

# Current Concerns

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## The importance of Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen for the cooperative movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

by Dr phil René Roca, historian

*In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Schulze-Delitzsch's approach as well as the "idea of Raiffeisen" was responsible for a broadly based cooperative movement in Germany. Similar processes are to be discovered in Switzerland. It always required the linking of traditionally minded, conservative movements with new contemporary ideas. Only in this way the general public – in urban and rural regions – could be convinced of the cooperative values, so that it placed confidence in new institutions.*

*Just imagine the cooperative movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was successful in many countries, would have even had greater effects reaching into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and not other inhuman, imperialistic and totalitarian ideologies had gained the upper hand. A 20<sup>th</sup> century, a Europe without the two world wars, would look*

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*"The institution is so genuine and democratic and at the same time genuinely Christian, because it is not the money that has the power but the moral value of the person."*

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*different today. But it is in our hands. We need to embody the cooperative principle to a larger extent in the economy. In this way, people can learn from history and set up an "economy for the benefit of all".*

### The "idea of Raiffeisen"

*Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen (1818–1888), who as a mayor in the German Rhineland was close to the people, recognized the needs of the region's agriculture and small businesses. The farmers and craftsmen needed affordable operating loans. Thus Raiffeisen found-*

*ed the first rural savings and loan association (later Raiffeisen banks) on a cooperative basis in 1864. The self-help, the principle of solidarity and the democratic structure thereby formed the basic foundation. The idea relatively easy to implement soon established the necessary confidence among the rural population. Who wanted to become a member of the cooperative, subscribed one share and paid a limited amount as capital. In addition, the cooperative members agreed to be liable with their property for the case of the cooperative. This solidary liability increased the*

*continued on page 2*

Federal vote of 3 March 2013 on the initiative "Against rip-off salaries"

## A move to protect market economy from blatant abuse from the inside

by Hansrudolf Schmid\*

Sixty-eight per cent of Swiss voters have backed a constitutional amendment on "fat cat" pay. Sunday's verdict was clear: shareholders of publicly listed companies will have a binding say on pay.

However, many comments on the initiative are confusing at best. A measure that is liberal by intent is seen as "restrictive", "curbing executive pay" and "not business-friendly". To discuss the Swiss solution in the same vein as the European Union proposal to cap bonuses for bankers further obfuscates its merits.

The Swiss people have not voted to undermine their liberal corporate laws. Quite the contrary, they have moved to protect the market economy against glaring abuse from the inside. Corporate executives and all those depending on them have corrupted the system. The very fact that their interests are commonly confounded with those of business proves the point.

Elite employees have exploited the power vacuum which developed over time

as ownership in large companies with a dispersed shareholder base became weak. It was time to strengthen management's accountability to shareholders. While this may not be of benefit to executives, it is a boost to those who fund them and carry the business risk.

From a capitalist's point of view, the vote is pro-business. Moreover, the Swiss remain reluctant regulators. Executive pay shall neither be set nor limited by government. However, "thou shalt not steal" is crucial enough to be enforced. "Ask before you take" is among the first rules we teach our children. Sadly, corporate elites need to be retrained.

The power grab by the salaried elite in the developed world may only be the tip of the iceberg. Just as shareholders wonder whether managements are working for them, people increasingly question whether politicians, governments and central banks have their interests at heart.

As the system-wide leverage increases, the incentives of decision-makers in business and politics are less and less aligned with the interests of the public. The massive bailouts first of private enterprises and then of entire countries has set the tone. Inflation that will hurt the real income of the middle class is targeted as the easiest way out of the financial mess.

Switzerland is well equipped to address agency problems earlier than others. The right to vote on people's initiatives empowers the Swiss to bypass self-serving elites when the need arises.

Switzerland's reputation rests on defending individual freedom and property rights. It was once again down to the Swiss citizens to protect their country's liberal constitution. The world is taking note. •

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**"The importance of ..."**

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creditworthiness to a third party, so that the cooperative was able to obtain money at favourable conditions or to buy goods. In return, members could receive favourable operating loans if they provided sufficient guarantees. They also benefited from generous interest rates on their savings and discounted goods. If the cooperative had made profits, interest was paid on the equity capital of the members; the rest of the money was paid into indivisible reserve fund. Each member had an equal vote at the general meeting, no matter how many shares he owned. The result was a culture of saving and investing, which corresponded to the economic needs, the traditions and the values of the people. In the next few decades hundreds of such savings and loan cooperatives were founded in our northern neighbour country.

**This idea  
was also successful in Switzerland**

The Thurgau Catholic priest *Johann Traber* became the father of the Raiffeisen movement in Switzerland. Prior to his studies, Pastor Traber had learned a craft and travelled as a journeyman across the German countryside. He saw and experienced himself the plight of the farmers and craftsmen, but also recognized the beneficial effects of Raiffeisen Banks. Traber recognized in each Raiffeisen Bank a small "school for social education" and emphasized the strong community-building effect: "The institution is so genuine and democratic and at the same time genuinely Christian, because it is not the money that has the power but the moral value of the person."<sup>1</sup> In 1899 Traber founded the first Swiss Raiffeisen Bank in his parish in Bichelsee/Switzerland. Bichelsee is therefore called the "Rütli" of the Raiffeisen movement in Switzerland.

Traber described the importance of Raiffeisen Banks as follows: "What is the Raiffeisen Banks? They are loan cooperatives, which are based on altruism and self-sacrificing love and have the purpose to morally and economically elevate the peasantry, the craftsmen, small businesses and commerce, and to strengthen the economically weak."<sup>2</sup>

The cooperative idea could be perfectly combined with the Swiss political principles of direct democracy and federalism. Especially the highly developed municipal autonomy guaranteed success and future of the Raiffeisen Banks in Switzerland. As early as 1902 the federation Raiffeisen cooperative banks in Switzerland was founded.

**An example from  
the Canton of Aargau –  
Catholic Men's and Workers'  
Association as the starting point**

The idea spread rapidly in Eastern Switzerland and then in other cantons, including the Canton of Aargau. At Rohrdorferberg in the river Reuss valley farmers and tradesmen had the same problems as elsewhere. Therefore the parish Rohrdorf took the initiative. Founded in 1900, the *Catholic Men's and Workers' Association* became crucial for the parish. Beside fostering the religious life, this association set itself the goal to improve the economy. Pastor Johann Traber visited Rohrdorferberg and on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1905 held a presentation in front of the association. Subsequently, 41 men immediately declared their willingness to set up a Raiffeisen Bank in Rohrdorferberg. The business district included the communities of the former Catholic parish Rohrdorf, namely Niederrohrdorf, Oberrohrdorf-Staretschwil, Remetschwil and Bellikon. Dean *Burkhard Senn*, who was later elected as the first president of the supervisory board, actively supported the formation. As early as 8 December 1905 the constituent assembly was held: They elected a board, a supervisory board and a treasurer.

**Modest start**

Initially the treasurer's own apartment served as registered office. The cooperatively organized bank developed over the following decades, slowly but steadily. First, the members were mainly recruited from the peasantry, then from all other professions. Thanks to its modest expenses and significant reserves, the Raiffeisen Bank was able to remunerate not only advantageous interest rates for savers, but also demanding more favourable, commission-free interest from borrowers than was usual elsewhere. On this basis, the cooperative-

ly organized Raiffeisen Bank developed better and became a secure value in the region.

The Raiffeisen idea impressed with clear ethical principles: for example, denominational neutrality was enshrined in the statutes or speculation transactions were outlawed. This undoubtedly generated confidence. The proponents of this idea established a "third paradigm". They distanced themselves from both liberal as well as socialist economic models and criticized the "centralists who pinned their faith on the state" and the "punters" and "dividend hunters". Thus the idea of Raiffeisen was also a tangible, humane response to the social issues in the wake of European industrialization.

**Cooperative movement  
in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the cooperative as  
the moral foundation of democracy**

Building on the Swiss traditions of the commons and of the cooperatives, which have their roots in the late Middle Ages, a broad cooperative movement was formed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially with the increasing industrialization. In this way, a merger of conservative political forces and early socialist, decentralized approaches was achieved. This fruitful merger included decisive ethical principles: On the basis of a personal view of man it was particularly the Catholic social teaching that could appeal many people with its postulates of a free, solidary and just society. For Switzerland, the cooperative principle was absolutely crucial with regard to the development of direct democracy. Starting from the community level via the cantons up to the federal level they succeeded in forming a cross-party grassroots movement, which repeatedly demanded the necessary political and social reforms.

Such a development can also be found in Germany, where the idea of Raiffeisen together with the approach of *Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch* laid the necessary foundation to form a powerful co-operative movement – in the past and in the present. •

<sup>1</sup> Traber, Johann: *Raiffeisenkassen, Raiffeisenverband und Zentralkasse in der Schweiz*, Frauenfeld 1912, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Traber, Johann: *Kurze Aufklärung über Raiffeisen-sche Darlehenskassenvereine im Lichte eines praktischen Beispiels*, St. Gallen 1907, p. 3.

