieved
without peaceful competition between
business locations.

I hope the exchanges you have here
at this Annual Meeting are inspiring and
engaging, and that in between the ses-
sions and discussions you are able to
find a moment to take in the wonder-
ful mountain landscape! Should you not
quite find the time this week, I can as-
sure you that Switzerland also has an
excellent reputation as a tourist destina-
tion...

Thank you!

Source: *Federal Department of Defence, Civil
Protection and Sport (DDPS), [www.vbs.admin.ch/
internet/vbs/en/home/documentation/reden/liste/
detailspeech.47544.n](http://www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/vbs/en/home/documentation/reden/liste/detailspeech.47544.n)*

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Catalonia: Learning from Switzerland

Switzerland, a small but important country serving as a guardian of freedom

by Jaime Arias*



Jaime Arias

Trips to Switzerland have more stimuli to offer besides mountaineering or skiing. For example, the reliability of their bank accounts: Something that cannot be improvised and that is undoubtedly meritorious. The Helvetic Confederation has asserted itself after long decades of voluntary service for world peace, which it has performed with incorruptible honesty.

Long periods of trials and practical experience in the art to keep on improving the internal cohabitation, inspired by various Western hegemonies and confronted with voracious totalitarianisms. In acknowledgement of the traditions and merits of Switzerland for diplomacy and negotiation the Palais des Nations was built in Geneva from 1929 to 1936, decorated with frescos by the Catalan artist *José Maria Sert*, symbolizing the solidarity between the five continents, the international fraternity, the social, scientific and technological progress

of mankind. The noble institution is built on green fields surrounded by paths from the Roman period.

The Swiss know that they are a small country, with eight million inhabitants, and, with a natural enthusiasm, take care of their acknowledged universality as a home in the service of watching over freedom.

You must not forget the system of self-defense on which the permanent peace of the country with such a stable neutrality is based. This is not just a constant and vigilant citizen army with weapons kept at home. Great importance is attached to voluntarism, which was brought to championship in the Western democracy. This strength has been developed in the course of centuries of practising living together by one's own will. It has become an authentic and paradigmatically powerful force against the threats of barbaric Euro-Asian aggressions. In the end the aggressors did not dare to challenge the resolute mountain dwellers. The invaders knew what they would have to expect at the Alpine passes – due to the men of the armed country.

None of these exemplary character traits would be possible without the acquired consciousness that distinguishes this small but incorruptible country from

others – a country that, in the course of centuries and in no small part, has been inspired by neighboring countries and various hegemonies. At the end a genuine federal union had arisen, on the basis of essential values and mutual respect between very different cantons. Democratic freedoms that the Swiss are always ready to defend together, unified with-in historical differences. A microcosm of democratic authenticity that is enhanced on the basis of genuine citizenship. To all this you must add a solidary patriotism, the patriotism of a confederated republic which is shaped by the cantons: the example of a life together in security, which, in fact, made Switzerland to the balanced center of the defense of peace. This clearly is the basis, on which negotiating sessions can take place, when it can be achieved to bring two or more counterparties to the table that are somehow willing to talk, and this at every level as well as internationally. •

* Jaime Arias, born in 1922 in Barcelona, is one of Spain's most respected journalists. He began his journalistic career in 1939 and is a regular columnist for the largest Catalan newspaper "La Vanguardia" for 40 years now. He is also advisor to the editors. For his work he received several awards, including the 2011 Kennedy Award.

(Translation Current Concerns)

62% of the Swiss in favor of bilateral agreements

Switzerland's imports of goods and services from the EU exceeds its exports by 40 billion

Accession to the European Economic Area (EEA) is completely out of question to the Swiss voters even 20 years after their refusal to join EEA. The current SRG survey makes this clear. The economy realized with great satisfaction that 62% of surveyed citizens are in favor of the bilateral agreements. Due to the bilateral agreements, Switzerland has embarked an economically successful way, which has helped the country to gain greater competitiveness, growth and prosperity.

After 1992 Switzerland has opened strongly towards the EU and secured mutual market access thanks to the Bilateral Agreements I and II. From the economic point of view, a very successful phase of deepening economic relations between the EU and the Switzerland began after the refusal to join the EEA. In addition

to the reforms of the Swisslex, the bilateral agreements I with the free movement of persons freed Switzerland of the paralysis and stagnation of the 1990s. The gross domestic product, the average wage, the innovation and the competitiveness of the entire business location have grown significantly since 2002 – on average stronger than in the ten years before.

Today, the EU is by far our most important export market with a share of slightly less than 60% and with a share of 80% it is our most important import market. Switzerland imported goods and services worth 40 billion euros more than it exported into the EU. The role of Switzerland as the economic export driving force of the EU economy underscores the fact, that the bilateral approach has become val-

uable for both sides since the 'no' to EEA 20 years ago.

The SRG survey released today shows that the bilateral approach is being seen by the voters as a success and the systematic continuation finds supporters of all parties from the left to the right as well as a clear majority within the unbound party voters. For the alternatives like accession to the EU, accession to the EEA or going along alone, however, there is no acceptance. For *economiesuisse* director *Pascal Gentinetta* it is clear that the bilateral agreements have paid off. Although the bilateral approach is currently difficult, it is important to move on consistently.

Source: www.economiesuisse.ch of 30.11. 2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

The iceberg of national debt

The economic graph: Severe sustainability gaps

by Gerhard Schwarz*

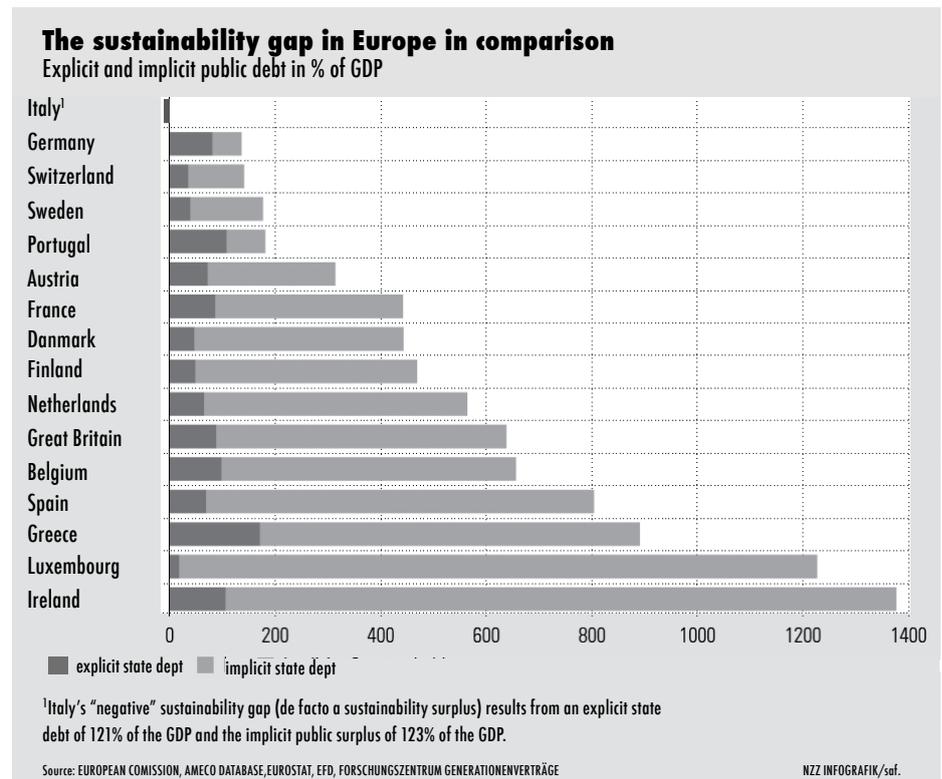
In fact what we actually can fairly recognise in the European debt crisis to some extent is bad enough. For 2012 the explicit national debts in Greece amount to about 170% of the *gross domestic product* (GDP), in Italy to about 120%; in Ireland and Belgium they are around 100%. These are basically quite immense amounts. And even in the “pillars” of the EU, in Great Britain, France and Germany, they range between 90% and 80%. Since public spending ratios range somewhere between 40% and 50% at large, this means that even the one-eyed among the blind, in case they wanted to pay off the mountain of debts, would have to grant absolutely no state subsidies, would pay no wages to officials, would have to close the public schools and they would have to intercept public transport etc for about two years. In other words: The states would have to cut their households for 20 years about 10% to attain the same effect. All states have been living so much beyond their means.

Below the water surface

However, such mountains of debts are like icebergs. We only see the tip, i.e. a small part, consider ourselves safe and underestimate the dangers. *With the national debts of the founders of the eurozone (the euro-12) only one quarter of the mountain of debts is clearly visible in the form of explicit public debts made in the past. Three quarters lie under the water surface. This still invisible, so-called implicit national debt consists of all those tremendous obligations for the future which the states have committed themselves to, and for which they make, however, no provisions.* Pensions and pension commitments or care and health services are to be considered which the states promise to their citizens and which will often come up only in future decades. Moreover, the present budget balance adjusted for interest expenses, the primary balance, plays a role.

