

Current Concerns

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English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

Federalism as a guarantee of peace and Switzerland as a model

**“Such a confederation provides a guarantee for peace
both to its own members as well as to its neighbours”**

by Dr phil René Roca, historian, Direct Democracy Research Institute

The Federalist State of Switzerland is not only a fruit of the Liberals; the Catholic Conservatives with their insistence on the cantonal sovereignty have contributed largely to this constructive solution after the “Sonderbundskrieg”. Virtually unnoticed in this context are the important contributions of early socialists, who in the second half of the 19th century introduced the federalist model of Switzerland to the European debate. Apart from federalism the early socialists in Switzerland also fostered the cooperative movement, which took up and built on the principle of cooperatives in the Ancien Régime. Together with the Catholic Conservatives they created an important foundation for the development of direct democracy.¹

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), as a French early socialist, advocated a libertarian approach and promoted federal structures, which distribute political power in a decentralized manner. He found such structures in Switzerland with the federal state of 1848 and took them as a model to be discussed with other early socialists in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Unfortunately, such approaches were only rarely debated in the context of a free debate. Karl Marx (1818–1883) discredited Proudhon’s work and launched a campaign against him. Such an action was symptomatic of the failing success of the socialist movement to promote sustainable peace on the national and international level and to prevent the two world wars. Instead, decentralized, libertarian approaches such as that of Proudhon were pushed back in favour of authoritarian state socialist theories. The Swiss historian Adolf Gasser (1903–1985) adopted Proudhon’s fruitful ideas as early as during the Second World War, and praised his theory of federalism in his groundbreaking work “*Gemeindefreiheit als Rettung Europas. Grundlinien einer ethischen Geschichtsauffassung*” (Communal freedom as a salvation of Europe. Outlines of an ethical view on history).²

Common features between Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and James Guillaume and democratic Switzerland

In a little-known letter – (open letter to the German social rebels between 1833 and 1871), Proudhon writes that the nucleus of the early French socialists would only have common features with the German movement, if the cadres were willing to discuss any issue with each member (CGT and CFDT) all over and fundamentally again (direct democracy!!!). In that case it would have a sustainable impact (sustainable development, UN!). If the German colleagues (around Marx and Co.) were prepared for this

“condition which is absolutely necessary” = “*conditio sine qua non*”, common conferences would make sense. “Sinon, Non!” (If not, no!)

Why did we not take such thoughts up? The dead of the two World Wars were not necessary. Rather than sinking into misery humans could have built up. Where now we have the “Bloodlands” and where the “Generation Kill” has raged, something quite different would have developed. Should we not reflect about that?

A. Buchholz-Kaiser

In his treatise, Gasser deals intensively with the question of what political and ethical principles might ensure a constructive communal life. This question, Gasser says, has been studied in too little detail by the intellectuals. European liberalism had in fact implemented the idea of freedom in the political constitution and the economy, but in the political practice the administrative authoritarianism was maintained beyond the letter of law (the same as in European socialism). Many liberals had not been able to withdraw from the bureaucratic centralism, of a quasi-military command structure, Gasser wrote. However, if the commune as the lowest political level remained a mere tool of governmental power in such a structure, liberal democracy with state machinery’s comprehensive power might take a fateful development towards authoritarian forms of government.

Proudhon and the model of the Swiss Confederation

In connection with his finding that only a federalist state with extensive communal autonomy could be guarantor for a constructive communal life, Gasser also mentioned Pierre-Joseph Proudhon alongside others. The anarchist theoretician Proudhon, Gasser says, had indeed emphasized the structure of society from bottom up; however, he had fought the “state” in a too uncompromising way, by equating “state” entirely with the magisterial organizing principle of civil service hierarchy and command administration. The “state”, Gasser says, defines itself differently. A state order could as well be based on the general will of the local self-administration, as the structure of the Swiss Confederation showed. For Proudhon the Swiss Confederation was an example of a federation that could no longer be called “state”.

For Gasser, these divergent perspectives were no reason not to include Proudhon in his fundamental considerations. He mentioned in particular Proudhon’s work, “*Du principe fédératif*”³, which had first been published in 1863 and had influenced him greatly.

Proudhon was one of the first to try and demonstrate the philosophical “theory of the federative system”. Among so many constitutions that philosophy suggested and history had tried out, the federative system was the only one to “reconcil[e] the demands of justice, order, liberty, and

"Federalism as a guarantee ..."

continued from page 1

stability".⁴ For Proudhon any political system is essentially based on a fundamental duality: on those of authority and freedom. These two principles are inextricably tied together: "Authority, without a liberty to examine it, to resist or submit to it, is an empty word; liberty, without an authority as counterweight, is meaningless."