## “Actions speak louder than words” A visit to the Schulze-Delitzsch-House in Leipzig

by Klaudia and Dr Tankred Schaer

The town of Delitzsch is located a few miles north of Leipzig. There we are welcomed by Dietmar Berger, Chairman of the Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch-Society and retired Association President and by the curator Dr Enrico Hochmuth. We meet at the Schulze-Delitzsch-House, a museum in honor of Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch. In 1849, Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch founded here in Kreuzgasse 10 the Shoemaker's Association – one of the first cooperatives in Germany. It is hence a birthplace of the German cooperative system.

As we enter the museum, our gaze rests on colored cubes with the names and logos of the currently existing cooperatives. The “Winzerverein Hagnau eG” (Winegrowers' Cooperative of Hagnau/Lake Constance), situated at a short distance to our home at Lake Constance and producing excellent wines, immediately catches our eye. We also find the icon of the *Volksbank Delitzsch*, a cooperative bank, which emerged from the oldest credit cooperative in Germany. Therewith the museum wants to make clear to visitors that the cooperative idea is still alive today – after all, there are about 21 million people in Germany, who are members of a cooperative.

In his own lifetime, *Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch* had great significance and influence throughout Germany with his ideas for the development of cooperatives. If you want to appreciate the politician and lawyer, a look at the living conditions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century will be helpful. Schulze-Delitzsch was born in 1808, at a time, when far-reaching changes in economy and politics lay ahead. Father and grandfather had been judges, and after his education at the prestigious *Nicolai-Grammar-School*, Hermann Schulze also started law studies. Like his father, he became a patrimonial judge. These judges were not appointed ex officio, but by the landlord. However, in the performance of their duties they were largely independent. The position of a patrimonial judge was abolished in 1848 in Prussia. It is important that as a judge, being responsible in the first instance, both in civil action and in criminal cases, Schulze gained insight into the living conditions of the population in Delitzsch. The experiences he had made in those years, laid the foundation for his later socio-political activities.

### The necessity of social and political reforms

In the Schulze-Delitzsch-House, the history of Schulze-Delitzsch is lovingly pre-

sented in different rooms. You are chronologically guided through the rooms with the help of a timeline, written down in beautiful handwriting along the upper ceiling. Even the political background at that time is highlighted. In the different rooms, you can read documents, quotes and look at pictures. The longer you stay there, the more apparent becomes the social and political context of the cooperative foundations.

In the period of German history from 1815 to the revolution in March 1848, the so-called pre-March era, revolutionary ideas were in the air and they were discussed in the educated middle class. The necessity for social and political reforms was tangible. Society really vibrated in anticipation of changes. At the same time, the conservative forces in Germany took care not to give too much room to the new liberal, national and social movements.

Going back to that time, we have to imagine a population in great distress. The uprising of the weavers took place in Silesia in 1844, to which *Gerhart Hauptmann* has given literary expression. The winter of 1846/47 is called the “winter of starvation”. Schulze-Delitzsch had to witness that in his place of residence even highly skilled craftsmen impoverished, because they were not able to compete with the industry. Schulze-Delitzsch immediately established a support committee to help the hungry people. He raised money from which he bought bread and distributed it to the needy population. As a result, an uprising did not break out in Delitzsch. The magazines and stores were not looted; military forces did not have to be deployed to restore order.

His assistance initially was only a reduction of destitution – it was a merely beneficial action. When you come into the museum, grain sacks are presented, it is shown how bread was baked, which then was given to the hungry people. However, that was not enough for Schulze. He wanted the people to take their destiny into their own hands. He wanted associations of people to be developed, being independent enough to help themselves.

### Establishment of cooperatives

Due to the increasing industrialization, in Delitzsch and other places entire professional sectors could no longer survive, for example, weavers, bag-makers, tanners and tawers, because their enterprises were too small. For Schulze-Delitzsch it was now very important to strengthen medium-sized companies in need, to promote education and to involve people in the po-

litical processes – to take political responsibility. In this context it is interesting to mention that in 1846 under the leadership of Schulze-Delitzsch the “Liedertafel für Männergesang” (choral society for male vocals) was founded and that he was co-founder of the town's gymnastics club in 1845. In 1848 the first savings bank had already been established, and in 1850 the first consumer cooperative in the neighboring town Eilenburg.

In 1849 Schulze-Delitzsch founded the first two purchasing cooperatives for carpenters and shoemakers. The foundation of health insurance and death benefit fund was also done by Schulze-Delitzsch in 1849. Then, already in March 1850, Schulze-Delitzsch founded the first advance disbursement society, a loan fund, which granted loans to small traders. The German *Volksbank* emerged from these advance disbursement societies and is still operating successfully today.

The idea of establishing cooperatives was in the air at that time. Of course, Schulze was not the inventor of the cooperative idea itself – people had always helped each other, also in cooperative associations. It is due to Schulze-Delitzsch, that his ideas for reforms were converted into law, that he had created a model which then spread like wildfire throughout Germany. Schulze-Delitzsch traveled to all parts of the country, took part in the establishment of cooperatives and, in 1859 already, brought about the organization of cooperatives in an association named “German National Association”. Very quickly, he published a paper which provided instructions for the establishment of cooperatives and valuable information to interested people.

### Autonomous self-help in the focus

Even without the Internet, the idea of Schulze was widely spread throughout Germany after 1857. As early as 1858, for example, the first commercial credit cooperatives were established in Baden. It is very interesting to see that the idea of the credit union was adopted by various individuals everywhere. Then well-attended foundation meetings were held, and within a short time they could start work. The establishment of the first credit cooperative in Baden was initiated by the manufacturer and art dealer *Georg Friedrich Holtzmann*. In November 1857, 90 people met to form a preparatory committee. Just three months later, the “Vorschussverein Carlsruhe” (advance

### “Actions speak louder ...”

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disbursement association) was formally constituted. The first bank counter was located in the general store of the elected cashier and businessman *Friedrich Herlan*. The actual work could begin, after a glazier had given 1,000 guilders to the cooperative and a shoemaker had applied for a loan.

The principle of autonomous self-help was in the focus of Schulze-Delitzsch's ideas. The cooperatives should follow the principles of self-management, self-help and self-responsibility – Schulze-Delitzsch was opposed to state support, because he feared that the cooperative could then easily become dependent on the state. For him the dynamic principle of competition, the market economy, was the condition for economic activity. Cooperatives should be another form of company among others. Schulze-Delitzsch declined the subsequent demand of socialist *Lassalle*, the Chairman of the *General Ger-*

*man Workers' Association*, for state-owned enterprises. The sharp conflict between the two contemporaries is clearly worked out in the museum.

As a liberal politician Schulze-Delitzsch was a strong advocate of democratic rights of the people and of their elected representatives. At the same time he campaigned for the unification of Germany. Furthermore, he was convinced that a free democratic society and a responsible free economic system were interdependent.

### Cooperatives promote democratic awareness

This attitude caused Schulze-Delitzsch the rivalry of the slowly developing social democratic and socialist movement. Their representatives accused him that he had not realized the true labor question. Cooperatives according to Schulze's model, only the commercial SMEs benefitted, but not the workers. Ferdinand Lassalle, socio-political opponent and co-founder of the first Labor Party in Germany, called for the establishment of productive cooperatives, which then would not be op-

erated on the basis of self-help, but with government support and control. Thus, in Prussia in 1863, the workers sheered out of the civic-democratic movement and turned against the socio-political concept of Schulze-Delitzsch's Progressive Party.

On the other hand, Schulze-Delitzsch's ideas were also in opposition to then Chancellor *Bismarck's* position. The cooperatives were a thorn in Bismarck's side, because they were democratically organized and proved that the citizens could help themselves without government control. Cooperatives promoted the citizens' democratic awareness. It did not suit Bismarck that cooperatives gained an increasing economic influence.

Schulze-Delitzsch's cooperative idea was part of his overall concept of a free societal order, in which the weaker members of society were able to compete by organized forms of self-help. Fearing political dependency on the state and on the ruling political party in each case, he refused state-sponsored cooperatives. With Schulze-Delitzsch, the cooperative members remained independent and autonomous. •

### Rescue of the Schulze-Delitzsch-House at the time of the German reunification

*ks./ts.* At the beginning of the German reunification in the 1990s the Schulze-Delitzsch-House was very dilapidated. It was about to be pulled down. We owe the fact that it still exists to committed citizens of Delitzsch, who argued for a restoration. At that time the German Cooperative and Raiffeisen Association and the Free State of Saxony provided money, so that the house could be restored. In October 1992, the museum was opened and operated by the town until 1997. Suddenly savings were to be made and the museum was about to fold. *Dietmar Berger* played a decisive role in initiating the founding of the *“Förderverein Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch und Gedenkstätte des deutschen Genossenschaftswesens e.V.”* (Association Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch and memorial for the German cooperative system, today *Schulze-Delitzsch-Association*), at that time against the resistance of governmental organizations in Bonn (then German capital). With great dedication cooperatives and citizens were contacted in Germany and Austria, who financed the operation of the museum by membership fees and donations. So the museum management underwent a smooth transition in 1998. Even today, the *Schulze-Delitzsch-Association* would welcome new associate members.