If we add the implicit national debts calculated by Prof. Bernd Raffelhüschen (Freiburg in Breisgau) to the explicit, officially shown debts, we are filled with bare horror. For the euro-12 states this whole burden of debts, hence the sustainability gap, amounts to more than three times the GDP of these states – or 75% of the world's GDP of 2010. In Ireland this gap even amounts to more than the 13-fold of the annual economic performance, in Luxembourg to more than the 11-fold. But even “prigs” like Germany or Switzerland suddenly face clearly higher debts, often several times as much as the explicit public debt.

Some time ago the German “Foundation Market Economy” worked out on the basis



of slightly different, but absolutely comparable figures and under the blunt title “Honorable States? The Sustainability of European Public Finances in Times of Crisis” (Moog & Raffelhüschen, 2011) what is needed to bridge these sustainability gaps. They calculated how much the state expenses would have to be reduced permanently (not only in one year) or the public revenue would have to be durably raised in order to protect the sustainability of public finances in the long term. For the euro-12 states they found out: 5.1% of the GDP (not of the budget) on an average, for the front runner Greece 17.6%, for Luxembourg 12.0%, for France 4.3%, for Austria 4.8%, for Germany 4.0% and for Italy 2.4%. The differences in ranking between sustainability gap and consolidation needs primarily have to do with population dynamics. If population shrinks as is expected for Germany, public debts will be distributed on lesser shoulders.

Italy outperforms Germany

The graph provides additional important insights: Firstly the explicit public debt which normally is in the centre of attention of economical analyses says little about the country's real condition. Italy for instance compensates for its explicit public debt by credits on the implicit side and, hence, shows no debt in sum. In the matter of financial sustainability Italy compares very well. On the other side, countries which show only a very low explicit public debt (compared to the GDP)

clearly fall further behind, considered the implicit public debt; Luxembourg for instance next to last rank. Switzerland also ranks among those countries which are in a better situation concerning the explicit public debt than the implicit one.

Secondly in the graph's countries the implicit public debt is always substantially bigger than the explicit one, except for Italy and Germany. One is often a multiple of the other. Thirdly under inclusion of these “invisible” debts one probably has to slightly revise the view of the debt situation of particular countries.

While the “usual suspects” range in the lower third of the graph, others surprise – like the already mentioned Luxembourg. France ranges in the worse half, and also Austria does not impress, whereas just much maligned Italy ranks first due to the low expected increase of expenses for pensions and welfare as well as because of the relatively high primary surplus. However, even Italy has to be careful, because an increase of the interest and a weak growth could quickly lead to the fact that the primary balance is not sufficient to keep the mountain of debts stable at least – not to mention all the other states.

* Gerhard Schwarz has been head of the economic editorial staff NZZ for 16 years. Since 2010 he has been managing director of “Avenir Suisse.”

Source: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 26.01.2013.

With friendly permission of “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*”.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Exempt the National Bank

Profits must now be retained, not distributed

by Martin Lanz

The expected annual profits of the *Swiss National Bank* (SNB) are 6 billion francs; with such an amount it seems to be justifiable to distribute the 1 billion francs to the federal administration and the cantons according to their agreement. However, looking at the equity position of the SNB – and thus its ability to absorb losses – in more detail, the federal and cantonal administration should actually defer their claims. They should do so because at the end of November provisions and equity just were 12% of the total assets, compared with around 50% in the period prior to the financial crisis. In absolute terms, the about 62 billion francs item may still impress, but it will not do so if compared to the loss of almost 11 billion Swiss francs in the fourth quarter of 2012, and the annual loss of over 20 billion Swiss francs in 2010. The SNB has to envisage much higher losses for its foreign currency assets of currently 427 billion francs and must steel itself accordingly.

For the state of the European Monetary Union, Japan and the US does not just promise a stable and predictable development of those currencies that are relevant for the National Bank: the Euro, the Yen and the Dollar. We must expect more and new distortions, and probably even greater exchange rate volatility is to be expected in the future. As long as the exchange rate lower limit applies, the SNB is nevertheless protected against losses in Euros. But at some point – and better sooner rather than later – this lower limit will be eliminated, while the SNB balance sheet will remain risky. So it would be advisable to build additional buffers to meet the volatility and the corresponding exchange rate risks.

The easiest way would be to retain the entire profit. It is not to be expected that the federal and cantonal administration renounce “their” billion and repeal the existing 2015 agreement. But in the interest of a credible and independent monetary

“The state of the European Monetary Union, Japan and the US does not just promise a stable and predictable development of those currencies that are relevant for the National Bank: the euro, the yen and the dollar.”

policy, the SNB must be freed from the bondage of such claims in the future, so that it is no longer unnecessarily restricted in making provisions. The distribution of profits must follow the monetary need. If determination of claims does not work, an indicative proportional profit sharing could be considered, but this must ultimately up to the competence of the SNB’s Governing Board, as is the case in other central banks.

Source: “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” of 18.1.2013
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

World Economic Forum in Davos

Medvedev states priorities of the Russian G-20 agenda

According to Premier *Dmitry Medvedev* the basic priorities of Russia’s G-20 presidency in 2013 are to take decisions that will boost the global economy and stimulate employment. Part of it will also be a further transformation of the International Monetary Fund IMF.

“The most important priority is undoubtedly to unite our efforts to take decisions which could boost global growth and increase the level of employment,” Medvedev said on Thursday at a panel discussion of the G-20 in Davos.

The Russian G-20 agenda will include an active work to promote the reform of the IMF.

“We will strive to continue the implementation of the Framework Agreement in order to ensure a secure, stable and balanced growth.”

Particular attention will be paid to the recovery of investment activity as well as increasing the level of employment, said Medvedev.

The world’s reserve currencies are also of great importance.

“This is not just about the currencies in which the central banks hoard their reserves [...]. As the experience of recent years shows, the liquidity crisis affected the reserve currencies at the financial activities as well as the volatility of the markets,” said Medvedev.

“Therefore, we must think about developing mechanisms, which could take on the role of the lender of last resort in such markets.”

During its G-20 presidency Russia will seek maximum transparency, develop contacts with international institutions to a maximum and will continue the practice of inviting leaders to participate in this forum, which do not belong to G-20.

In addition there is the need for an active dialogue with the business community and civil society.

“Russia will use all its strength and is looking for non-simple but contemporarily adequate solutions to the problems of the world economy in order to accelerate growth and to create favorable conditions for business activities and increase employment,” the Russian prime minister said.

In total there are eight priorities, which include the stable development of global energy markets, support of international trade and fight against corruption.

The Russian presidency began at a rather complicated time, emerging trends to a slowdown of the world economy could be observed. During 2010, global growth was 6 percent, in 2012 it was 3.3 percent and for 2013 the IMF predicts 3.6 percent, Medvedev said.

Source: *RIA Novosti* of 24.1.2013

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

The terror cynics – in Mali against, in Syria with al-Qaeda

The West has to end this cynical pact with the terrorists

by Jürgen Todenhöfer*

When the West invaded Afghanistan, its objective was to overcome international terrorism. However, the opposite has been achieved. The number of suicide attacks multiplied worldwide after 9/11. For every dead terrorist, dozens of new ones rose. Anti-terrorist wars are terrorist breeding programs.

The Muslim world is now filled with national terrorists and foreign “itinerant jihadists”. They are primarily funded by private organizations in Saudi Arabia. The latter want to spread their Wahabite-Salafist radical Islam, which only two percent of Muslims believe in worldwide.

In contrast to what the alarmism of western domestic politicians leads us to assume, Europe has largely remained spared from Al-Qaeda’s terrorism so far. According to Europol, only three out of 249 completed or attempted terrorist attacks in 2010 had Islamist motives. In 2011 not a single one of the 174 attacks in Europe was motivated by Islamic fundamentalism. Most perpetrators were separatists and left-wing extremists.

Nevertheless, we should not let the Muslim world alone with its terrorist problem. The aggressive policy of the West towards the Muslim world that has been ongoing for centuries is ultimately the main cause of this disease. Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq are only the latest examples of this disastrous policy.

Significant responsibility for the epidemic spread of terrorism is with its sponsors in the Gulf. Without Saudi money al-Qaeda could not survive. But the West does not dare to approach this central problem of terrorism. They argue that the Saudi royal family has a mafia-like pact with the terrorist godfathers. It was spared from attacks only as long as it does not disturb their circles. Their reluctance to

engage with the men behind the terror was therefore understandable. The West was richly compensated by oil for its understanding, they say.

But oil is just one of the reasons why the West does not start dealing with the hinterland of terrorism, Saudi Arabia. Islamist terrorism has also proved to be a useful pretext to justify aggressive military action. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became the principal enemy of the United States, after 1991, when *Colin Powell* had complained, that “he was running out of villains”.

Whenever the West wages or calls for anti-terror wars it is about completely different things. In Afghanistan, it was about the central geostrategic position in Asia, in Iraq for oil, in the conflict with the alleged nuclear-addicted “terrorist state” Iran about the dominance in the Middle East. In Mali, for example, it is about uranium in neighboring Niger. If there was only sand in the ex-colony “French West Africa”, Tuaregs, terrorists and Malians could have a real go at each other as long as they wanted. Paris would never intervene. It knows very well that its “anti-terror war” can ultimately not defeat Islamic terrorism, but will further fuel it. But what does this mean compared with a secure supply of electricity in France by African uranium?