In his book, Proudhon analyzed four forms of government, all of which are characterized by the pair of opposites authority and freedom: Under the "rule of the authority" he subsumes monarchy and communism, which are characterized by the indivisibility of power; under the "rule of liberty" he subsumes democracy and anarchy which both included the separation of power. For Proudhon the idea of a separation of power or powers was one of the biggest achievements so far in political science. Proudhon called himself an "anarchist" but in his work he did no longer use the term "anarchism" but put the "Idea of the Federation" into the centre, which he probably considered a kind of synthesis of democracy and anarchism.

Finding a reasonable balance between liberty and authority

Proudhon also notes that the government systems, which constituted the political practice at his time, were not able to balance liberty and authority in a reasonable manner. The result was the "anonomies of rule" which are characterized by arbitrariness and corruption. Based on this disillusioning analysis of the present Proudhon wants to find out "whether society can arrive at some settled, equitable, and stable state of things, acceptable to our reason and our conscience". In following he deals with the "exposure of the idea of 'federation'" and puts the "idea of the contract" at the beginning of his considerations. In Proudhon's federal system political agreement is actually a binding contract that is proposed, discussed and voted on. The political agreement is anything but fictitious for Proudhon; it gains all its dignity and morality only under two conditions: "1. it is synallagmatic and commutative, 2. it is confined, in its object, within definite limits". The following must be provided for the single citizen who concludes such a political contract with the state: 1. The citizen must obtain from the state as much as he assigns to it, and 2. The citizen must keep all his freedom, sovereignty and initiative. This way Proudhon describes exactly the direct-democratic political culture of Switzerland which the former citizens had won in hard political struggles.

Proudhon then goes one step further by saying:

"What is essential to and characteristic of the federal contract, and what I most wish

the reader to notice, is that in this system the contracting parties, whether heads of family, towns, cantons, provinces, or states, not only undertake bilateral and commutative obligations with each other, but in making the pact, they reserve for themselves more rights, more liberty, more authority, more property than they abandon."

Proudhon emphasizes – by referring to a central idea of *Rousseau* – that the powers assigned to federal government must never exceed those assigned to communal or provincial "authorities" in numbers and content. The essential characteristic of Proudhon's federalism is that in all vertical structures of contract the higher levels' power must decrease vis à vis the lower one. Gasser took this idea of Proudhon over and called the "state" a "federalist body politic of the future" and a "contractual voluntary federation of communes".

Proudhon mentions the Swiss federal state as the single example that has put into practice the characteristics he mentioned. In the following he quotes several articles of the Federal Constitution of 1848 in order to underline this statement:

"Article 2: The purpose of the Confederation is to secure the independence of the nation towards foreign powers, to maintain internal peace and order, to protect the rights and liberties of its members, and to increase their common prosperity.

Article 3: The cantons are sovereign within the limits of federal sovereignty, and as such they exercise all rights which have not been delegated to the federal power.

Article 5: The Confederation guarantees to the cantons their territory, their sovereignty within the limits established by Article 3, their constitutions, the liberty and rights of their inhabitants, the constitutional rights of their citizens, as well as the rights and powers which the people have conferred upon the authorities."⁶

The Federal Constitution of 1848 does not mention the communes at all. It was the part of the sovereignty of the cantons to grant the communes their freedom. However, it was implicitly clear that the communal level was the lowest state level and that the principle of subsidiarity was guaranteed.

Proudhon says about this Swiss "state structure":

"Thus a confederation is not exactly a state; it is a group of sovereign and independent states, associated by a pact of mutual guarantees".

For Proudhon the Swiss State gave practical evidence that his idea of a federation could be put into practice.

The federative system as a guarantee of peace

In summary, Proudhon explains that "the federal system is the contrary of hierarchy or administrative and governmental

centralization which characterizes, to an equal extent, democratic empires, constitutional monarchies, and unitary republics."

For Proudhon the actual social contract is always a contract of federation, which is concluded by a legal act between the citizens and the state. Thus, the two opposing poles "authority" and "liberty" are brought into balance. In the course of time, the community of citizens would come to achieve that "the former declines imperceptibly and withdraws, while the latter expands [...]; since this dual movement leads to a subordination such that authority becomes progressively the instrument of liberty". For Proudhon, the federative system is applicable to all peoples and times and a "a guarantee [of peace] to its neighbours as well as to its own members".