Since 1998, the museum – the only Schulze-Delitzsch-House in Europe – has variously expanded its work. The aim of the association is to inform students, apprentices, all interested people, scientists and cooperative members about the cooperative pioneer *Dr Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch*.

A publication series was edited, dealing with Schulze-Delitzsch, but also with important cooperative foundations by *Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen* and the basis of the cooperative system. Annually on 29 August, the museum-talks take place and since 1993 the Delitzsch talks about government, business, associations and cooperatives in November. Even a small specialized library could grow steadily. On the occasion of Schulze-Delitzsch's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday the promoters initiated a special stamp issue and published a high quality commemorative. After these successes, support money was granted again, and the museum could be reshaped. The “Memorial of the German cooperative system” changed into the “German Cooperative Museum”. This naming also reflected a thematic opening of the museum to all cooperative issues.

Since 2011, the museum has been able to employ two curators, *Dr Enrico Hochmuth* and *Susanne Blandau*, allowing a variety of activities.

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# European single market – basic error of integration

## Against the of free trade doctrine

by Professor Dr Karl Albrecht Schachtschneider

The European Union has failed. Its economic and political instability has become obvious. The reasons are either not recognized or denied. The Union never had a chance to reach its boastful targets as for example pursuing the *Lisbon Strategy* of 2000 and “becoming the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion by 2010”. Not only the common currency, the euro, has ended the stability but the single market has already been the fundamental mistake of the European integration. The monetary union with a single currency was a response to the imbalance, which the single market had caused; it did however, accelerate the crash, as is always expected when undesirable political developments are being defended.

### Deregulation takes away the protection of the peoples’ economies

The European single market is the reality of the basic freedom or economic freedom, i.e. the freedom of movement of goods, freedom of establishment, freedom of services, the free movement of capital and the free movement of workers. They were enforced with the utmost severity, and deregulated the markets in the Union. The single market follows the doctrine of free trade, which is also fundamental to globalization. The neo-neoliberal deregulation takes the peoples’ protection of their economies away. *Ricardo’s* theory of free trade lists specific conditions of *com-*

*parative advantage*, namely the complete utilization of the resources of the peoples involved, and has otherwise not taken the boundless and borderless free trade into consideration. Without defined comparative advantages that are possible on sub-markets, advantages for the one side are nothing else than disadvantages for the other, namely absolute advantages; such as low wages in a country resulting in unemployment in another, especially when production is shifted to the low-wage country. Unemployment in the high-wage country makes consumption more expensive, although the purchase of imported goods is cheap. Economically, the cost of funding the unemployed must be added to the direct acquisition costs. The costs for unemployed people are not lower than the costs for employees; they even tend to be higher given the low cost of labor due to the administration of unemployment and the regularly higher disease rate of the unemployed. The total costs of consumption are therefore higher. Moreover, there are the human and political costs of unemployment, but also the de-skilling of the unemployed. Actually, all costs of the body politic are to be summarized, including the costs of the state, especially the wars, the banking, insurance, pensions, etc., in order to calculate the actual costs of the resulting products. This is clearly shown in the tax and contribution burdens, which the companies and the workers, but also consumers of the single market (VAT, excise duties, etc.) have to bear. The exporter countries of cheap products do not only have advantages, but apart from the degradation of their population by underpaid labor they also have disadvantages, because they are neglecting the development of their internal market and do not sustainably develop their infrastructure. China is currently trying to counter this undesirable development.

### Single currency takes away the economies’ possibility of devaluation

In the European Union, the doctrine of free trade will have a specific effect because the circumstances are different than, say, in the cheap labor countries. For social-political reasons which essentially determine the elections, wages have approximated those of developed economies – despite the performance – even prior to the monetary union by inflationary wage policy supported by the central banks. However, since the monetary union this has primarily been done by interest-subsidized loans from the stability-

oriented members of the monetary union. The single currency has deprived the export weaker economies of a decisive competitive advantage, namely the possibility of devaluation, which has the same and in most cases even a stronger effect for the export of a country than wage restraint. The market also forces devaluation, while the wage policy is either in the hands of the social partners, and therefore largely depends on the unions, or, if the particular constitutional law permits it, it is in the hands of the state, for whom statutory wage cuts cause big trouble. The cost of even indirect intervention in the wage structure is the loss of the power in most cases, as long as the state is still a (real) multi-party state, as the example of (former German chancellor) Schröder’s *Agenda 2010* shows. The market-open currencies exert their cost-political effects relentlessly, though they do not so equally let alone justly for all those affected. They also demonstrate the unity of business and government, and thus the fateful unity of the people. This is fundamental for democratic realization.

### Unprotected competition always benefits only the strong

By the impossibility of devaluation in the context of the single currency, economies with a weak export lost their competitiveness, not only in the European single market, which of course is not a true internal market due to the respective national social policy, but also on the global market. The stronger economies of the single market are able to produce at lower cost and can provide for the weaker, but not relevantly cost-efficient economies in an uninhibited manner. The same mechanism applies at a global level. The low-income countries provide consumer goods at lower costs and take away the jobs from those single market members of the union, which are weaker on the world market, and the price increases outlined above becomes even worse. Some other factors are added, such as import-related corruption, e.g. in weapons trafficking. The similarly structured markets, the single market and the global market ruin the less robust economies that have surrendered themselves without any protection at the mercy of market conditions, especially when the most important general protection is abandoned, i.e. the possibility to devalue the currency. But even without the currency, market forces have a devastating ef-



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fect in that fictitious free trade, which is prescribed by law and by contract, albeit more slowly, at least in case and because economies are dependent on imports, especially on oil imports. Therefore they cannot afford an excessive devaluation. They must be able to earn the foreign currency for the import and need a reasonable trade balance for the sake of a currency they can use for imports. Usually such countries have a less developed infrastructure and a population who lacks productive power. As long as their production costs per unit are higher than in other states capable of export, they are at the mercy of single market structures and the decline of the open global market. They cannot handle competition but get caught in a vicious circle. Unprotected competition, the system of a pseudo-free trade, benefits only the strong and hurts the weak, i.e. single states, which cannot compete economically in such a market system, although the form a economic and social union.

**Concluding bilateral or multilateral treaties in the sense of Friedrich List**

On the single market stronger economies get steadily stronger, weaker ones get steadily weaker. This is the rule of unprotected or inadequately protected competition. A competition in which not all competitors have an equal chance is unfair, without rights, i.e. economic warfare. The same applies to the competition of the strong with the weak. Equal opportunity is a sufficient condition of a livable and legitimate competition. The German national economy, despite all the weaknesses (along with several other smaller economies) is stronger, especially stronger in exports than most of the economies in the European Union, particularly in the southern periphery. This is reflected in the unit costs, but also in the level of industrialization and other elements such as the (still better) training system, the diligence and thrift of a large part of the population etc. Even before the agreement of the monetary union, the unit costs in Germany were only about 80% of those in France, which has increased the labor costs excessively and, in addition has de-industrialized more than Germany, following an erroneous economic, albeit long-time fashionable theory, claiming that the future lies in services. The industry's share in GDP is about twice as high in Germany than in France. The French franc depreciated steadily prior to the agreement of the monetary union. Not different was the development in Italy, which has been suffering more than France and Germany from

mafia conditions. The lira dropped. Due to Germany's industry, which was not even working at full capacity, most other members of the European market had no long-term chance of surviving beside the German industry, and certainly not after they had raised the standard of living of the population to the German or even higher level. The currency even aggravated this situation, and also provided Germany with a true competitive advantage on the European and global markets, namely a much undervalued currency and thus immoral price dumping, while the other partners of the single market (graduated) had to exist with overvalued currencies in the European and global competition, which however they cannot. The appreciation would not increase the unit costs of the German industry in an anti-market and anti-competitive manner because imports which account for a large proportion of the products, would be cheaper. In addition, the German domestic market would be greatly invigorated by strengthening the purchasing power of the German population. Certain structures of the German economy would change, especially for the benefit of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. Offshore industries would frequently return, also in favor of the labor market. Willy-nilly Germany has become a profiteer of the artificial free trade and the single currency, especially on the world market, at the expense of the partners in the European single market. To criticize the doctrine of free trade does not mean to put the case for sealed-off markets, but for a practical and sensible policy of the states, which conclude bilateral or multilateral agreements in their own interest in the sense of Friedrich List. However, if an export country like Germany gave away the responsibility for its trade policy would be an intolerable violation of sovereignty.

**International bank bailouts will also ruin Germany**

The damage done to Germany is the falling behind of the purchasing power since the appreciation of Germany's currency cannot be done because of the monetary union; next the low interest rate on savings deposits because of the low interest rate policy of the central bank, also the return loss of life insurances because of the flight into Germany's nearly interest-free government bonds, as well as the long neglect of investment due to investing in the countries that promised quick and high returns (and more), and finally Germany's vouching for loans, enforced by the European ideology, with which these countries have financed their ultimately unsuccessful, bubble-like booms. The bailouts of the international banks, covered up as euro-rescue, will also ruin Germany. The

monetary expansion by the state funding of the European central banks will finally destroy all economic stability.