Western anti-terrorism policy has climbed the height of cynicism in Syria. There, more than 50,000 armed rebels are fighting against the *Assad* regime. 40,000 of them are Islamist extremists, according to some democratic oppositionists. At least 15,000 of them are committed to the al-Nusra Front, an al-Qaeda offshoot – among them thousands of foreign jihadists. Only a minority of the rebels is still fighting for democracy. In case of a victory of the extremist rebels there will not be a democratic model state, but an “emirate” of religious fanatics involving al-Qaeda. It would be the greatest political triumph of al-Qaeda in its history.

The Syrian rebels receive weapons and money especially from Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Saudi Arabia supplies mainly al-Qaeda, with the United States’ knowledge. The West is backing the entire rebellion politically, including al-Qaeda. It is a de facto ally of al-Qaeda. In Mali, against, in

Syria with al-Qaeda – it couldn’t be more cynical.

Assad is a dictator; so are the King of Saudi Arabia and the Emir of Qatar. The US and the despots of Saudi Arabia and Qatar do not care about democracy in Syria. Their objective is the elimination of an essential ally of Iran, who has become too powerful as a consequence of the war in Iraq. The fact that one of the most endearing multi-ethnic peoples of Arabia is breaking apart does not interest our “world strategists”; neither does it interest them that with a victory of the extremists two million Christians could lose their homeland.

There are reasonable solutions to this tragic fratricidal war. The key is in the hands of the US. They should be willing to negotiate with Assad. As happened once with the leaders of the Soviet Union. In that case *Ronald Reagan* never asked them to withdraw before peace negotiations could start.

The United States would be well-able to enforce the ceasefire that the Syrian people are longing for if they only stopped the flow of arms from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, for a certain period. Russia could follow suit. The ceasefire would have to be fully used for Assad’s negotiations with all social groups – including the exiled Syrian opposition and the rebels who would have to lay down their arms. The aim would be the formation of a transitional government, the drafting of a democratic constitution that protects the minorities as well, and the preparation of internationally monitored free elections.

Assad is capable of waging this war for a long time. All those, who have proclaimed his downfall “the second next day” for almost two years, were wrong. They also may have been wrong about his future plans. In my estimation, he is not overly interested in running for office again in 2014 – in case a fair peace agreement is settled.

Wise negotiations do still have a chance. It is time for the West’s course correction. It must end its cynical pact with al-Qaeda. •

With the kind permission of the author.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

* Jürgen Todenhöfer was born in 1940; from 1972 to 1990 he was an MP of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union). In his parliamentary group, he was development policy spokesman at first, later he was responsible for arms control. After retiring from the Bundestag in 2008 he served on the board of the Burda Group as Deputy Chairman. Since 1980 Todenhöfer has repeatedly visited trouble spots in the Islamic world, Afghanistan and Iraq and most recently Libya, Syria and Iran. He is the author of “Feindbild Islam – Zehn Thesen gegen den Hass” (De-monizing Islam – Ten Theses against hatred).

The French intervention in Mali – what next?

by Prof. Dr Albert A. Stahel, Institute for Strategic Studies, Wädenswil

On 11 January by the order of President *Hollande*, the French intervention in Mali started. Supported by 12 combat planes the intervention corps of 3,700 men (ground forces including paratroopers of the Foreign Legion) gradually recaptured the most important cities and towns

this difficult time of economic crisis for France he does not want to risk such a loss of image.

The second consideration takes into account France's relations with the population of the Tuareg, which are intact until now, and thus with their movement

thousands of years. If France would make the Tuareg to their enemy, former French investments in North Africa would be endangered. Add to that the realization that Mali's *Soldateska* are incapable of anything else than killing innocent people. The former Mali can hardly be restored with bandits. So it makes more sense for France to come to an arrangement with the Tuareg and to accept a partial autonomy of the north of Mali.

The third consideration refers to France's relations with Algeria. Due to their years of experience in the fight against Islamists the rulers in Algier want to prevent the Malian war from spreading onto their territory. The first warning sign of such a threat was the occupation of the Algerian gas field. The Algerian generals want to avoid by all means a prolonged confrontation with the Islamists of AQIM and the separatists of the Tuareg on their territory. Such a conflict could result in interruptions of gas supplies to Europe and thus to the loss of much-needed revenue by which the unemployed youth of the country can be kept at bay. Even France, being dependant on the good relations with the Algerian rulers only because of gas supplies, is not interested in such a development. An untroubled relationship with Algeria takes precedence over the interests vis-à-vis the military rulers in Mali, which previously have proved to be unreliable.

After expelling Ansar Dine from their position of power in Mali, *Hollande* relies on a kind of *modus vivendi*, maintaining the good relations of France to Algeria, guaranteeing the achieved gain power for France in Mali and thus controlling further reprisals by the Malian soldiers against the Tuareg. Simulta-

continued on page 7

Insurgents and Tuareg rebels in Mali trained by US instructors

The insurgents and Tuareg rebels in Mali, whose operations had led to the occupation of the northern part of the country by Islamists, have been trained by US instructors in the fight against terrorism, a newspaper reported.

"Over the past four years, the US has completed a comprehensive anti-terrorism program in the region and will invest up to \$ 600 million in the training of military contingents in Mali", the "New York Times" reported on Monday. "After well-armed Islamists from neighboring Libya had invaded the northern areas of Mali in March 2012, there was a military coup d'état in Mali led by General *Amada Sanogo* at the top who had been trained by the Americans."

According to the newspaper, the Americans have not only overlooked

the imminent coup, but also ignored that the command over the elite forces has been transferred to representatives of the Tuareg who had been in conflict with the central government for around 50 years. "In April, the Tuareg in northern Mali proclaimed the State of Azawad. The commander of three of the four army units in the north of the country defected to the side of the separatists along with personnel and weapons, reinforced by about 1,600 deserters."

"The Americans' help proved useless. They had made the wrong choice," the paper quoted a Malian officer. ●

Source: RIA Novosti on 01/14/2013

(Translation Current Concerns)

of Mali. Now the troops have reached the town of Kidal in northern Mali. The French were accompanied by the Malian army, which only achieved success was in killing unarmed Tuareg. So a "Soldateska" (band of marauding soldiers), not deserving its name, compensates for its military inability by revenge attacks on defenseless persons. During his visit to Timbuktu *Hollande* signalized, that the contingents of the West African States would now replace the French and that they would definitely have to pacify the country. What considerations may have determined this decision of the French president, after the intervention of his troops have been successful so far? Presumably there are three of them.

First of all, the Islamist fighters of Ansar Dine, a splinter group of AQIM (al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb), avoided the armed struggle with the French and may have retreated in the mountains of the Sahara (Adrar des Iforhas). In this inaccessible area they would fight a guerilla war against the French, which would cause serious losses for the French, which they were able to avoid up to now. *Hollande* won't be able to afford a prolonged guerilla war and as a result he would lose his popularity in France, which he gained previously through the intervention. At

MNLA, which had, prior to their displacement by the Islamists, fought for the independence of northern Mali and which had nearly reached this. Alone from the territorial point of view, the membership of the North to the artificial state of Mali is a geographic absurdity. In addition there is the ethnical border, which separates the northern from the southern population. The north is inhabited by the Tuareg people from the Berber ethnic group, they control the Sahara with their caravans for

Security and Military

Clinton admits: Mali crisis is result of overthrow in Libya

US Secretary of State *Hillary Clinton* admitted that the crisis in Mali was a result of the overthrow in Libya and the killing of the ruler *Muammar al-Gaddafi*.

"Unfortunately the instability (in the region) is the result of an overthrow by the army and the Tuareg who has been hired by Gaddafi as mercenaries over the years," Clinton said in the US Congress on Wednesday. "After Gaddafi's disempowerment, they returned heavily armed and with huge supply of ammunition to Libya [...]. At the same time al-Qaeda established a camp in the north of Mali." According to Clinton, the US was try-

ing to regain control over the situation in Mali, which had failed so far. "No doubt, the terrorists in Algeria had also used weapons smuggled from Libya. No doubt, the extremists in Mali also make use of Libyan weapons," the Secretary said. Before, the US Intelligence Agencies had repeatedly stated that the recent series of "Arab revolutions" had led to the escalation of terrorism and extremism in North Africa.