In addition to the peacekeeping Proudhon mentions further ethical principles that a federative system creates:

"The federal system puts a stop to mass agitation, to the ambitions and tumults of the demagogues; it is the end of rule by the public square, of the triumphs of tribunes, and of domination by the capital city."

These ethical implications can in fact be compared to Gasser's "ethical collectivism". The federative and direct democratic system that has shaped Switzerland from 1848 on, is not only a specific decentralized structure of society. The people living in it also create values that are beneficial to peaceful coexistence and the constructive shaping of society. After the Second World War Gasser tirelessly endeavored to introduce and discuss his federative and direct democratic approach at the national and international level. It is absolutely worthwhile to follow in his footsteps. •

¹ Cf. Roca, René: *Wenn die Volkssouveränität wirklich eine Wahrheit werden soll ... Die Schweizerische direkte Demokratie in Theorie und Praxis – Das Beispiel des Kantons Luzern, Schriften zur Demokratieforschung*, vol. 6, Zurich-Basel-Geneva, 2012.

² See Gasser, Adolf: *Gemeindefreiheit als Rettung Europas. Grundlinien einer ethischen Geschichtsauffassung*, 2nd extended edition, Basel, 1947.

³ See Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph: *The principle of federation and the need to reconstitute the party of revolution*. Published in 1863. Translated from French by Richard Vernon. Without page reference. <http://www.ditext.com/proudhon/federation/federation.html> (accessed 28 Aug 2013) All Proudhon quotes are taken from this text.

⁴ Cf. Proudhon *Principle*, without page reference

⁵ Gasser, Adolf: *Geschichte der Volksfreiheit und Demokratie*, second edition, Aarau, 1949, p 231, see also Gasser, *Gemeindefreiheit*, pp. 22.

⁶ Cf. Proudhon *Principle*, without page reference. See also Kölz, Alfred: *Quellenbuch zur neueren schweizerischen Verfassungsgeschichte. Vom Ende der Alten Eidgenossenschaft bis 1848*, Berne 1992, pp. 447

History and its lessons

The failure of Swiss politics when it comes to the defense of Swiss sovereignty

by Thomas Kaiser

There are analogies in history, which worry us, but can also give a perspective when one thinks of the “malice (nowadays)”. We are now at the beginning of the 21st century confronted with very similar questions as our forefathers were 140, 100 or 75 years ago: How should Switzerland assert her sovereignty? What does it take to survive as a neutral small state, surrounded by great powers or even only the superpower EU, and not – as was euphemistically repeated over and again – by friends, without abandoning our state’s independence?

Reading different books which depict the historical situation of Switzerland while the situation in Europe developed more and more in the direction of war, we can recognize somewhat frightening parallels to the current geopolitical situation. One of these books was written by *Bernhard von Arx*: “Konfrontation – Die Wahrheit über die Bourbaki-Legende [Confrontation – the truth about the Bourbaki legend]”. (see *Current Concerns* No. 12 of 25 March, 2013). It outlines almost in analogy to the present time, how inadequately Switzerland was prepared in 1870/71 for the escalating conflict between Prussia and France. Policymakers, in particular the Federal Council, here in the person of *Emil Welti*, had criminally neglected the army and its defence capability but focused instead on prestige projects like *Alfred Escher’s* railway plans.

Nothing worked in this army and it was highly disturbing in case the emergency case should occur. So for example no standardized ammunition was

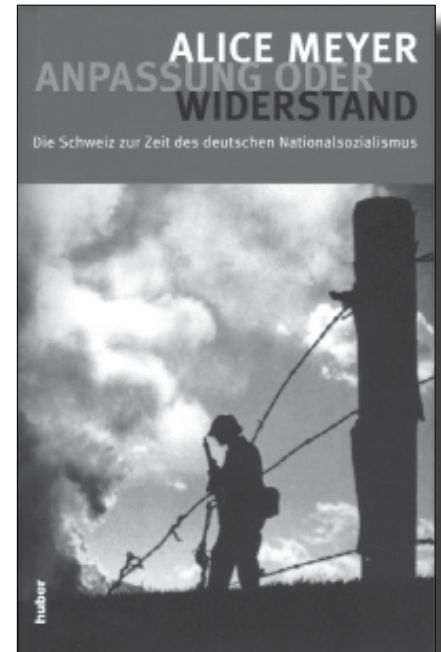
used, the logistics were insufficient and the army was completely insufficient in size, the armament and equipment extremely deficient. If war had been taken to Switzerland by Prussia or France, Switzerland would have faced a disaster. With some ten thousand men, Switzerland would have been unable to defend its independence and sovereignty against the Prussians, reinforced by soldiers from other German principalities and Duchies or against the French mass army.