**Free movement of capital – the decisive blow against the sovereignty of the people**

There are profiteers of the global artificial free trade policy. These are the international companies that generate widest margins in the importing countries by the change of the production sites as long as the transport costs are so low that they do not balance the wage savings in low-wage countries, i.e. slavery countries, apart from the benefits of mass production (economy of scale). Furthermore, there are the banks, insurance companies and institutional investors which can make use of the capital that they have gained, largely on a private basis, with the greatest return on investment, forcing the states by way of threatening them with capital shifts to leave them the greatest possible profits, for example by waive taxation, but also by refraining from the regulation of capital movements, and even by pushing through the socialization of their risks and losses. The free movement of capital has been the decisive blow against the sovereignty of peoples. Finally, it is the political class, which deprived the states formerly based on the rule of law of their rights. We can no longer expect from the courts that they protect the law, which is inherent in man. They belong like (most) media to the political class. The anti-democratic party election system ensures the election of sufficiently pliant politicians in state offices. Corrupt media in the hands of a few oligarchs support the inhuman system of disinformation and hypocritical moralism.

**Fake free trade does not tolerate freedom**

Europeanization as well as globalization are instruments of certain forces that have been operating a *One-World* policy for a long time. In the New World they want to shape humanity according to their own image, degrading people to workers and consumers, dominating them in any case, i.e. take away their freedom and thus their dignity. They may also want the good, but they do not respect human beings as equal beings. The freedom of every human being is alien to them, probably because of their wealth and power. The warning of *Friedrich Nietzsche* is suitable here, "And beware of the good and the just", in any case of those who celebrate themselves as such, the moralistic Jacobins. Paternalism is directed against the humanness of man, moralism is the opposite of morality. The world must be set up so that all people can live in freedom, hence in dem-

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# The EU is developing according to plan: from a community institution to a central institution

by Professor Dr Eberhard Hamer, Germany



Eberhard Hamer  
(picture ma)

British Prime Minister *David Cameron* will no longer cooperate: According to him Europe was developing in a far too centralised manner, it monopolises all the competencies and is becoming too

expensive; the ancient English democracy is endangered by this new central government.

Immediately the EU Commissioners and the prime ministers of the EU member states financed by Brussels attacked him and tried to isolate his opinion in order not to be forced to agree to it.

Just at that time, in late January, the Federal Government's overdue response to an interpellation by *Frank Schaeffler* (MP FDP, the Liberals) about EU salaries burst into the European plans for a strong increase of budget:

4,365 Eurocracy officials earn more than the German Chancellor, more than 30,000 (of 50,000) earn more than our state secretaries or federal ministers and 26,292 simple EU translators earn more than our MPs.

## Eurocracy claims the superior government

On balance, therefore, Eurocracy has not only proliferated like an octopus, but has also positioned itself on top of the European salary pyramid. The politburo in Brussels cannot understand the outrage about this in Germany: They consider the EU the superior government above all national governments and therefore higher claims as legitimate, since they were held responsible for the whole of Europe and not just for one country.

The salary issue is another symptom of a purposeful shift of power in Europe: Instead of a "Europe of nations" the Brussels treaty has already created a standard Europe with standardised citizens and abolished nationalities – i.e. a central state with provinces. That this was a national de-democratisation through Euro-centralism in violation of the German constitution (a coup d'état), has been studiously concealed by the press.

The self-proclaimed "EU loudspeaker" *Juncker* has already expressed how purposefully the Central Committee in Brussels centralises power in Europe, "We decide on something, leave it lying around and wait and see what happens. If no one kicks up a fuss, because most people don't understand what has been decided, we continue step by step until there is no turning back ...". This is how the loss of democracy in Europe and the rise in power of the Political Commission in Brussels works.

## The background of all this are the targets of the world's financial industry

Behind this centralisation of Europe are the goals of the global financial industry. Already in 1991, *David Rockefeller* thanked the world press in return for their discretion about the actual goals of the *Bilderberg Group*, "It would have been impossible for us to develop our plan for the world if we had been subjected to the lights of publicity during those years. But, the world is more sophisticated and prepared to march towards a world government. The supranational sovereignty of an intellectual elite and world bankers is surely preferable to the national sovereignty practiced in past centuries."

## ESM is the result of a second Enabling Act

Through the euro crisis the high finance has moved a lot closer towards their goal

of world domination: They have virtually created a second Enabling Act by means of the consent of the member states to the ESM (European debt monster) which cancels national sovereignty over the finances, financially incapacitates the national parliaments, creates a debt and liability union and transfers the financial sovereignty of the member states to a centralised, freely operating and liability free euro superior financial management authority without any parliamentary control.

The ESM may at any time demand any amount from the member states and make any amount of debt at any time and distribute it not only to countries but also to banks. The highest parliamentary sovereignty right – the control of government spending and government revenue for the protection of citizens – is thus undermined indirectly in all member states and assigned to the superior financial authority.

What will be left of democratic self-determination if you cannot decide on your own finances any more, if other countries and even foreign banks can determine through massive debts all over Europe what more solid countries and even future generations have to pay for them? The transfer, liability and fiscal union are the end of national fiscal sovereignty of member states by the Enabling Act, i.e. the approval to the ESM.

As another coup the "eternal principle of democracy" of our constitution has been undermined. *Trittin* and *Steinbrück* want to go one step further: By the means of Euro Bonds they want that in the future Germany shall also be made liable for any additional bank gambles, bad loans, bad financial products and unrestrained debts of member states, which means that they want to communalise all risks of all member states and their banks on a European basis, but ulti-

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## "European single market – ..."

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ocratic republics which can only exist in small units as a republic of republics. In this world, every community must develop its own responsibility and be protected from the intervention by others, in particular from the supposedly humanitarian intervention, a regular hypocritical protective claim of conquest for economic interests. Thus says the *Charter of the United Nations*. At least in Europe, we do not

want to give up the culture of freedom. Switzerland is exemplary, despite the bilateral market commitments (but still without the euro), and yet, – I would even say therefore – it is one of the most competitive countries in the world.

A single market does not integrate automatically into a homogeneous economic area, but reinforces the differences – as proven by the large-scale test of a European single market against the illusions of integration politicians. For the sake of the political objective – uniformity of living conditions in the politically united area –

it enforces a policy of integration of the social. This is only possible by means of a large financial compensation, which over-stresses everyone and weakens the large European space on the world market so that it loses its overall competitiveness. Above all, it loses its political culture, namely freedom, together with democracy and the rule of law. The big word free trade cannot legitimize the policy of impoverishment of the many and the enrichment of the few. Fake free trade cannot tolerate freedom. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

**"The EU is developing ..."**

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mately unload them only on the four payer countries – notably Germany.

**It is against the national state**

It obviously has to do with our remote-controlled press in Germany that there was no outcry of indignation throughout Germany against the debt monster ESM, against the transfer of fiscal sovereignty and against the debt union – at least among the 50% SME performers, who already pay 80% of taxes and social security contributions in Germany and in the future also for Europe. Most people do not seem to have fully realised yet what happened in autumn 2012 in terms of fundamental de-democratisation and Euro-centralisation. Future generations will rightly accuse us (as we accused our fathers): "Why did you not prevent this Second Enabling Act?" After the First Enabling Act, democracy turned into a national dictatorship; after the Second Enabling Act it will turn into a euro-financial dictatorship. But those who protested were defamed politically (like MP Frank Schaeffler, FDP) or silenced. Finance Minister *Wolfgang Schäuble* apologized at least by referring to the fact that we still were not a sovereign nation, but an occupied country. He rightly points out that in our country things do not happen as the parties would like them to; they happen the way the international high finance and their deputies in Brussels want. They want to dominate the whole world (One World Government) and to enforce this capitalist globalisation and unifi-

cation by systematically removing all barriers. These obstacles include in particular the nation states whose sovereignty is gradually transferred to supranational organisations. Likewise, the mere existence of national populations is seen as an obstacle, therefore they are turned into mixed populations. To this end the inquisition against "racism" (refusal of immigration) and "fighting the right" (nationalist ideas) has been introduced with mandatory prison sentences.

**The role of the Bilderbergers**

The entire political class committed itself to this globalized major agenda. Examples include that a year ago at the Bilderberg meeting (the 130 most important global representatives) the newly approved (apparently newly selected) government aspirants Steinbrück and Trittin were admitted for the first time, who since then favor Euro Bonds, or else the European indebtedness of German citizens and voters. What makes politicians dare to betray the interests of their own voters in favor of international forces, unless the power from above is much stronger now than the fear of the voters below?

We should be grateful that in any case the UK Prime Minister David Cameron will not join in the euro debt fraud for the benefit of his voters and reject an enabling act including the delivery of financial sovereignty to the Euro-top authority ESM. Moreover, he does not want to reduce the centralization of Europe at the expense of national democracies. He has again opened the discussion on the wrongful path toward centralization and socialization in Europe. Do we really want that

the peoples in Europe do no longer differ, that they lose their identity (through immigration) and become uniform Europeans? And do we want that the German taxpayer will be made indefinitely liable and has to pay for all bank recklessness and for all debts orgies of southern countries? And do we really believe that democratic self-determination with respect to the euro-centralization (euro-dictatorship) would no longer be enforceable?