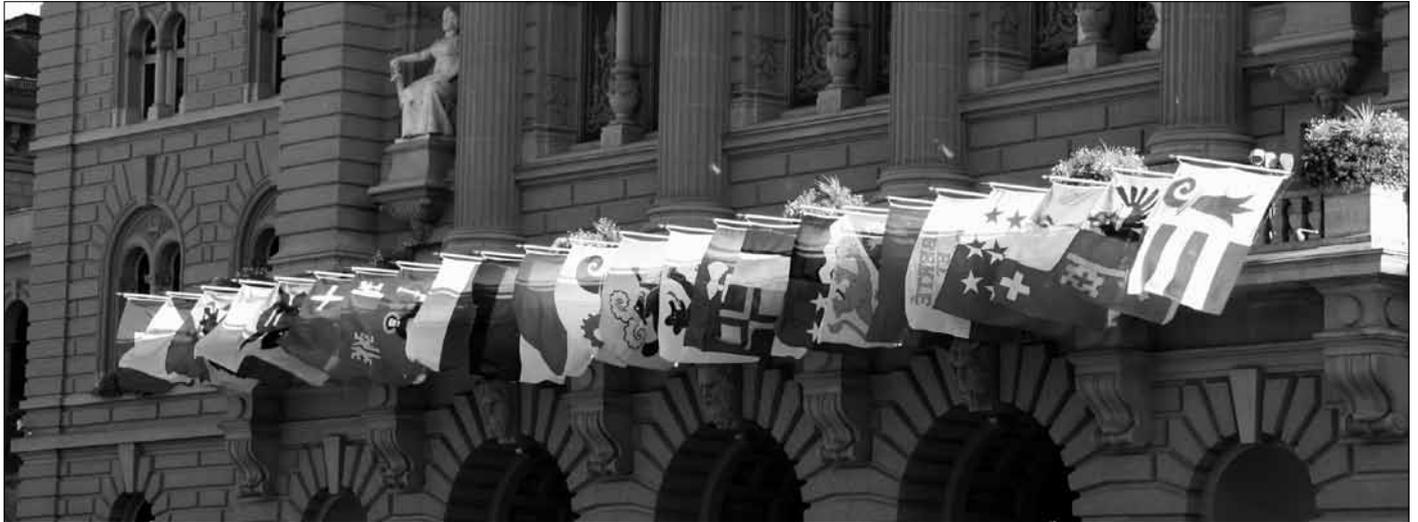
Source: RIA Novosti from 23 January 2013

(Translation Current Concerns)

Militia principle as a model for peace – against neo-feudal étatism and military interventionism

The four pillars of the model Switzerland must be protected against attacks – to Europe's and the world's hope

by Tobias Salander, historian



Kishore Mahbubani said about Switzerland on 21.08.2006: It is a small country, no great power. But it has an enormous amount of "soft power". With a well-ordered polity, with a credible policy of neutrality, and with a great commitment to international humanitarian law, Switzerland sets standards which apply internationally as exemplary. He was hoping that Switzerland would go on to take this unique role in the future, as well. (Cf. Widmer, p. 239)

The attacks against Switzerland do not subside – the latest blow was directed against our militia system that has proved to be successful for centuries. The fact that the blow was dealt by a group from inside does not make things any better. But even these groups, unless they are agents of a foreign power, will come to their senses when they think twice about it: Of course, everyone is in favor of peace. However: How can we secure peace? With a professional army? Because that would be the first option if we did away with our well-proven militia army. With a new caste living in barracks that may apply violence at the behest of a political elite? Or as a second alternative to place Switzerland directly under NATO command, hence under a war alliance, which has already led to multiple wars of aggression contrary to international law? Nobody may want either option. Reason enough to think about

"The French intervention in ..."

continued from page 6

neously Hollande avoids to compromise his achieved popularity in France. At most, there is the risk that, with his decision, he could only have reached a small breathing space for France. In the meantime, other groups in North Africa might have supplied themselves from Libya's arsenal of weapons, which is no longer controlled after the death of *Gaddafi*. •
(Translation Current Concerns)

the nature of the peace model Switzerland and recall the comprehensive militia idea as the foundation of our cooperatively, bottom-up structured polity. The basis for this, among other things, was the excellent book by Paul Widmer "Die Schweiz als Sonderfall" (Switzerland as a special case).

The model Switzerland is based on four pillars or characteristics: These are direct democracy, the strong federalism, the perpetual armed neutrality and multilingualism. But what is common to these four pillars? They are all vital to the highest possible degree of the citizens' freedom, and they provide peace, both internally and externally. In other words: they contain any pursuit of power by individuals, whole groups or the whole country.

Now if a foreign power like the EU, the US, the high finance or whoever wants to weaken Switzerland in its existence, it will attempt to undermine one of the four pillars in the population with the help of propaganda, just like *Hitler* once did when he attacked the sovereignty of the nation state in violation of international law; with the malicious intent to make the whole state structure collapse.

Attentive contemporaries have noticed for some time that this subversive activity can be observed on all levels, even from the inside, done by a kind of fifth column: Thus the pillar of federalism has been under attack for a long time, if,

for instance the cantonal majority comes under pressure, or by the so-called mergerism: communes or even whole cantons are asked to merge, Switzerland is supposed to be divided into either metropolitan areas for urban regions or nature parks for rural areas. It will end up in centralization, with the easy-to-see-through intention to implement the rule from top down, i.e. from Brussels' grace. This is the attempt to deprive the people of their homeland, to cut them off their tradition and to destroy their feeling of unity.

Sweeping blows against the model Switzerland

The instruments of direct democracy such as initiative and referendum do naturally not fit into a centrally dominated Europe, since the commissioners in Brussels and their wirepullers like the financial oligarchy are very much afraid of their "subjects" plebiscites.

The constant pushing back, sometimes contempt and often didactically nonsensical teaching of the other national languages and the accelerated expansion of teaching English from an early age attacks another pillar of the model Switzerland: If verbal communication is lost, the understanding of each other is lost as well and the cohesion of Switzerland as a nation established by the will of the people is at risk.

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"Militia principle as a model ..."

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The attacks on these three pillars have been going on for some time, but they met with considerable resistance. Nature parks are rejected in rows at the ballot box; metropolitan areas are not getting anywhere, the largest of them – that of Zurich – has suffered failure since Zurich itself is thinking about quitting the association. A referendum demanded by the liberal side calling for "essentialization" of the people's rights, i.e. raising the necessary votes (quorum) for initiative and referendum, was massively rejected and returned to the sender by the sovereign; the mergerism has been recognized for what it is: at best, a savings exercise, but mostly an act of anticipatory obedience to the Commissioners of the centralized EU. Regarding the issue of multilingualism, every citizen is requested in person, not only the children and adolescents, who are expected to learn meaningless and chopped-up modules that are mostly not appropriate to their levels.

**Without militia system:
administrative totalitarianism,
caste system, interventionism**

The next attack on one of the four pillars now comes from the inside, but is no less dangerous: the GSoA¹ initiative to abolish the militia army.

It is worth having a closer look at the nature of neutrality, the militia army, hence the idea behind the militia system in its historical dimension, in order to fully assess the extent to which GSoA activists thus plead for the abolition of Switzerland as a whole – and if they should not

be aware of their behavior's consequences the thorough examination of the militia principle, of armed neutrality, and the ensuing peacekeeping mission of Switzerland would even be more necessary. Especially if the alternatives are considered: Those who reject the established Swiss model will get an administrative totalitarianism, a caste system, a standing army and military interventionism, in short, a neo-feudalist polity à la *Louis XIV's* absolutism; or to put it in more modern terms, a neo-liberal, neo-con war machine à la *Bush-junior-America*. Who in Switzerland may want such a thing? Nobody, if he is honest. Unless he does not think things through and is taken in by the sounds of the empire's propaganda shawms. However, this may not happen to an enlightened citizen of the 21st century, who is cosmopolitan and up to date with modern information technology.

**Militia system and
the principle of good faith**

Like Austria, Switzerland is a small state; and hence peaceful in nature (see also the article "Big central states as risk of war", *Current Concerns* No. 5 of 5 February). In a small state the citizens take over many tasks on a voluntarily basis. Namely in terms of administration, civil defense, fire brigade, but also general defense; this is called a militia system. It ensures the cohesion of a community and due to Switzerland's small scale design and the lived principle of good faith it requires no major legislative machinery. There is more trust among citizens rather than is the case in large structures, where no one knows his neighbors anymore.

Even *Aristotle* in ancient Greece thought of the ideal state in the form of a republic with militia citizens who work during the day and check if everything is all right at night, similar to what *Gottfried Keller* once formulated. This is exactly the idea that the people in the cooperatives in Switzerland dedicated their lives to, at the local level, without having studied Aristotle – obviously the Greek philosopher had met a basic truth of human life.

**Militia system: an extremely
economical form of government**

Switzerland has been built from bottom up since time immemorial. This federal structure requires many small political units, and the countless political bodies have to fill innumerable offices. Only a few are held professionally. Most officials work in their profession during the day, just as Aristotle envisioned. Thus, the militia system is an extremely economical form of government. It embodies a civil society in which the transfer of knowledge between society and politics is much faster than in a bureaucratic state. Studies show that the Swiss authorities are better managed at various stages than those in France, for example, even though, or perhaps just due to the fact that graduates of elite universities work as fully professional officials there. They are not in touch with the citizens, neither independent and often lack the expertise that goes beyond the immediate dossier. Nowhere, however, the identity of rulers and ruled is as strong as in a democracy based on the militia system. The militia politicians can afford to live for politics instead of living on it, because they all have a profession that feeds them.

**Militia army:
the exact opposite of militarism**

Many will probably first think of the military when they hear the word militia. Certainly, the commitment to the community is most obvious there. The principle is that every man contributes to the security of the community as well as he is able to. The militia principle in the military protects a society well before a caste system and is thus the school of the nation. The citizen in uniform has been an expression of republicanism since ancient times. The militia army is the exact opposite of militarism, since it brings together people from all levels of society and promotes the exchange between the country's regions. The members of the nation established by the will of the people get to know each other as never before, the townspeople get to know those from the countryside, the people from Valais those from German-speaking Switzerland, the German-speaking Swiss those from Ticino etc.