Switzerland was just lucky

General *Hans Herzog*, elected by the Federal Assembly, had tried by all means available to him to maintain a rudimentary defense capability, even then with greatest efforts and against the strong resistance on the part of politics. Federal Councillor *Welti* did not tell the population the truth about the actual state of the army, but glossed over the situation and depicted the military capability of Switzerland in the nicest colors. *Welti* deceived the population in a manner practiced ever and again up to this day by various Federal Councils, for example when the total revision of the Federal Constitution allegedly was only a “light actualization”, or with respect to the revision of the Epidemics Act, that is supposed to be “much less restricting” than the old one, etc etc. What was neglected under *Welti* for many years could not be fixed in such a short time. Even though in 1870/71 the Swiss soldiers went to work courageously and took seriously on their task of national defense and the protection of the homeland, that is of old men, women and children; it was a happy coincidence that Switzerland in the Franco-Prussian war came away with a “black eye”. Considering this experience, should we actually again rely on good luck today and in the future and send our army home or even dismiss it what the GSoA has been demanding for years? Or maintain the military capability in such a way that we can adequately respond to threat scenarios?

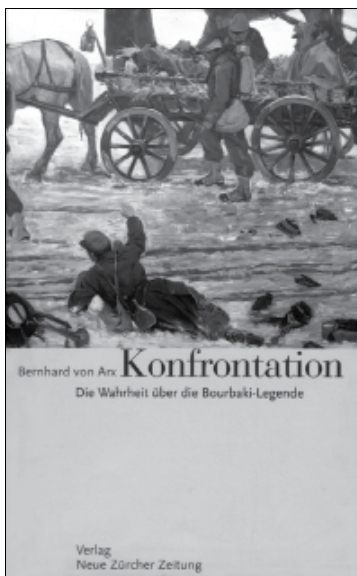
“The army [...] was worth if only by the fact that it existed.”

Another book that has been discussed already in detail (see *Current Concerns* No. 4 of 28 January 2013), is has obtained a gloomy relevance in the present political situation. In this work, written by *Alice Meyer*, “Anpassung oder Widerstand” – Die Schweiz zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus [Adjustment or resistance – Switzerland at the time of National So-



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cialism”), the ambivalent attitude of the Federal Council and in particular of the two Federal Councillors *Motta* and *Pilet-Golaz* plays a devastating role, much like in the book of *Bernhard von Arx*. What *Hitler* intended with his so-called “extended strategy”, – which was successful namely in Austria or in the Sudetenland, later in Denmark and Norway, as well as in Croatia and not least in France, at the beginning anyway – to break the enemy’s resistance with targeted propaganda and a willing fifth column in their own country to incorporate the corresponding land into the German Empire without the deployment of the military – was lead to success in Switzerland, as well. But this was not the case. What worked in other countries failed in Switzerland, not because of a courageous Federal Council, distinguished by clear words and a clear stance – although some Federal Councillors as *Obrecht* clearly expressed themselves – but because of an informed population and a really independent press. At the time, there were over four hundred independent newspapers and similar to the time of the Franco-Prussian War an army command that recognized their responsibility and strengthened the spirit of resistance. It is undisputed that an effective and operational army made a decisive contribution to protect Switzerland from the misery and the destruction of the war. Even the historian *Georg Kreis*



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continued on page 4

"History and its lessons"

continued from page 3

writes so, who otherwise uses every opportunity to put Switzerland in a negative light, when he explained in his book published in 1999: "How ever the military strength of the Swiss Army is classified, the army was [...] worth alone by the fact that it existed. Without the army Switzerland would have been much more exposed to the German and Italian pressure. Switzerland would have become a completely unprotected 'self-service shop' and would have been ruthlessly exploited as for example France or Denmark were. (Georg Kreis: *Die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Ihre Antworten auf die Herausforderungen der Zeit*, p. 98).

If the press was really independent...