**Now is the time to save democracy**

Many times throughout history, democracies have turned into central governance and even dictatorships if the population did not nationally defend their democracy. Only within the manageable area of a community, a region or a nation democratic state legitimacy through election is meaningful at all. International conglomerates of different peoples with different conditions and different cultures are forced together only by some central government – just like the theorists of the "One World Government" intend.

The centralized EU politburo is now threatening our democracy, the self-determination of our peoples, our nations, and our financial solidity. It is time to resist these efforts, instead of supporting them. The upcoming federal election should therefore not deal with minor issues, but with this vital question which is central to our democracy! And we, the citizens and voters, should elect politicians based on the question whether they want to reduce or revitalize our democracy!

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## European Court claims its own jurisdiction in EU-Europe

*km.* The *European Court of Justice* (ECJ) has shown once again that it wants to overturn the sovereignty of the EU member states by all means. The ECJ not really being a court of law, but a political EU body, has since its establishment been known for doing everything it can do to strengthen the power of the EUcracy.

Thus, the German Advocate General at the ECJ in Luxembourg, *Juliane Kokott*, who had crucially contributed to the judgment of the ECJ on the Irish action against the European Stability Mechanism ESM, criticized the German Federal Constitutional Court in a speech at the *Press Conference of Justice* (JPK) in Karlsruhe on 6 March because the court wanted to measure the ESM and the fiscal pact against the German constitution.

Kokott called on the German court to cooperate more intensively with the ECJ and, as the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" wrote

on 8 March, "to leave the interpretation of EU law to the ECJ in Luxembourg when in doubt, and to present appropriate cases". Kokott was referring to the principal proceedings on ESM and Fiscal Pact as well as to the ECB plans to purchase government loans in unlimited amounts.

The Federal Constitutional Court has recently stated that it would not come to a decision before the fall of 2013 and that it would examine the legal issues thoroughly. Obviously, this disturbs the ECJ plans. Kokott also commented "it would be nice if this issue could be decided one day by the competent European Court of Justice." This would contribute to "the unity of EU law, of which now almost no sphere of life is being excluded."

It does not suit Kokott and the ECJ that the highest German court in its judgment of ESM and Fiscal Pact took a decision different from that of the ECJ;

moreover in its preliminary decision of September 2012 the court had called the ESM "a fundamental transformation of the economic and monetary union." Kokott: "I think it is a bad thing if the statements of the European Court of Justice and the Federal Constitutional Court are openly conflicting in such important decisions."

In fact, the ECJ must urgently ask itself what it thinks of the constitutions of the states and their sovereignty, and if it is not quite bothered by their existence and perhaps by the courts that still feel committed to the constitutions of their respective countries. Kokott has again expressed what the ECJ has been thinking of the sovereignty so far. She praised the Court's judgment on the Irish action, since the Luxembourg ESM judgment had opened the door "to a strong control of the member states by the ECJ."



Spring session: Thursday 14 March 2013 in the National Council

## UN Security Council: No place for neutral Switzerland

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

In 2002 Switzerland joined the UN. At that time, the opponents' fears that the principle of perpetual neutrality of Switzerland could be harmed by the membership the Federal Council used several arguments for appeasement, including the argument that Switzerland was not striving for a seat in the Security Council. Five years later, the Federal Council declared that it was considering candidacy for the Security Council in 2020<sup>1</sup>. On 5 October 2007, this plan was discussed critically in the National Council. According to current law, however, the decision regarding the candidacy lies in the jurisdiction of the Federal Council, so that the National Council could only take note of this issue but not vote on it. Many parliamentarians did not agree with this allocation of authority, and rightly thought that in case of such a drastic step with respect to the neutral status of Switzerland the sovereign should be the last approving authority. However, a similar motion coming from the ranks of the National Council was not pursued.

In the latest foreign policy report of March 2012, the Federal Council reaffirmed its decision to run for a seat in the UN Security Council<sup>2</sup>. Two initiatives on this issue will be subject of a debate in the National Council during the Spring session.

Hopefully the National Council will clearly reject the ambitions of the Federal Council to "have a say" in a forum which according to the UN Charter decides on war and peace, and in which might is frequently known to take precedence over law. Due to neutrality policy reasons, a seat on the Security Council of Switzerland has to be clearly prevented. That is why the National Council is called to pave the way on 14 March to ensure that the parliament and, finally, the people will decide on this serious issue.

In the Foreign Policy Strategy 2012–2015 the Federal Council declares the *ceterum censeo* of our executive at a place that might pass unnoticed: "Besides, Switzerland intends to actively participate in the necessary debate on Security Council reform. With our candidacy for a seat on the Security Council in the years 2023/2024, we have also a clear goal in mind which we intend to achieve in the second decade of our UN membership." (p. 18/19). The National

Council will be the first chamber to deal with this on 14 March.

### Another appealing report of the Federal Council – or a job done properly?

First, the National Council has been presented the following postulate by its Foreign Affairs Committee:

- *Federal Council's report on the membership of the UN Security Council (postulate 13.3005)*

"In regard to its own will to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, the Federal Council is assigned to prepare and submit a report for discussion to the Parliament with special consideration of the neutrality issue."

The Federal Council proposes the adoption of the postulate. However, it can be assumed that such a report will not contain anything that is not already painfully familiar: The Federal Council is going to assert – as it has been doing for years – with great eloquence, that a seat on the Security Council is not in contradiction to Switzerland's principle of neutrality. Next, the National Council and the Council of States will discuss the report, however, they can still not vote on running for a seat on the Security Council, because the Federal Council is responsible for this decision.

A second attempt is the initiative of the National Councillor *Luzi Stamm*:

- *Participation of the Parliament in applying for a seat on the UN Security Council (Parliamentary Initiative 12.479)*

"The legal and constitutional foundations are to be created to ensure that a candidacy for a Swiss seat for a respective membership on the UN Security Council will be decided by the Swiss Parliament and shall be subject to an optional referendum."

In its reasoning, the initiator points to the fact that the Federal Council insisted on its decision-making competence in an earlier statement. "The Federal Council adopts the view that the Federal Council decides on a candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in the context of its powers in foreign policy in accordance with Article 184 paragraph 1 BV." In contrast, *Luzi Stamm* and 50 co-signatories hold the opinion that "considering the implications of membership on the UN Security Council it is not justified that the Federal Council decides alone. Rather, it is to

ensure that this political decision is put on a much broader basis."

We citizens share this opinion: we should no longer watch the Federal Council changing the concept of neutrality claiming that the seat on the Security Council would allegedly be compatible with Switzerland's principle of neutrality.

### Federal Council and Federal Assembly are obliged to protect Switzerland's neutrality

*BV Article 185 External and internal security*

1 *The Federal Council takes measures to safeguard the external security, independence and neutrality of Switzerland.*

The same obligation is imposed on the Federal Assembly by the Federal Constitution (BV Article 173, paragraph 1 a). According to a recent survey, 95 percent of the Swiss citizens are in favour of maintaining Switzerland's neutrality.

Recently, *Current Concerns* published an article about the history and essence of the neutrality of Switzerland (Perpetual armed neutrality – *Conditio sine qua non* of the peace model Switzerland, by *Tobias Salander*, No. 8/2013) that is worth reading. It emphasizes the important fact that neutrality is not synonymous with neutrality of attitudes: the individual citizen, and under certain conditions also the state may comment on belligerents. Here, the neutral state must very carefully consider its own trustworthiness: "Since trustworthiness is the only capital of neutrality. And this has to be achieved in times of peace, in order to possess it in times of war. This policy needs to be constant and predictable." The author of the article points out that Switzerland must not be suspected of bias if it wants to retain its trustworthiness as a neutral state.

Therefore, the urgent question is to be put to the Federal Council and Parliament: How should Switzerland retain its trustworthiness as a neutral state when it takes a seat on the Security Council, an institution where decisions on war and peace are taken; where sanctions against states are taken which often do not really hurt, but result in hunger and poverty; where the bias is so evident in most decisions? Where Switzerland as a small State would bear the responsibility for the power plays of the Great?

**"UN Security Council: No place ..."**

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**As a reminder:****Extract from the National Council's debate from 5 October 2007**

Federal Councillor *Micheline Calmy-Rey* who appeared elsewhere as representative of humanitarian Switzerland with conviction and exerted herself actively for a revival of our tradition of *good offices* – for which the neutral small state particularly is suited – expressed something astonishing on the issue of membership on the Security Council: It would be no violation of our country's commitment to the law of neutrality, since the resolutions of the Security Council were about measures for maintaining peace and international security, according to the mandate which had been entrusted to the Security Council by the community of states and were not about acts of war.

Quite a number of National Councilors, members of different parties disagreed resolutely.