Militia system as a firewall against (neo-) feudal rule affectations

ts. Since the late Middle Ages the Swiss cantons knew the militia system in administration and military. This willingness of the citizens to promote the community in its entirety and give their professional experience to the general public too, has been maintained in Switzerland till today. Today this doesn't fit to the plans of the domestic and foreign propagandists of centralism – but also in the Ancien Regime cities like Bern and Zurich repeatedly had tried to create an authoritarian state with a standing army and a bureaucracy – at the expense of the oppressed rural population. For this purpose they would have had to raise more taxes, namely from the farmers and the traders of agriculture. But those defended against it, and appealed to their traditional rights. So in Switzerland the Peasants' War of 1653 happened. Although the peasants were defeated militarily, they won in case. The urban masters mostly had to

waive the new fees. Thanks to this circumstance, the resolute defense of the farmers, in Switzerland no feudal absolutism could spread, even if the Bernese patrician, the lords of Zurich and other cities would have liked it so much – just think of the chair of the Berne mayor, which was made for a pocket-Sunking (cf. pp. 51 Widmer).

Today likewise it is thanks to the strong militia system that Swiss citizens can live in great freedom, self-determination and even without large tax burdens – and that the resistance within the population against an accession to neo-feudal large structures, such as the EU and NATO still remains extremely strong – simply because it is going better in doing it on yourself, because there is confidence, because one knows each other. For who knows the countless Brussels commissioners by their names – or the "Saceur", the NATO Supreme Commander for Europe?

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Standing armies as a threat for peace

ts. How do the three terms "Small state", "Republic" and "War" interrelate? In his work "Perpetual Peace", the great Enlightenment philosopher *Immanuel Kant* was convinced that citizens don't start a war if they can decide themselves on war or peace. This is best practiced in a republic, in a small state with citizens wearing the surcoat (uniform). If a militia army consisting of citizens is re-

placed by professional soldiers, i.e. by a standing and barracked army, the ruling elite has an easy job of sending these soldiers to war. The soldiers will not refuse, since they are wage-earners of the elites, and neither will the population resist, because it is not their own sons, fathers, boyfriends and husbands that are being sent to the battlefield. (Cf. Widmer, p. 93)

"Militia principle as a model ..."

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Some say that in Switzerland as a nation established by the will of the people the biggest value of the Swiss militia does not lie in its actual purpose, the military, but in the social fabric. Here the solidarity between the regions and social groups is being tested, year after year. It is the glue of the nation.

Militia system and low taxes already praised by the British in the 18th century

ts. The British diplomat *Abraham Stanyan* who was in office as envoy in Switzerland from 1705 to 1709, praised both the militia system and the low taxes in 1714. At that time already, long before 1848 and the founding of the modern federal states, one could see that the structure of Switzerland from bottom to top, its cooperative structures and the militia system led to a more careful handling of the finances than it was usual and possible in the absolutist and centralistic governed states abroad. This kind of praise from 18th century Britain is the last thing the historiography – intending to destroy the special case Switzerland – around *Mr Bergier* wants. However, this book was also the last thing another internal, self-proclaimed elite wanted: the merciful masters of Bern, just imagine this, banned the British envoy's book (See Widmer, p. 60f.).

A procedure that speaks volumes not only for the chutzpah of the Bernese aristocracy, but rather for the Switzerland-tired guild of historians who also would prefer to sweep such findings under the carpet – ban, as did the former Bernese upper class, is not quite possible today ...

Professional armies weaken the peace, militia armies strengthen it

Whoever wants to abolish the militia principle in military matters is handing over the country to either a military bloc like NATO, or he must maintain our own professional army. Switzerland could never afford such a standing army in due size; moreover, a standing army does not belong to the tradition of Switzerland. And history teaches: professional armies always weaken the peace, while militia armies strengthen it. In addition, the government and parliament would handle it more carelessly and order a war deployment, if they did not have to send their own sons into combat, but strangers. Any examples? France rarely hesitates to send his Foreign Legionnaires into combat, with Mali as the most recent example. The deployment of US and British troops in recent years met with little opposition in their respective countries, since the fighters were members of a professional army – military service had been abolished after the experience of the Vietnam War. That Germany has recently abolished conscription unceremoniously makes us feel uneasy about the future; Keyword "archaic fighters". And: "the Germans need to learn to kill again" ...

Praise to the Austrians, who held onto their militia army this January with a lush majority of votes!

He, who wants to hold a country like Switzerland together, will also commit himself extensively to institutions that generations before us have created: in addition to the civil service we talk about the Romandie year, but also about rural service – young people on their continual search for sensible activities would be grateful to find support in this direction by the mature generation.

Militia army and neutrality are mutually dependent

What foreign policy garment does fit the militia system though? Would it suit the citizens who do professional work during



the day and care for the preservation of the community in the evening, but who also care for its security throughout the year? The citizens in uniform will always strive for defense, never for attack or conquest. From bitter experience, Switzerland has agreed on the so-called "sitting still", or in more modern words on neutrality. Hence this form of interaction with others is first and foremost a contribution to peace – and it embodies hope: If all states were neutral, there would be no more war. An idea to which every citizen will have to agree anywhere in the world.

Neutrality, which is advocated by 95% of the population in Switzerland according to the latest studies – yes, you read that correctly, 95 citizens out of 100! – neutrality is an equally meaningful and demanding way of dealing with one's fellows. It contains some elements which avaricious elites don't want in any case: In times of peace it always reminds, albeit quietly, to the possibility of war; but in times of war it reminds of peace by standing aside. That is, it always reminds us of the possibility that the situation might be different or there might be another solution, because not all the surrounding countries are small states and they always have to expect the greed of the centrally structured oligarchies. The old Confederates had a very apt term for that, when they spoke of the "malice" of the times.

"Take this unique role in future, too"

It must be subject to more articles to illuminate the history of neutral Switzerland. To conclude only this: The state maxim of perpetual armed neutrality, taken in the memorable phrases of *Brother Klaus* – "do not open the fence too much", "do not interfere with other people's affairs" – confirmed in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna, 1907 in the Hague Conventions and put into law in 1949 at the Geneva Conven-

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Rousseau: Poland should take over the Swiss model of the militia army

ts. The great philosophers of the Enlightenment *Montesquieu*, *Voltaire* and *Rousseau* all praised the model Switzerland; in particular, they considered Switzerland as a paradigm of a liberal state. Even though Rousseau as a hard critic of culture saw the danger that the old customs taken were decomposed by money took in by trade and the mercenaries, he was nevertheless full of praise concerning the militia principle in military matters. Thus he advised the Polish to study the Swiss model of the militia army. In contrast to the rest of Europe, the soldier in Switzerland was a respected citizen and was not despised like a thief as elsewhere. The Swiss Army consisted of citizen soldiers, and even the nobles of the cities served with devotion, just as they did in the Town Hall. (Cf. Widmer, p. 65)

"Militia principle as a model ..."

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tions, this state maxim or one of the four pillars of the peace model Switzerland stands and falls with the militia principle. Neutrality with professional soldiers is not possible. Who confirms neutrality by 95% cannot say 'no' to the militia army – if the matter is thought through to its logical end.

Even if some of our contemporaries have become weak-minded in the last few years with all the EU and NATO propaganda, we may refer to the conclusion of thinkers from different continents on our planet. There, people speak highly of the

Swiss peace model because of its four pillars. So the Singaporean diplomat, Kishore Mahbubani, according to US media one of the hundred most important intellectuals of our times, said about Switzerland in his address to the conference of ambassadors in Berne on 21.08.2006: It is a small country, no great power. But it has an enormous amount of "soft power". With a well-ordered polity, with a credible policy of neutrality, and with a great commitment to international humanitarian law, Switzerland sets standards which apply internationally as exemplary. He was hoping that Switzer-

land would go on to take this unique role in the future, as well. (Cf. Widmer, p. 239) It is up to our Swiss citizens to maintain and beware the model Switzerland carefully. Not least as a hope for the people in the other countries of the world. •

Literature: Paul Widmer. "Die Schweiz als Sonderfall. Grundlagen. Geschichte. Gestaltung." (Switzerland as a special case. Fundamentals. History. Design.) Zurich 2008 ISBN 978-3-03823-495-1

¹ Group for a Switzerland without an Army

German agitation against the peace model Switzerland – as early as in the 16th century

ts. Agitation from German countries against the model Switzerland – and here against Switzerland prior to 1848! – has already been known in the 16th century. *Steinbrück* today, *Hitler* and *Goebbels* in the past stand in an old tradition, hostile towards freedom.

So the German Abbot *Trithemius* originally Abbot *Johannes Heidenberg von Trittenheim* wrote in the annals of the monastery of Hirsau in 1513, the Swiss were people, "naturally boisterous, enemy of princes, rebellious and for long unruly and disobedient against their masters ..." (Quoted from Widmer, p. 59). A quote which should open the heart of each leftist Switzerland doubter ...

A second report comes from the Florentine statesman and writer *Niccolo Machiavelli*. He had met the confederates on his own travels and referred to them as "armatissimi e liberissimi" as "very well armed" and

"very freedom-loving". Following the model of the Roman Republic of the Antiquity and the contemporary Swiss Confederation, he abolished the mercenary army in Florence and replaced it by a national militia. Machiavelli then wrote about these Swiss Confederates that in their love of freedom they did not only refuse to have princes, but also nobility and knighthood, a fact that more than annoyed the German nobles. Therefore they would stir up hatred against Switzerland, wherever they could. Not to speak of the envy of the landsknechte who were offended because the confederates were said to be better warriors. (See Widmer, p. 57f.)