But it took time and again it took people, individual citizens, who adhered to the freedom and sovereignty of Switzerland and took a stand for it with their own means. The effect that this had on the fellow human beings should not be underestimated. The national exhibition of 1939, lovingly called "Landi" by the Swiss, reflects exactly this mentality which is needed, when major powers are making a free independent and peace-loving small State the object of their greed. The media landscape at that time was diverse and independent and this shows by what media mishmash we are steered at the moment preferably into one direction. Today, there are a few large publishing houses, which more or less determine the whole media landscape for German-speaking Switzerland. Despite the internet and so-called "information society", it is difficult to form a comprehensive and independent opinion today. Usually, it is common sense, which prevents you from being fooled by misinformation.

Today the "extended strategy" is much easier to apply than at Hitler's time. Through the electronic media and their strong focus on profit there is an open way to manipulation. There are hardly any honesty and no journalism committed to truth to be found. Only this way one can explain why Switzerland today, 20 years after the fall of the iron curtain, is in such an uncomfortable situation similar to the one after the First World War. At that time as in 1991 it was "unrealistic" to believe that war was obsolete. At that time it read, as *Hermann Suter* stated in his interview: "No more war!"

In 1991, one spoke of the "peace dividend". Since the win war of aggression waged by NATO against Yugoslavia (1995 and 1999) offense of international law at the latest, and since the intolerable "War on Terror" (since 2001) by *George W. Bush* and an ever more imperially behaving EU (since 2007), this dividend has been used up. And what were the consequences of

this "fantastic peace dividend" for Switzerland? A military eradication in the once powerful Swiss Army, which is highly dangerous.

Adjustment or resistance – a question even today

In a further book, edited by the *Group Giardino*, excellently titled "Mut zur Kursänderung" (Courage to change course) the status of the Swiss army is revealed and it is described what devastating role the federal government played and is still playing. (see *Current Concerns* No. 22 of 8.7.2013) We remember the above-mentioned quote by Georg Kreis, who attached a great impact merely to the existence of an army.



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However, the Group Giardino goes further. An army, and this requires our Constitution, must be capable to protect the country and its people and to defend them in an extreme emergency. For this, the necessary financial means must be provided. If this is not the case, you must call the spade a spade, and that is something which the Group Giardino is doing with its book, among other things. The behavior of European EU-countries towards Switzerland, notably Germany and France, is disturbing and should be sufficient reason to be ready for a possible further escalation. So far, our Federal Council bows to the pressure and hopes to be able to avert the disaster. Far from it! The weaker our government is, the greater are the claims. In 1940 it was clear already, and that hasn't changed even today. "It depends on us at this stage of the international scene only, that we remain stable and rigid. [...] The Reich leadership will not decide on a military action against Switzerland, if it maintains its current armament and mobilization. [...]"

The fairy tale of the eternal friendship

As soon as our country gives in in one point concerning our own nation, the next claim is already pulled out of the

hat, and you rub your eyes in amazement. The fairy tale of friends, who surround us, is dangerous, because it obscures reality and confuses historical thinking. A US geo-strategist brought it to the point: "Between states there are no friends, but only interests." Who had imagined, that in August 2013 the situation between Spain and the United Kingdom comes to head, that newspapers are already heading: "Is there a second Falklands war concerning Gibraltar?", after the British had already sent war ships to the Strait of Gibraltar and Spain has pledged its support to Argentina in the issue of Falkland in return, which must sound almost like a declaration of war in the ears of the British. These are the realities: "friendly states", who are both members of the EU. Unfortunately it is the status still as of today, although the UN Charter signed by all members of the United Nations enshrines the equality (in the sense of equal value and equal rights) of all states that great powers always try to dominate the small ones and to rule over them, except those that can defend themselves. But to this end a well-equipped, motivated army is indispensable as well as representatives of the people, who know what they have to defend, and who support the people in their discomfort and so build up a resistance – so resistance rather than adjustment. •

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The principle of the militia army is a main pillar in the Federal State of Switzerland

Interview with Hermann Suter, President of the Group Giardino



Hermann Suter
(picture thk)

thk. The Swiss army, says Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer (see box), is no longer able to fulfil its constitutional mandate, namely to ensure the country's defence. For several years, the Group Giardino, an association of former and still active militia officers and proponents of a contemporary militia army has drawn attention to this miserable situation. The Group Giardino has denounced this miserable state of the army in several publications and prompted a reversal. Her most recent publication "Mut zur Kursänderung [Courage to change course]" is unflattering to the state of the army and offers solutions how a meaningful transformation of the military could be performed so that it can fulfil its mission again. In the following interview Hermann Suter, president of the Group Giardino, explains the situation in detail.