*Jacques-Simon Eggly* (FDP liberal, GE): "Well, Mrs Federal Councillor, as you know, the radical-liberal faction does not entirely agree with your engagement for a candidature of Switzerland in the Security Council. [Though it is correct that Switzerland should have a say if it already pays such high contributions.] *However, we think that, in any case, in the conciliation phase the expansion of negotiations on a broader basis than the Security Council, that is under inclusion of the affected states, would be a more interesting field which would suit Switzerland better than a candidature in the Security Council which could become a reality only some time ahead, anyway.*" (Translation *Current Concerns*)

*Hans Fehr* (SVP, Zurich): "To be part of the game at all costs is apparently the name of the game in relation to the foreign affairs policy. Although 92 percent of the Swiss want to adhere to neutrality according to a study of Professor *Haltiner*, in particular to Swiss integral neutrality, this success story is apparently to be buried. [...] The UN Security Council decides on war and peace, Mrs President of the Federal Council. *So in days to come we would have to have a say in determining war or peace, and this would be the death blow to Swiss neutrality.*"

*Kathy Riklin* (CVP, ZH): "The CVP faction thanks the Federal Council for the good report on Switzerland's activity in the UN. Five years of UN mem-

bership have proven its worth. The CVP faction thanks everybody who have committed themselves to the concerns of the global community. Switzerland that also operates as a host state for the UN could take over a leading and very respected role within the UN in a short time. Within the new Human Rights Council to which Switzerland was elected as a member for three years our country can exert itself actively for more human rights in the world. We are grateful for this valuable work. We are glad that the UN have decided to strengthen the main focus of their activity on the field of development, humanitarian aid and environment. This also corresponds to the concerns, which we have as a CVP, and with what we expect from this world-wide organisation.

However, we have little understanding for the ambitious notions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to join to the UN Security Council. *With the voting campaign six years ago we and the Federal Council have promised on all platforms that Switzerland should become a full member, but not a member of the Security Council – this from neutrality-policy and foreign-policy considerations.* Besides, not before the year 2020 we would have chances for a membership in this committee which is always controversial nowadays and which could not prevent, for example, the Iraq war. Why should we awake the negative spirits in our country, Mrs President of the Federal Council? We plead that our Minister of Foreign Affairs shows restraint on this delicate field."

*Markus Wäfler* (EDU, Zurich) reminded the President of the Federal Council of what kind the "peace operations" had been which were decided by the Security Council:

"I have a text here, not from Marignano, but it is about the UN charter. In Article 24 we read: 'In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.' If the invasion in Iraq had not taken place at the USA's own idea, but once more initiated by a UN mandate of the Security Council, how would the Federal Council have positioned itself and how would that have been compatible with the policy of neutrality?"

Answer of Federal Councillor *Micheline Calmy-Rey*: "If the invasion had not been a military operation controlled by a great power in Iraq, but an op-

eration that had been decided by the Security Council, Switzerland would have had to bear the consequences of this decision, in compliance with the decision she had taken with her accession to the UN." (Translation *Current Concerns*)

**Neutral Switzerland has better alternatives in the field of peace policy**

It should be acknowledged at this point that Mrs Calmy-Rey has committed herself over and over again to a Swiss peace policy. Thus we may sincerely agree if, in the same debate, she points to the fact that an engagement is not possible for a more peaceful world if one hides away. However, it is a fatal mistake to think, that the historical neutrality concept of Switzerland – the renouncement to take sides in case of armed conflicts – would be outdated, today.

Especially today, Switzerland has many other and far more sensible resources to take a stand for the world. Let us give the word to the Federal Council and select from his *Foreign Policy Strategy 2012–2015* two important fields in which Switzerland is particularly suited to act as a neutral state.

"Switzerland is especially well placed to act in the field of human security. As a neutral state – one committed to dialogue as a way of resolving conflicts and with a long tradition of providing good offices and mediation – it also has incomparable experience of direct democracy, federalism, and respect for diversity. Like international cooperation, peace promotion benefits Switzerland's security and prosperity. Switzerland's concrete input (such as its mediation activities in the Caucasus or its mandates to act as a protecting power) provides the opportunity to strengthen Swiss contacts not only with the states directly concerned, but also with the great powers with an interest in the efforts the Confederation is making."<sup>3</sup> (p. 13)

"Switzerland's long-standing commitment to respecting, promoting, and strengthening international humanitarian law is part of the country's humanitarian tradition. As the depository of the Geneva Conventions and seat of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), this accords well with its neutrality."<sup>4</sup> (p. 14)•

<sup>1</sup> Relations with UN and with international organisations with headquarter in Switzerland. *Report of the Federal Council in 2007*

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Policy Strategy in 2012–2015. *Report of the Federal Council on foreign-policy main focuses of the legislation from March 2012*, p. 11

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* p. 13

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* p. 14

## Closing embassies is not in Switzerland's interest

thk. For 40 years, Switzerland has had diplomatic relations in Central America. In this region – troubled during the 80s and in the period afterwards – Switzerland has done beneficial work and significantly influenced the initiated democratic process with its direct local presence. To save money, the Burkhalter Department (of Foreign Affairs) wants to close this embassy and to maintain a Swiss rep-

resentation only in Costa Rica, which will subsequently be responsible for 6 countries (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala).

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council has therefore launched a motion to maintain the Swiss embassy in Guatemala, which was the result of the casting vote of the President of the Commission, the National Councillor Andreas Aebi

(SVP). Next Thursday, the National Council will decide on that motion.

In the following Walter Suter, Ambassador to Venezuela until his retirement four years ago and still closely connected with Central and Latin America, and Luzi Stamm, National Councillor (SVP) and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, comment on the importance of the motion.

## Don't we squander reputation and credibility

by Walter Suter, former Ambassador of Switzerland



Walter Suter  
(picture ma)

For 40 years we have been present in Guatemala and run an embassy there. Besides the accreditation in Guatemala we were concurrently accredited in Honduras and El Salvador. Three countries in Central

America. The office is in Guatemala, and the ambassador is responsible for all three countries.

The activity of Switzerland has focused mainly on the promotion of the peace process in El Salvador and Guatemala. In this context, the archives of the atrocities of the former military regime in Guatemala were also found and opened to the public a few years ago. Our Ambassador in Guatemala, like other Swiss ambassadors in other countries, has dealt strongly with human rights issues. These human rights issues are enormously important, for we have gained an enormous reputation in these countries and among the majority of the population. There we are known as a country with no hidden agenda, as honest and sincere. We have gained reputation and recognition as impartial intermediaries not burdened with hidden interests. The credibility of our country as an honest mediator is particularly valued and recognized there. This trust and credibility capital is an irreplaceable asset. For a small country like Switzerland, reputation is its capital, which is tremendously important. We have no great power ambitions and are therefore recognized as a credible, democratic state. It is negligent to put this reputation now recklessly at risk, a reputation that we enjoy due to our support in dealing with the incidents referred to above and the entire support that we provided. We lose the credibility that we need to preserve after the attacks on our country, especially in Europe. We are member of

the United Nations and wanted to take our place there. If Swiss people run for certain posts in the UN, we need every vote in the UN, and here we risk losing these votes.

The reason given for the closing down – that we lacked the means, because we should open an embassy in Myanmar – is dubious against the background of our loss of credibility. Here we must not prioritize the budget issue, but the Burkhalter department should require additional funds by the Parliament in order to do the one thing and certainly not abandon the other. It is a gross underestimation of the fact that the physical presence can achieve a much greater effect when later on only one embassy should

be responsible for six countries. Although the status of diplomatic relations with the maintenance by an ambassador from Costa Rica formally remains the same, the closure of the embassy in Guatemala actually downgrades the level of our relationships. In addition, the efficacy in those countries where we are actively involved is drastically reduced by the absence of an embassy. Therefore, local presence is desperately required; otherwise we will lose what we have built up. Compromising the quality of the relationship is certainly false and not in the overriding long-term interest of Switzerland.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Not simply close embassies!

by National Councillor Luzi Stamm



Luzi Stamm  
(picture ma)

The Swiss embassies are traditionally an anchor, which is available for the Swiss abroad to keep in touch with their homeland. Of course, the work of the embassies gets effectively into public view, when a Swiss somewhere out in the world

suddenly needs help. But the task of a Swiss embassy goes far beyond that. The necessary formalities that are to be completed with the homeland Switzerland, and support that our countrymen need to build up their projects, are a wide field in which embassies can play an important role. In addition there is the traditionally important contact with the local governments.

For several years, unfortunately, the trend has become obvious that major Swiss embassies are simply done away with during a rationalization pro-

cess and closed down in order to save money.

It would however be imperative that the state finally saves money effectively, because it is intolerable, how government spending skyrockets in many locations. But it is a mistake to cut costs where the valuable contact with the homeland can be maintained. If the nearby embassy or consulate will be closed and our countrymen are forced to travel hundreds or even more than a thousand miles – perhaps even to a neighboring country – in order to get support from an embassy, this is a downright mistake. This applies even more since current means of communication could make embassies very efficient.