Those words of the man from Florence also explain today's venomous attacks on Switzerland, precisely because our country today as once represents "a silent witness for other possible ways of state existence". (Widmer, p. 69).

Letter to  the Editor

Teachers show young people the way into life

It was with very great interest and even greater concern that I read the articles by Henriette Hanke-Güttinger and Roland Güttinger.

I have dealt with computers since 1968, at the tender age of 19. It was then that I started as a programmer at IBM to finance my studies. Ever since then these impressive machines have accompanied me throughout my life. And so I am able to judge how computers can be used and what they cannot be used for.

For a long time I have been following the rage of reformism in our schools with an uncomfortable feeling. And now I hear

with sheer horror that computers are to be used in the learning process itself, in order to replace the teacher. How is such an aberration possible? For a long time humanistic psychology has taught us that the human being grows and lives in interpersonal relationships. The learning process is essentially the interaction between teacher and student, the aim of which is to show young people the way into life – and nothing else. Replacing the teacher by a binary machine is a joke. Why, I ask myself. This must not happen! We must not lose sight of our children's welfare, that is most important.

And so I read the articles by Henriette Hanke Güttinger and Roland Güttinger with great pleasure – very clear, very competent, very brave and committed. They show very clearly what the issue is. I would personally like to congratulate them and *Current Concerns* in general. May this commitment have a positive impact! It is good to hear such a voice in these difficult times.

With many thanks and
very best wishes

Klaus Umbricht, Maur

1992: The rejection of the EEA

Dr Peter Forster, Editor in Chief of "Schweizer Soldat"

6 December 2012 marked the 20th anniversary of the memorable EEA referendum in 1992 – a referendum as it has hardly ever taken place before and as it will not take place again soon – unless unreasonable politicians push Switzerland's accession to the EU against the will of the overwhelming majority of the Swiss people.

Back then, on 6 December 1992, it was "only" the question of accession to the *European Economic Area EEA*. However, in the spring before the referendum, the Federal Council had called the EEA a "training camp" for the then *European Community EC* – thus for the predecessor of today's EU.

The "training camp"

The application for EU membership and the "training camp" furnished a fit occasion for the EEA opponents. The many undecided were affirmed in the fear that, via the EEA, the Federal Council was aiming at the EC.

The referendum campaign was conducted with a flintiness that younger Swiss citizens will not be able to imagine. With the exception of the "Schaffhauser Nachrichten" and the "Thurgauer Zeitung" all media campaigned almost fanatically for the EEA.

Officially, the economy and the bourgeois parties CVP (Christian People's Party) and FDP (Free Democrats) were for the accession, their keen commitment to Brussels were to cost the CVP and the FDP tens of thousands of votes as a result.

Conversely the people's close-run vote and the cantons' massive "No" by the cantons on 6 December 1992 launched the rise of another party to become the strongest in the country.

In business, there were leaders secretly against the candidature: They recognized the economical disadvantages the accession would have entailed.

"Bear up!"

The writer was at that time editor of the "Thurgauer Zeitung", which was set against the EEA. He received dozens of calls from leading bankers and industrialists, "Bear up! Brussels is poison for our economy! Do not let yourself be intimidated by the Euro-turbos!"

The EEA proponents had a huge advertising budget at their disposal and fought with no holds barred. The men lined up against the EEA were threatened with the loss of the job. The former Bank of SBG expelled the spokesman of the EEA opposition from the administrative board be-

cause, in Winterthur-Seen, he had dared to attack the pro EEA bank's CEO in argument.

The rift between the pros and cons went across societies, companies and groups of friends or colleagues. In the graphic company *Huber* everyone knew where everyone else stood: the typesetters and printers were against the EEA, the commercial staff partly for it.

The last shirt

One should be careful in talking about "the basis"; the 1968 generation claimed the term "basis" for their failed "revolution".

However, in connection with the EEA it is valid to speak of Swiss "the basis" within the Swiss people. It was rank and file who mobilized against Brussels, accumulated donations of 10 and 20 francs, and warned of the EEA by means of minuscule advertisements.

The writer was in contact with men and women of the people who gave their last shirt for the fight against Brussels. Outside in the cold they stood behind their make-shift stalls in the streets.

Their leaflets looked puny compared to the posters in world format of the pro-committee – but "at the end of the day", when the votes were counted, they were the unexpected winners: 50.3 per cent of votes said no, 16 of the 23 cantons opposed the accession.

The ensuing proceedings in Berne amounted to an unparalleled low point in the history of Switzerland: Instead of admitting defeat, Federal Chancellor Mr. *Delamuraz* ridiculed the winners of the poll. Completely incomprehensibly he accused the EEA opponents of having caused a "dimanche noir".

An impressive majority against Brussels

For a while, the Federal Council tried to join the EEA via the back door – success: The bilateral approach prevailed.

The Confederation defended the pillars on which it has always been resting: direct democracy, armed neutrality, federalism, freedom and independence – with its own army and its own legislation.

As the CVP President is again speaking about the EEA, he should look at the polls: more than ever, with an impressive majority between 80 and 90 per cent, the Swiss people opt against Brussels – not to mention the majority of the cantons.

All those who strove against Brussels back then retain the heroic struggle

in their hearts: They shielded our country from the worst against overwhelming forces.

Source: "Schweizer Soldat" (Swiss soldier), No. 1, January 2013

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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Prevention of laws instead of Prevention Act

by *Gottlieb F. Höpli*

The Council of States had bethought for once of his once-vaunted role as “*Chambre de réflexion*”. And, instead of acting as legislator for health prevention, it had opted for the prevention of an unnecessary law.

It was difficult for the Council though. The question is who wants to be reproached nowadays for not feeling strongly about the health of the citizens! Today, all health experts and together with them the politicians and the servile media are convinced that the citizens are neither able to keep away from alcohol and nicotine, nor to eat healthily or to get enough exercise. Do the experts, politicians and journalists judge others by their own standards? If not so: What legitimizes them to take

others principally for more stupid and unhealthier than themselves? Actually whose health is to be promoted? The health of the great part of the population that behaves healthily without any law? Or of the part with an “above-average health” compared to other Europeans – as the Federal Council, which is very keen on acting educationally, says – without the projected “awareness and influencing the population”? Or rather the health of those for which the often obtrusive campaigns of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) or the Swiss Lung League have so far been in vain? This is a vast area for health missionaries, however a barren one, but also one that can be made fruitful by any campaign.

Between disease control and disease police, between the creation of fire insurance and the fire police there were only a few steps. How far would be the way from central health promotion, monitoring and evaluation to a health police?

Prevention of laws instead of Prevention Act – for once the Parliament followed the commandment of *Montesquieu*: If it is not essential to make a law, it is essential to make no law. •

Until 2009 Gottlieb F. Höpli has been chief editor of the “St. Galler Tagblatt” and is president of the association “Medienkritik Schweiz”.

Source: “Schweizer Monat”, 11/2012
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Is an economy for the benefit of all an option?

by *Reinhard Koradi, Committee for a self-confident, free Switzerland*

Twenty years ago, despite all the scare tactics, the Swiss people rejected the accession to the EEA at the ballot box for good reasons. At that time we decided in favor of going our own way with a resounding yes to the independence of our country.

Looking to the future of our country it takes again a resounding yes to a free and independent Switzerland. This Yes includes a second unconditional Yes to Swiss agriculture and thus to Switzerland as a work place is necessary. Switzerland has established and secured its place in the international competition by its own forces, with healthy self-confidence and an exemplary educational system. There are no foreign “gifts” that have made us strong. The current severe turmoil – triggered by the financial and economic crisis – is a great challenge for our country. We will overcome this if we concentrate on the typical Swiss virtues and pursue the path of independence self-confidently. A strong and productive agricultural sector is essential for our independence. This includes a robust business location Switzerland. Both are threatened by the destructive forces of globalization. For state reasons, security and socio-political reasons, we have to re-

assess our position in the so-called “free market” seriously. If we want to defend our freedom, independence, our political system of direct democracy, we need to upgrade our ability to defend ourselves.

This also includes protection of our borders. We need to set borders and limits for the free flow of goods, services, capital and people. If we want to give our farmers a real opportunity for the future as producers of goods and if we want to keep the work place Switzerland at its current high level, we must be prepared to use border protection in the interest of our country and its people as an alternative in order to steer our economy.

With the federal popular initiative “For an economy for the benefit of all” the discussion about a sustainable economic system has been set in motion. The initiative was developed by fifteen winemakers in western Switzerland. Its objectives go beyond the protection of domestic agricultural production and call for a sensible use of natural resources, without becoming addicted to green ecology delusion. The aim of the initiators is: Protect what is worth protecting. Develop what leads to a fair and sustainable economy and con-

tributes to maintaining the local, social and economic structures as well as a vital supply for the country. In addition, conditions are to be created, so that we can pass on to our future generations an economic system which is marked by fairness, good quality of life, and peaceful coexistence.