Current Concerns: The Group Giardino advocates a modern, well-equipped and powerful army. What's wrong with our army?

Hermann Suter: It is in fact true that the Swiss Army has got into a precarious situation. This does not only affect the material and equipment, but it has been led into the disaster during the past 20 years due to increasing financial cutbacks. Almost all reserves have been abolished, material worth billions was destroyed, mind you without legitimacy. The training has suffered severe damage because totally inadequate concepts were created. There is no longer any "ability for mobilization", also the logistics is in dire state, even if one begins slowly to correct some things here. In our opinion, as we have shown in the book "Mut zur Kursänderung [Courage to change course]" and in the two preceding publications "Schwarzbuch I und II [Black Book I and II]", the army is at a crossroads in terms of staff, material and finances. It has – together with some parts of the militia organizations who could not prevail – completely lost its planning security for the next 10, 20 years, due to the disastrous policies of the Federal Council and the Parliament...Why is it that the army has fallen into such a condition, and where is it to be observed?

ASMZ:

"An army of 100,000 men is unable to fulfill the contract under the Federal Constitution Article 58, paragraph 2: 'The army defends the country and its population.' It is therefore no more constitutional."

Ueli Maurer: "The statement is basically correct."

Source: *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitschrift (General Swiss military journal) ASMZ, No. 7, July 2013*

In a sense, history repeats itself, and I am going back almost 100 years, to the end of the First World War. After this tragic event in which millions died, were injured, maimed, traumatized, the world has called loudly: "No more war!" The League of Nations was established and peace talks were launched. The League of Nations took up residence in neutral Switzerland, in Geneva, the birthplace of the Red Cross. This was driven by well-intentioned idealistic and humanitarian ideas. The "No more war!" was politically misused. The argument was, if there should never again be a war, if there would be no more shooting, an army is no longer necessary either. In 1924, as a consequence, Switzerland has had literally let the army go to rack and ruin, with the TO 24 (troops order). No one was prepared for the fact that a few years later the Nazis, the fascists, had incredibly upgraded their military and unleashed the Second World War only a short time later. Our army was not prepared for that. The analogy to this historical situation is the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of East-West confrontation, the end of the Warsaw Pact and the fall of the Iron Curtain. At that time the whole Western world said, "now there will be no more war." In response, the Swiss military, which until the beginning of the 90ies, had been well positioned, started to launch the carousel of reforms that can make you dizzy. The high politics, the Federal Council and the bulk of the federal parliament are clearly responsible for this. They fell victim to the same naive illusion as their predecessors more than 80 years ago. There is an almost identical repetition. It is completely irresponsible, and it was last not least for this reason that the Group Giardino was founded in order to stop the politicians in federal Berne and

to stop the further destruction of the army. That is our goal.

What has been abolished, that we would urgently need for a good army?

Let's start with the armed forces' personnel strength. The *Army 61* ended with more than 700,000 men. It had an impressive level of mobilization. Three quarters of the troops were operational within 48 hours. In the field of equipment the army was as redundant as no other army in the world. When General Clark, the NATO supreme commander of his time was asked, how he would judge the defence force in Switzerland, he responded that it could well defend itself. That was then. Today, we are regarded as the reserve army of the reserve by NATO. Today, the army has about 100,000 men. About one-fifth of these 100,000 are called combat groups that are not even fully equipped. The initial number of 40,000 men, who are now planned to be deployed for so-called subsidiary operations, i.e. to support the cantons in disasters, were halved to 20,000. The whole army has been manoeuvred into a direction that even the head of the DDPS, Ueli Maurer, declared that the army cannot defend the country. He said so four weeks ago in an interview in the "Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitschrift [General Swiss Military Journal] (ASMZ No. 7, July 2013). According to Giardino this situation violates Article 58 of the Federal Constitution. Also the project of the Development of the Army (WEA), which we radically reject as unconstitutional, supports the thesis that the army is no longer able to defend itself, let alone our country, neither to the outside nor inside.

Even Ueli Maurer said in the above-mentioned interview that the state of the army violates the constitution.