Switzerland increasingly spends heaps of money for foreign policy; not to mention the billions that will be spent for misinterpreted “aid” on bogus refugees. Therefore it won't do to close embassies that cause relatively little cost and that so far have been a great help for our compatriots all over the world.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Spring session: Wednesday, 13 March 2013, in the National Council

## Direct democracy presupposes a high degree of integration

### The total revision of the Swiss Citizenship Act

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

*The National Council will be the first council to discuss details of the Swiss Citizenship Act (SCA). If we critically look at some fundamental changes, this is done solely from the point of view of the high requirements which our direct democratic and federalist state structure with the associated militia system poses for its citizens. It is more than justified when we accept each foreigner – whatever country or continent he comes from, whatever ethnic group or denomination he belongs to – as a fellow citizen if they are well settled in our country and are aware of the uniqueness of our political system, but also aware of the responsibility that we bear as Swiss for our commune, our canton and the Confederation. By the way, it would do no harm to some contemporaries who were born as Swiss citizens if they reflected these basics from time to time.*

Among my friends, there are many foreigners who have settled in Switzerland. They work here, their children go to school in the residential commune, they are living with us, they are trying to learn Swiss German – which is admittedly not very easy – they are interested in the ballot proposals and the political system of their commune, the canton and the Confederation. Many of them take part in local clubs and also take their place as a volunteer: with the Samaritan Association, the civil protection or the fire brigade. In short: they actively contribute to their integration. The longer they live here and the better they are familiar with our country, the more the majority of them is aware that it takes a lot to truly fulfill the role as a Swiss citizen some day.

#### How to become a Swiss citizen?

In the course of my long career as a vocational school teacher I met many young people from different countries and continents. Most of them already had the Swiss citizenship when they started an apprenticeship; some of them got it during their apprenticeship. They had spent all or most of their schooldays in Switzerland, learnt more or less well Swiss German (depending on whether they had the opportunity to do so in the family and leisure time), and got settled. As apprentices, they did their job, they were eager to learn and motivated. Of course not quite all of them – but this also applies to some young people who were born with the Swiss passport. My stu-

dents learned rather simple professions, and many of them – including some native Swiss – did not particularly well know the Swiss state structure and did not dare getting informed before a plebiscite or knowing and assessing the political landscape prior to elections. It was one of my responsibilities as a general education teacher to make them familiar with our constitution and our policy, to read with them and understand the ballot paper with its pro and contra arguments, to fill in the National Council electoral lists and to make them “tempting” to participate as active citizens. At some point during their apprenticeship I gave my students the order to visit their municipal administration or a facility in their commune and write a short report about it. The author and his classmates got to know their environment better, from the resident’s registration office, the fire brigade up to the sewage treatment plant. A visit to the police was particularly popular, but also the communal presidents or the communal secretaries were interviewed. At the end of their apprenticeship, some of my naturalized students told proudly that they would then visit the recruit school. I often realized that some of them could appreciate being Swiss more than some of their classmates who took everything for granted. I will always remember the young man from Kosovo who thanked on the last day of school for my civic studies classes and added: When I go back to my country, I will tell my fellow countrymen how democracy can work.

The two descriptions give an idea of what is important if someone wants to become Swiss. In other countries than Switzerland as well, you should be integrated, above all know the language well and the way of life of the inhabitants as well as the political system to gain citizenship.

#### Longer stays are necessary

In Switzerland however, the bar is set much higher. In order to be able to take part in municipal, cantonal and federal affairs it is necessary to grow into it to which cannot be done fairly quickly. The fellow people who came to our country and would like to settle and participate in social and political life should be let the time which is necessary.

The proposal of the Federal Council does not do justice to this state of affairs: Article 9 paragraph 1 b of the draft requires a stay of “a total of eight years,

[...] including one year prior to the application being made.” Hence it would be possible that the naturalization candidate had lived once a few years here and a few years elsewhere and most recently a single year in Switzerland before applying for a naturalization license. That doesn’t work! A long, continuous stay must rather be provided.

The majority of the commission wants after all to stipulate 10 years. Why not stick to the currently required twelve years? Nobody will be better integrated by a rapid naturalization process, as some politicians claim. First the integration, then the naturalization process – this is the realistic and meaningful order. The proposal of a commission minority to stay with twelve years “whereof three years immediately prior to submission of the application” allows a more profound integration as the draft of the Federal Council.

On the other hand due to my experiences with foreign vocational students applying for naturalization I would leave Article 9 paragraph 2 as it was: “When calculating the period of stay according to paragraph 1 letter b the period that the applicant has lived in Switzerland between the ages of 10 and 20 counts as double. The actual period has to be at least six years.” The commission majority of the National Council wants to delete this facilitated naturalization for young people. My consideration is: when you go to school in Switzerland and/or make an apprenticeship you integrate faster and lighter than an adult by being together with Swiss children and adolescents, by the Swiss school subjects and in particular the daily use of the German language as well as the introduction into professional life in the training company.

#### How to measure integration

The Federal Council proposes the following integration criteria:

##### Article 12 Integration Criteria

- 1 A successful integration is evident in particular:
- a. in observing the public security and order;
  - b. in respecting the values of the Federal Constitution;
  - c. in the ability to communicate in a language of the country and
  - d. in the will to participate in the economy or the acquisition of education.

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## A friend of the socially deprived

### Obituary for Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frías (1954-2013) by former Swiss Ambassador Walter Suter

by Walter Suter

*Bern/Caracas. Now he has left us – and yet he continues to be with us: our brother and comrade, Comandante Presidente Hugo Chávez Frías. On 5 March 2013, after heroically enduring his long suffering from cancer, he has passed on into immortality. “Those who died for life ... cannot be called dead.” (singer-songwriter Alí Primera).*

To me personally, the intense and unusually long conversation with the President about his revolutionary plans, which I was granted when I presented my credentials as a leading Swiss ambassador to Venezuela in late 2003, remains unforgettable. At the end of this conversation, he took hold of my arm, looked at me straight in the eye, firmly and resolutely, and said emphatically: “Mr Ambassador, I am telling you, in this country, the culture of cheating dominates, and I am going to change this culture!”

#### Improvement for the disenfranchised and the marginalized

In effect, *Hugo Chávez* leaves an exceptional heritage, characterized by restless sacrifice and devotion for the disenfranchised and the marginalized in his country and for the improvement of their lot. He will be kept alive in their memory. Hugo Chávez loved his people, he has given them dignity, respect and self-esteem. A truly great man among the Great.

*Gottlieb Duttweiler*, founder of the retail chain *Migros* in Switzerland, who was certainly not a leftist, once said: “Anyone who fights for the weak will have the strong for his enemy.” This could also be

*gl.* The expressions of condolence by the Venezuelan people and by entire Latin America on the death of President *Hugo Chávez* is overwhelming. More than two million people from all over the whole country have taken part in the funeral ceremonies. They have been waiting in a queue for days to pay their last respect personally to their president. The whole of Latin America sadly mourns the passing of a statesman who has intensively supported integration and development of the continent – and who had coura-

geously and fearlessly committed himself for world peace, the sovereignty and the equal rights of all states. In 15 countries, including Brasilia, Argentina – and even in China – national mourning was ordered.

The miserable caricature concerning Chávez’ achievements which is still being produced in Europe casts a poor light on the independence of our press. Latin America will not be impressed by this – there we are still considered faithful vassals to the USA.

the motto for the Venezuelan revolutionary *Hugo Chávez*’ fourteen years as president; both to explain all the problems and difficulties he had in his own country, and also to explain the phenomenal improvements effectuated by his government for the majority of his countrymen who have been disadvantaged and discriminated against for centuries.

After his fourth cancer surgery in Cuba, he has recently returned to his country, but was too weak to take over the presidency again. His presence was, however, felt so much by his followers as to guarantee the continuation of his policy. For in elections they will vote for him again, even if it is in the person of the new candidate of his *United Socialist Party (PSUV)*.

This new candidate, probably the former Vice President *Nicolás Maduro*, will already have to answer for one “correction”: the devaluation of the currency by a third. This move was necessary because production in the country itself contin-

ues to be too low. Reducing the dependency on imports has always been one of Chávez’ main concerns. But all his attempts to strengthen industrial as well as agricultural production remained largely unsuccessful, as is freely admitted by the Venezuelan government. The focus of the new development plan (2013 to 2019) therefore lies again on an improvement of the economic conditions, particularly on industrial development.

#### “Radical struggle against poverty”

The deficiency in this area is not least due to the pursuit of Chávez’ key issue, which he pursued from the start and for which he used the majority of his country’s oil revenues: the all-out war against poverty.

His aims were to finally grant access to health care, to education, to a tolerable living for all those who had been excluded before. The President provided the

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#### “Direct democracy presupposes ...”

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Quite rightly, many National Councillors are not satisfied with the minimal wording of point c: The “ability to communicate in a national language” is certainly not enough to safeguard the political and social rights and obligations of a Swiss citizen. The majority of the commission therefore requires in letter c the “ability to communicate well in spoken and written national language in everyday life.” The commission minority which presupposes not only knowledge of one of the official languages, but the “ability to ex-

press themselves in spoken and written form in the official language of the commune of naturalization” goes even further.

This concern is certainly justified, because it leads to the question whether a German can be naturalized in the French speaking part without speaking and writing French – because he can interact in the “national language” German (of course nobody will expect that he writes Swiss German). Swiss citizenship includes also the citizenship of the commune in which the applicant wants to make his home. So he ought to be able to express himself in French if he wants to become a citizen of Vevey or Delémont.