Alongside with the capability to regulate the imports, it also concerns the fight against dumping prices, destructive competition and market power abuse, both by foreign as well as local market players. The initiative is also against competitive advantages through lower quality (the demand for ‘spears at equal length’). Production and supply structures need to be promoted at the local and regional level. It is about an economic system that breaks away from the song of praise for the free market and focuses on an honest economy that serves mankind. This is certainly a demand that is shared by many Swiss people so that our farmers and our SMEs will not be outsourced through cut-throat competition. •

More information on the initiative can be found at www.wirtschaft-zum-nutzen-aller.ch
The petition is open until 1 May 2013.
Closing date: 14 April 2013

From opposition to an upright posture

by Anton Friedrich

The growing importance of the advisory referendum, people's initiative and referendum for policy decisions by the sovereign in the euro area, i.e. the voting population of a country, can be exemplified by a few examples.

Iceland is an excellent example for an alternative to bank bailouts at the taxpayer's expense. The Icelanders have not only criticized the common practice in the euro area, but in two referendums with the clear majority of the electorate they have forced their government to prevent the already decided socialization of bank debts. The frosty diplomatic relations between Iceland on the one hand and Britain as well as Netherlands on the other, where the banks now have to be liable for their own debts, leaves the majority of Icelanders cold. Temperatures are often chilly in Iceland, but the domestic geysers warm from the inside. An example that should be followed.

In a referendum with a large majority the Austrians have expressed to keep the military conscription and civilian service. The participation in the voting with 50% of the population was well above expectations. Only 40% were in favor of a professional army and a civilian volunteer service. 60% of voters voted for preservation of the military conscription. For the advocates of a professional army (SPÖ, AAF, the Greens and Team Stronach) it would be hard to overrule the vote of the people. Although the referendum is not legally binding, all parties have pledged to respect the vote of the people. Whether the outcome of this referendum is of relevance for the national elections in autumn is understandably very differently judged by opponents and supporters of the military conscription. The role of billionaire Frank Stronach, so far living in Canada, who was considered for some time as rescuer of the Adam Opel Plants in Germany, is rather ambiguous after his return to Austria. On the one hand, the Team Stronach recommended the phasing out of military conscription; on the other hand, they refer to the idea of the former French President Charles de Gaulle of a Europe of fatherlands. The Team Stronach does however not want to terminate the Lisbon Treaty, but prevent the further centralization of Europe. The team critically scrutinizes both euro and the ESM, but does not present real alternatives. Frank Stronach still must put the cards on the table: Does he want an agenda 2013 light for Austria, or does he want to leave the euro zone?

In Ireland, the collapse of the inflated real estate market has brought the country at the brink of bankruptcy. In 2008 the bubble burst. Many Irish people were homeless and unemployed. The Dublin Government imposed a rigid austerity course on the country at the expense of taxpayers and welfare recipients. And today? The Irish competitiveness increases, in 2012 Ireland's economic output grew twice as much as in the whole euro zone. Now Goldman Sachs and others recommend investing again in Ireland, particularly as the International Monetary Fund expected that in 2013 Ireland will be among the leaders of the economic growth in Europe and will successfully manage to escape the economic slowdown. From its government's point of view, Ireland has made bad experiences with EU referendums and is not suspected to have encouraged the UK to consult the British people. Recently the Irish Government has taken over the rotating EU Presidency. But the Irish people, i.e. the Celtic Tiger, are back. Finally, the tiger has to jump.

In a referendum the British want to vote on whether to stay in the EU or not. In his keynote speech on Europe British Prime Minister David Cameron said, the British people must have a "clear choice", justifying this by the "growing frustration" of the British over the EU: "It is time for the British people to have their say ... we have always been a European power – and we always will be ... I'm not a British isolationist." Nevertheless, Britain had to negotiate a new settlement with its EU partners in the next Parliament. In a first statement German Chancellor Angela Merkel remained quite guarded by saying that we "always have to keep in mind, that other countries have their own wishes, too." The German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, however, posted sharp words: "Not everything must be decided in or by Brussels, but a policy of cherry-picking is not an option." José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and Herman Van Rompuy, EU Council President – who on other occasions express themselves very eloquently – keep silent. Even the European Parliament President Martin Schulz, always omnipresent in the media, brings about nothing but "a dangerous precedent." The spokeswoman for the Commission, who has actually always been the guardian of European unification, rejects all journalists' questions categorically. This was a unique situation in the history of the EU. Neither did she respond to Cameron's criticism, nor

did she want to explain publicly how the withdrawal process of the British would be managed under Article 50 of the EU Treaty. Brussels blocks out and plays for time: Even if the British vote to withdraw from the EU, this should only be possible with the agreement of all 26 other member states. And such negotiations should be dragged on for many years. Will this force the British to their knees? Hardly, if you take a look at British history.

On 21 January 2013 committed citizens in Germany have launched a People's Initiative for the Withdrawal of the ESM which was submitted to the Bundestag President Lammert. The people's initiative refers to Article 20, paragraph 2 of the Basic Law, which states that all state authority is derived from the people and it shall be exercised by the people through elections and other votes. The signatories also referred to the judgment of the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC), dated 12.09.2012. Thereafter, the decision on the ESM was primarily not a legal, but a political issue, therefore an issue of the people's will. On 06.07.2002 the German Bundestag approved by roll call the introduction of advisory referendum, people's initiative and referendum on the federal level. The rationale for the initiative is documented in the internet at: www.volksentscheid-esm-austritt.de. All German citizens who have reached 18 years of age and are eligible to vote, have the right to sign this initiative. It will be valid if signed by 400,000 voters. The FCC specifically stated a possible notice of cancellation of the ESM agreement.

In recent years the desire for greater participation rights of citizens has grown steadily and could reduce the gap between the will of citizens and the behavior of politicians. At the level of the Federal States, the citizens' participation rights have been significantly expanded and successfully implemented. Additional participation rights for the citizens bring more responsibility in deciding important substantial issues. That strengthens the citizens' interest and their commitment to a responsible decision-making. It enlivens democracy and counteracts the boredom with politics. The parliamentary-representative system of democracies will be complemented by new direct participation rights and Article 20, paragraph 2 of the Constitution will be invigorated: "All state authority is derived from the people. It shall be exercised by the people through elections and other votes." (Emphasis added by the author) •

(Translation Current Concerns)

“I fear for democracy”

An interview with Konrad Adam*

Prominent euro-critics have established the Wahl Alternative 2013 (Electoral Alternative 2013).^{} What are their goals and how do they want to get involved in the election campaign in 2013?*

Compact: Alongside the euro-plaintiffs, Karl Albrecht Schachtschneider, Wilhelm Hankel, Joachim Starbatty, former BDI chief Hans-Olaf Henkel and other prominent people you are the co-founder of the electoral initiative 2013. What are your goals?

Konrad Adam: In our founding manifesto, we were strongly committed to the subject of the euro. The constantly repeated assertion “If the euro fails, Europe will fail, too” by the Chancellor is by no means correct. This kind of policy has plunged the West into the worst crisis of its history. A policy of “business as usual” as represented by the CDU/CSU, SPD and the Greens would be fatal.

What do you put against it ?

We are focused on three points. For one, Germany, quite in line with the Maastricht Treaty, may no longer pay for the debts

of other countries. Secondly, the unified euro currency-area was to be abandoned. Third, all assignments of essential sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Germany were to be approved by referendum in future.

Why don't you boldly demand “Get out of the euro”?

The consequences of such an enormous step are barely predictable. Smaller steps would be better. The deficit-making Southern states for instance could jointly form a separate Southern euro. With a devaluated exchange rate they could make their exports more competitive on the world market, thus put their economy back on track. Germany could leave the euro zone for 24 hours in order to launch such realignment. [...]

After many years as journalist and writer, what is driving you in person to expose to the perils of policy?

I fear for democracy in Germany. Behind the euro issue there is the constitutional issue. Democracy thrives on the separation of powers. We have to observe, however, that people's representatives in leg-

islature abuse their mandate entrusted to them by the voters. Laws such as the permanent rescue fund ESM are not carefully read prior to agreeing to it. Then the Supreme Court as judiciary is called for help. Hence, given the power of facts, it cannot intervene anymore. Thus, all power is assembled in the executive authority. This again, is moved ever more to Brussels. Or to the board of the European Central Bank or to the board of governors of the ESM, where Germany has one single vote only. Democracy means rule by the people – however, there is not much left in the current development. •

* All information on the electoral initiative 2013, at www.wa2013.de. Konrad Adam (born 1942) was editor of the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” from 1979 to 2000 and subsequently chief correspondent of “Die Welt” in Berlin until 2008. His book “Kampf gegen die Natur. Die gefährlichen Irrwege der Wissenschaft” (Fight against nature – The dangerous aberrations of science) has recently been published in the Rowohlt Verlag. Interview by Jürgen Elsässer.

Source: COMPACT magazin, November 2012 (www.compact-magazin.com)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Medvedev – Russia has to think about how to keep on “feeding the world”

According to Prime Minister *Dmitry Medvedev*, Russia has to alter its export policy. It has to think about what it can offer to the rest of the world, except raw materials.

Every 50 to 70 years, there would be a world energy revolution, he said on the periphery of the World Economic Forum in Davos. Currently one of the largest oil and gas suppliers in the world, Russia must be prepared for the fact that natural gas and crude oil would not always be significant for energy supply. “We need to build up a modern high-tech economy and to contemplate how Russia may continue to feed the world.”