That's exactly it. In addition, you should know that, as can be heard from very well-informed sources, that the head of the DDPS is always shot down with his bills six to one in the Federal Council. The state government is primarily responsible for the disaster; as well as the federal councillors who did not notice this or did not want to notice it. In this regard I speak only of the bourgeois parties – the left wing advocates the abolition of the army anyway – the big bourgeois parties, CVP, FDP, Green Liberal etc. The SVP (Swiss People's Party) has always adhered to the

continued on page 6

"The principle of the militia army ..."

continued from page 5

army, we have to give them credit for that. But slowly but surely the other parties also realize what disaster they have caused. Whether that insight will have any political impact and will lead to the establishment of an operational army remains to be seen.

Let us address the vote on 22 September. What does the militia army mean for Switzerland?

The foundation of it all is the basic idea of direct democracy that the citizen is also a soldier and the soldier at the same time a citizen. This is the basic maxim. Only a democratic state can afford, must afford and must want to afford to maintain the connection citizen-soldier and soldier-citizen and to place confidence in the citizen. So in the final analysis it is a political principle of trust, a basic understanding of the state, and therefore the principle of the militia army is just a main pillar in the Federal State of Switzerland. Only a militia army in which the soldier really provides his service and fulfils the general conscription to serve the community and

in which the soldier returns to civilian life and comes back into service as a citizen, only this militia army can succeed. Those who want to abolish are not only shooting the army in the foot or cutting the ground from under the army's feet, but also damage the whole political culture in party politics, in educational politics, in health politics – in any political area this way. Therefore, we must hold on to the military service, as we have defined it, and how it has well-proven itself.

The argument that a professional army or even a volunteer militia army is cheaper, is often heard.

A small country like Switzerland can afford no other army than a militia army. For 30,000 men (of a professional army) we would have to raise wages of 3 billion. However, nothing else is paid for – no gun, no uniform, no military material. A complete illusion. A state militia army is politically imperative and mandatory, and, in my view, just for the task in which the citizen soldier has to sacrifice his life, if ill luck would have it, there is no alternative. With all our might, we must reject the neo-marxist theories of GSoA, that dreams of a nonviolent society or even

world, and I hope that the people will also realise that.

What does it mean for our country if we speak of the state-political importance of our army?

For the multilingualism of Switzerland, the old army was a very important social bracket. Switzerland, as a nation that was established from the political will of the people, with its various language regions, has to be recreated virtually, every day. This is not self-evident. The fact that, in the army, we do not only have the various social classes under one roof, that those who are in the same barracks also have to go to the same arena, the bank director just as the butcher apprentice, that the Romansh-speaking and the French-speaking and the German-speaking Swiss have to do the same exercises, has been crucial for the cohesion of our country. Now we have reduced the stocks dramatically against our better judgment, we have reduced the conscription age dramatically, we have abolished the army classes, we have no more reserves. Today, you leave your service obligation at the age of 30, the recruitment to the army is about half. Therefore, people have started to discuss military justice. We have reduced the whole army so that its integrative function is no longer as effective as it could actually be. Starting the brigadization of the army and the abolition of the traditional associations in the individual cantons, as I have experienced as a child, is just nostalgia. This way the common touch of the army was damaged quite viciously. *Giardino* is therefore of the opinion that one must increase the resources not only for purely military reasons, but that creating reserves again is a very urgent task as well. The WEA report says that no more reserves are necessary, which is the biggest disaster of all. An army without reserves can not fulfill its mission. We need to enlarge the stocks again, in the military, but also in the political and social interest for the integrative function that this militia army has.

The 'ramp-up phase' was the answer to the drastic reduction of the soldiers for years. How do you see that?

This idea is nonsense. An army needs a minimal solid foundation. This foundation is only useful if it can be put on its feet within a reasonable time. At the same time a mobilization capability is needed. In the era of *Ogi* and during the Minister of Defense *Rumsfeld's* term in office in the United States, the high Swiss officers were sent there. Then they came back home with this idea and started to have fantasies of a module-and-attack army.

Updated scenario: The implosion of Switzerland at the gates ?

by Professor Dr Albert A. Stahel

While in Syria a civil war is raging – initiated by the Saudis and Turkey – while at the same time the US are deploying special task forces from Jordan against the *Assad* regime, keeping up the pressure on Iran through their armada in the Persian Gulf, it looks as if Saudi-funded radical Salafis but also al-Qaeda fighters of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant might seize power in Syria after the fall of the *Assad* regime. At the moment these extremists in Syria are also fighting the so-called secular insurgents, supported by the United States.