#### Conclusion

The Swiss passport is not only a document that makes it easier for the holder to travel and thanks to which he may elect a governmental party every four or five years. Such an abundance of political rights and duties is linked with the Swiss citizenship, so many opportunities for participation in the direct democratic and federalist structure, that many people and civic groups in other countries would like to implement at least parts of the Swiss model in their own way. We should not make the acquisition of the Swiss citizenship too easy – because we need citizens who know the Swiss model from the basics and want to preserve it and are able to pass it on to the next generations. ●

**"A friend of the socially deprived"**

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stimulus and has achieved a lot. As early as in 2005, Venezuela was declared free from illiteracy by the *UNESCO*. The proportion of poor fell by almost 50 per cent in 2002 to just below 30 per cent in 2011. Everyone has access to doctors, and staples are subsidized. All this was worth paying for. Thus Chávez has given hope to the disadvantaged majority. People have noticed that something has changed in their favour.

**Parliament democratically legitimized**

After centuries of authoritarian rule those who were previously excluded are now able to take part in political decisions and to participate in the now 30,000 to 40,000 local councils (*Consejos Comunales*). They did not want to allow this to be taken away from them again. Therefore, Chávez was elected time and again. Although the opposition continues to have most of the press and television at their command and despite launching caustic campaigns, clear

majorities have been supporting Chávez' policy in 14 of 15 polls since 1999.

By 2005 the EU and later also former US President *Jimmy Carter's* foundation confirmed that these elections were carried out absolutely correctly. In the meantime, even the Venezuelan opposition concedes this fact. Therefore, Parliament is undoubtedly democratically legitimized. And the Chavistas will have an absolute majority there for at least another three years. In addition to this, 20 out of 23 governors are partisans of the Chavistas. Moreover, the armed forces now also apparently stand largely united behind this government and this policy. Given this institutional strength there is every indication that the social policy will be continued in the coming years.

**Conservatives acknowledge Chávez' achievements**

Brazilian Bishop and liberation theologian *Helder Camara* once said: "When one dreams alone, it remains but a dream. When we dream together, it is the beginning of reality." Chávez acted as a beacon of hope also for his country's Latin

American neighbours. Large sections of the population saw that miserable living conditions were not unalterable.

In the last decade, democratically elected leftist governments came into power in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and Ecuador. They all took their bearings from Chávez. And even a Conservative like the Chilean President *Sebastián Piñera* acknowledges that Chávez has been the real inspiration for the Latin American integration reached by this time. In Europe, this is often not appreciated enough. And of course these integration steps are not in the interest of the North.

In short: The Venezuela of today still has massive problems, which Chávez and his people do not sweep under the rug: the economic situation, the still rampant corruption, an administration that is not functioning well, and a high crime rate. Notwithstanding all this, Chávez has accomplished a very great deal. Today, many people dream together of his "socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century".

\* Walter Suter is a member of the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland and has been the Swiss ambassador to Venezuela until recently.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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## Working with horses – in the rhythm of nature

by Michael Götz, Eggersriet, Canton of St. Gallen

*From the outside, the “Laas” farm differs little from the surrounding farms. But working in the fields, one can still see horses at work. The farmer and his wife are horse lovers and want to work with nature as closely as possible.*

The Laas farm belongs to the commune Les Prés de Cortébert in the Bernese Jura and is located on a plateau of approximately 1,150 m above sea level. Emanuel Schmid has been waiting for dry weather so he would be capable of sowing spelt. Two black horses are harnessed to the “Aebi” seeder. The gelding Lord is seven years old and the mare Goldie four. Both are Old Oldenburg Warmblood horses. The agricultural trainee is sitting on the planter box directing the horses. Their clean deck-coat is shining in the sun. Emanuel has filled the seed into the seed drill which he will steer with the aid of a handlebar. He lets down the coulters and off they go. The horses pull with a short tug. The spelt trickles into the coulters, from where it is directly led into the ground. Their monotonous noise accompanies the vehicle.

### Concentration and calm handling are necessary

Work is progressing rapidly and it looks quite easy from the distance. The work, however, demands high concentration from man and animal. Only when the horses are aligned straight and erect, there will be a straight line so that no seeding site is lost. At the end of the 220 m long field Emanuel pulls the coulters from the soil. “Hüst ume”, he talks to his horses. The teamster directs the horses into the next track. Sometimes, one has to balance things. The horse and cart have to take a few steps backwards. In that case it is particularly important that the horses have confidence in their teamsters. They always have a calming influence on the horses, without any bad word. It is a harmonious cooperation between man and animal.

With the 2 m wide seed drill the horse and cart need some two hours to plant



Fully at work. (picture M. Götz)

the spelt seed in a field of about one acre. Finally, a transverse row is sowed, as a suitable limitation at both ends of the field. Thereafter, horse and cart move to the surfaced stable forecourt, where the horses are unyoked and washed. Finally, the harness and the seed drill are cleaned.

### Only little external energy is necessary

Emanuel Schmid and his wife Ursina operate the leased estate with 24 dairy cows according to the principles of organic agriculture. It was his love for horses that led Emanuel Schmid to agriculture. There, he was able to combine his hobby with his work. Horses help him to understand and apply the natural cycle. Here for example, the food the horses are fed returns back to the land as fertilizer. He was fascinated to get by with as little external energy as possible. However, it was not possible for him and his wife to do everything with the horse. With 40 hectare of agricultural land, the farm was too large. This is why the farmer mows most of the time and uses a conventional forage wagon. At least for the time being, plowing and harrowing the fields is done with the tractor.

In winter the horses are used for working in the forest and for transporting wood. In spring, they pull the circular harrow on meadows and pastures. And in summer, they are used for pulling a tedder and rake when haymaking. The machines are driven by a motor which is mounted to a pre-carriage. For self-sufficiency, 12 ares potatoes are also planted with the horses. The potatoes are

set with the planting hole device. For chopping and hidging a Burkhalter multiple device is used. The farmer's favourite machine is the PEQUEA dung tedder from Pennsylvania which has been developed by the Amish in the US. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Les Prés de Cortébert was populated by farmers from the Emmental. Like the Amish, they, too, belonged to the Baptist community and had to leave their original homes.

### Driving to the milk collection centre

Every day at 6:30 a.m., Emanuel gets Lord from the enclosure to drive with him to the milk collection centre. Last night, the weather changed. It has become stormy. It is a good thing there is a protected room in the barn, where the farmer can put the milk cans onto the box car and tense the horse. The sliding door is opened and off you go into the darkness. A spotlight at the coach box directs the way. It takes only a ten minutes drive to the collection centre. But in winter when a cold wind blows, this short drive is likely to appear much longer to carter and horse.

### Taking breaks from work

While their master has breakfast, Lord and Goldie are making themselves comfortable on the soft straw bed. The group stable with feeding stand, separate lounge area and a permanently accessible outlet accommodates the horses in species-appropriate husbandry. Although rain has been announced, the two still have to get to work this morning. They have to demonstrate the dung tedder to visitors. Emanuel directs the sleigh to the collecting point for defuse, where he protects the horses with a blanket and loads the tedder with the yard trac. Thereafter, the farmer cleans the space around the cart. This way, the horses would get a rest there and he himself could make a sensible use of the time, since in the end there would be less cleaning work to be



*Emanuel Schmid is loading the dung tedder with a yard trac. (picture M. Götz)*

### Taking one's time for training

*Emanuel Schmid* and his wife train their horses themselves. Emanuel drives the horse and cart while his wife takes care of the equestrian training. He had found out that the training of horses is often too fast these days. It was important to take the time and not to demand too much of the animals. "Goldie is still a kid, despite her four and a half years", says the trainer. Sometimes one must also admit that a horse is not suitable for agricultural use. A certain "basic serenity" was required to do that job.

### Get some training

Who wants to work with horses should, if possible, start with an experienced horse. Even if you make mistakes, the horse keeps its composure and will not easily be upset. It is different, however, if the horse does not yet know the work it should do. It may then lose its head more easily. Training courses in Switzerland are organized by the Agricultural Centre Liebegg ([www.liebegg.ch](http://www.liebegg.ch)) and the Interest Group Workhorses ([www.igarbeitspferde.ch](http://www.igarbeitspferde.ch)).

### "Working with horses ..."

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done, says the farmer, who is considerate of order and cleanliness.

### In the rhythm of nature

A brisk march takes us to the meadow. The visitor walking behind the team thinks: "Somehow something is missing". There is no noise like one is used to hear from the tractor. Everything is operating calmly – in the rhythm of nature. The shafts may be switched on from the coach box so that the driver does not have to get off into the field. The strong horses go at it with a will and pull the dung tedder across the meadow with all their might. It is not only the almost three tons which they have to pull, but they have to move the scattering mechanism and the moving floor via the driving wheels. At the back the dung is flying onto the meadow in a high arc. After approximately five minutes, the load is empty. With dry weather, the farmer yields about 8 to 12 loads per day and approximately 80 per year. But today, because of the rain this remains the only one. He pulls up in front of the barn, where he unyokes the horses and rewards them. ●

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(Translation *Current Concerns*)