Medvedev referred to the fact that in the early 20th century Russia did already “feed the world” as a large exporter of food. “After that, we have abandoned the field for obvious reasons. There are, however, trimendous possibilities for plant and animal production. Therefore, we have to move in that direction, as well.” •

Source : *RIA Novosti* of 24 January 2013

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

The financial situation in Germany goes off course

The financial situation in Germany goes off course. While the government agrees to ever more payments and liabilities of multi-billions, municipalities sink into financial chaos. Berlin, for instance has more debts than the entire Republic of Argentina with 41 million people. When it comes to government bonds, Germany is one of the safest states in the world. This is absolutely absurd in the light of the fact that approximately half of the 16 federal states are in a worrying financial imbalance and that the federal government has assumed trillions in liabilities, guarantees and payments to banks, bankrupt euro states like Greece, Portugal etc. In comparison, Argentina has 60 billion euros in government debt and has technically been bankrupt since 2001.

With 550,000 inhabitants, Bremen has recorded new debts in the amount of 5 billion euros since 2007. The total debt amounts to approximately 20 billion euros now! This is the highest per capita debt of all states and almost as high as that of bankrupt Greece. According to *Erwin Gradinger*, financial and policy analyst with the EPM Group Berlin there are even more such outrageous examples. The members of parliament have debated for more than a year whether Hartz IV-recipients shall receive additional 50 euros per month. In a few days only though, they waved through a further 44 billion euros in financial help for Greece. •

Source: *inter-info* No. 409, January 2013

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Ruttnern – an ancient snow path technique

Train horses on historic mule trails – an epilogue

Heini Hofmann

In previous centuries, goods were transported across the mountains on mule tracks, using packhorses in summer, sleighs in winter. The biggest concern in terms of such transalpine trade relations was the opening and maintenance of the mountain passes in the winter time.

This was achieved by means of a technique used by mountain traders for centuries, now almost forgotten and only occasionally still used by the packhorse company (horse-equipped mountain infantry formation) of the Swiss Army: *Ruttnern*. This involves creating viable snow trails in rugged terrain with the help of horses and mules or, in earlier times, also with the help of oxen – as the latter are less likely to sink into the snow, because they – unlike horses – stand on two toes which in addition they can easily spread apart.

The last truly spectacular *Ruttnern* exercise was carried out a quarter of a century ago, when a packhorse convoy with experienced horses and soldiers wanted to demonstrate one more time the effectiveness of the packhorses in an exemplary way: The conspiratorial nature boys with their hippological 4x4s opened the Scaletta Pass, located in the canton of Grisons, connecting the Davos area with central Engadin, for the first and probably also for the last time after more than a hundred years – through backbreaking hard work.

Old path-making techniques dying out

Just as in agriculture the horse is also disappearing from the army – a victim of modernisation. While packhorse companies still possessed around 10,000 animals in the middle of the last century, their number has – following the abandonment of real mountain troops – already shrunk to less than 700.

With the disappearance of the oat-powered engines the know-how in dealing with the working animals is also being lost, which means that well-tried techniques are becoming extinct, such as log transporting with horses or *Ruttnern*. So let's revive this brilliant technique of making paths through the snow before it is irrevocably forgotten.

First the ski patrol

When alpine road construction started in the 19th century, the transportation of goods by means of pack animals on mule tracks or bridle ways died out. It was only through the mountain soldiers and their army horses that this tradition lived on, albeit with a different goal: Whereas the

Rustic fellows in uniform

HH. Already in former times the profession of mountain trading required young, strong and healthy people. Therefore, it was said that no one could be admitted to the guild if he was not able to stem a keg of wine weighing of 144 "Krinnen" (about 75 kilo) with a jerk onto the bast saddle of the horse. Anyway, physical strength and ability to drink stood for respect and reputation.

Meals were and are taken outdoors or in the mountain shelter respectively the bivouac. What in former times was the flour soup with a lot of lard, enriched with crumbs of bread and cheese and diluted with a pint of Veltliner wine, is nowadays the stew "Spatz", only without the Veltliner. How golden were these times, when the mountain trader, after hav-

ing tended to his horse, was awarded his good night glass of wine which got its legal blessing already by the mountain traders' regulation in the 16th century. Which service regulation of today includes such sympathetic paragraphs?

The military mountain trader of today, the train soldiers, have the reputation by the infantrymen to be willing, perhaps somehow unconventional, but reliable, tough and enthusiastic soldiers, downright rustic fellows in uniform. Practical skills dominate over theoretical knowledge and performance comes before military etiquette. Maybe because of such mentality, they succeeded in doing something which in former times was only achieved by the mountain traders: breaking the mountains!

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



After the detachment of the shovellers follow the trail horses in single file. Due to the danger of injuries, they walk barefoot, this means they do not wear a horseshoe. They compress the snow trail with their body weight. (picture Fritz Heinze)

winter opening of smaller mountain crossings was once commercially necessary, it is now carried out for packhorse training purposes.

The *Ruttnern* technique has remained the same for centuries: A marking team, nowadays a ski patrol led by snow and avalanche specialists, marks the routes, taking into account safety and a steady ascent. Very often, this route selection does not correspond

to the summer trail. Dangerous spots – for example, a stream crossing hidden underneath the snow – are especially flagged.

Shovellers and trail horses

After the ski patrol has marked the path, it is followed by a detachment of shovellers. They break the snow from both sides

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"Ruttner – an ancient snow ..."

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into the middle of the path so that it can be compressed by the following trail horses guided on long reins. This is painstaking work. Wading and "floating", the steaming horses dig their way naked, i.e. without harness and – depending on snow conditions, in order to avoid injuring themselves – without shoes on their hooves.

A spectacular sight! Man and horse often sink up to their shoulders into the snow and, bathed in sweat, need a few steps and leaps to recover before being able to do the next few metres. Often after only a few minutes of Ruttner work, the front man-and-horse team has to let the others overtake, as this tracking in the deep snow means working to exhaustion. And all that in a stiff wind and a bone-chilling cold that freezes the breath in front of your nose and nostrils to hoarfrost.

Finally the track-making sledges

The trail horses are followed by shovellers again, then horses once more and finally by sledges which level the snow track with chains transversely stretched under the runners. The result is a solid trackbed on which the horse companies can then transport their goods – on raffia saddles or sledges – and on which infantry can also move effortlessly.

If *Ruttner* could be started with the first snowfall and continued regularly, the result would – ideally – be a solid, sustainable path at the same height as the surrounding snow cover, which means that it could not be blown away. This is why a *Ruttner* piste is the exact opposite



Calm, strong and barrel-chested animals serve as trail horses. And it is also important that the horse guides act also calmly and considerably despite working at the limit of performance.
(picture Fritz Heinze)

of a snow lane that would be filled up by the first storm.

The White Reaper

While modern mountain troops have avalanche specialists, explosives and rescue facilities, the *Ruttners* of the past often had to risk life and limb. The people, horses and trading cattle that lost their lives in avalanches on the mountain passes over the centuries are legion.

However, there were and still are other problems for the winter caravans: sudden

storms making any orientation impossible and piling up several-metre-high snowdrifts, or the so-called "floor stoker", biting, piercing wind, and finally the brutal cold that makes you think your body is no longer your own.

Horses are resistant to cold

The horses can better adapt to the cold than people. They endure temperatures up to minus forty degrees Celsius before suffering from first-degree frostbite. However, in the stable and not moving they are especially sensitive to moisture and draughts.

What they are capable of enduring in extreme situations in terms of dry cold, if they have not lost their hardiness (as is already partly the case with domestic animals, just as with humans), has been demonstrated by both warhorses, for example, in the Arctic Ocean expedition and on the Berezina, and by the *Ruttner* animals of the old mountain traders on the Alpine passes.

A young generation will ask the "old masters" to show them their techniques in order to fill up the current gap with athletic vigour and pride. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

From cartage to pay

HH. The "Ruttners" of the past received their pay in terms of taxes. They received six "Kreuzer" for each pack or riding horse crossing the opened mountain, half for each head of cattle of any age, twice the amount for a horse or ox together with a slide. The cartage for one "Saum" (cargo) was one Gulden, the cartage for loose goods per "Rupp" (about ten kilos) was five "Kreuzer". In general, the regulation of cartage and transport used to be quite complicated and that was the reason for one or the other dispute among the rough and hulking carters.

This is not the case with today's "Ruttner" soldiers as they know from the beginning, that the cartage for the service to their homeland is the undisputably fixed pay: 5 francs a day for a soldier, 16 francs for a command-

er in the rank of a captain, 20 francs for an instructor in the rank of a lieutenant-colonel, whereas even with this pay one obtains daily 4 francs less than each horse; since the rent in the instruction service which the army pays to the private landlords for the stabled horses is at least 27 francs a day for a horse or mule.

Thus, in the army physical strength is paid higher than mental work, corresponding to the logical consideration that a horse has four legs whereas a lieutenant-colonel has only one head... Who wants to be equal to the train horse has to rise to the position of a major; for only a two-star general obtains 27 francs daily. It is only a silly rumour that, for this reason, the horses in the Swiss army are to be abolished...

(Translation *Current Concerns*)