Egyptian President *Mursi* has been overthrown by the army. The rule of the Muslim Brotherhood has ended. Now a power struggle is raging between the Muslim Brotherhood and the army! It seems plausible indeed that this is going to lead to a collapse of state and economy.

As a consequence, Egypt would only be able to provide for half of its 80 million inhabitants! If so, 20-40 million Egyptians would migrate to Europe! Two million Christians from disintegrated Syria and probably some millions more from Tunisia and Lebanon would have to be added.

This development already looms ahead, while the EU is still facing the euro crisis. At the same time in the EU's

eastern (Romania, Hungary) and the southern outskirts a process of economic and social decay has begun. These countries are also facing mass immigration from North Africa and Syria. If this mass immigration increases, the economies of these countries are likely to come under even greater pressure. With such a development, a definitive collapse of the economies of Spain, Portugal and Greece is conceivable.

According to its policy in the past, Italy is likely to pass on those movements of people further north. This could lead to Switzerland being faced with 5–10 million asylum seekers from North Africa and the Middle East in the near future. Already today, the political leadership in Berne is unable to cope with this task. All the more Berne will prove incapable to overcome the crisis under the strain of additional asylum seekers. In such a situation also the cantonal police forces with their shortage of manpower will be no longer operable. State, economy and society of Switzerland are likely to collapse very quickly as a result of such a development. •

Source: *Institut für Strategische Studien* [Institute for Strategic Studies] from 17 August 2013; www.strategische-studien.com

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

continued on page 7

Surviving in malicious times

Switzerland 70 years ago

by Dr phil Peter Koller

ts. In history, it has not been easy for the small states. They are either exposed to the arrogance of the bigger states or they are surrounded by a big power structure – or there might be such people within the country who are tired of their homeland and / or the 5th Column beleaguer them from within to the abandonment of their independence. The old “Eidgenossen” (Confederates) used to describe these circumstances by the term “malice of the time”. As the articles in this issue of Current Concerns show, each generation of Swiss citizens must take a new effort, especially when it was granted a period of peace. We forget all too fast that history does not always pass peacefully and we better prepare in times of peace for more turbulent times. If EU policy makers even compare the year 2013 to the year 1913, with all its consequences, a small country like Switzerland will be well-advised to proceed into the future in union, having ascertained itself of its past. The subsequent article will contribute to this: If the precarious situation of the Confederation before and during the Second World War is presented, with all the pressing issues and problems of national defense, of how to secure the supply of the country, but also how to reject the Nazi propaganda, every contemporary must ask himself: Where do we stand today? What about our current food security? What about our army? What about our spirit of resistance? Is there a General Guisan, i.e. is there a personality today willing to

complete this task? As a nation forged by the will of the people, would we muster the will to comprehensively protect and preserve this our jewel? A look into the history may straighten up those confederates who have become fickle or insecure by today's propaganda: The Swiss model of direct democracy, federalism and the perpetual armed neutrality is and will remain the model of peace, which has remained unmatched to this day, radiating not only to the inside, but also to the outside world, as a hope for the people elsewhere that a coexistence among sovereign nation-states, respecting human dignity and living together in peace would be possible – if we finally really commit ourselves to it.

“None of us will go on a pilgrimage”

Given the threatening signs for a new World War, the Swiss Federal Council took its state political task seriously by the end of 1938. In his message to the Federal Assembly on 9 November 1938 Federal Councillor Philipp Etter named the “tasks of the Swiss preservation and promotion of culture”. This message has been later referred to by historians as the “Magna Charta of the spiritual defense of Switzerland”. In his message the Federal Councillor Etter rejected “racism, ethnic nationalism, the state propaganda on culture and the leader state” and contrasted them with the basic values of Switzerland: the belonging to three European cultural areas, cul-

“The principle of the militia army ...”

continued from page 6

Switzerland has never wanted to attack a country. We have a purely defensive army. Our philosophy is dissuasion. But dissuasion and armed neutrality is credible only if the army is able to take a certain force to the front within a reasonable time and to have an external effect. The whole magic about ramp-up is complete nonsense and means scattering sand into the eyes of the people. Today we speak of anticipation. At that time I personally had asked Federal Councillor Ogi if he could tell me how Europe will look like in five years time and at what point of time he would seize the “red” phone to reinforce the army. The answer was dead silence. This is useless. Obviously, if the situation evolves more and more towards war, the degree of preparedness has to be changed. Then you have to consider where there are still resources that can be brought to use.

But the basic foundation must be such that it deters potential enemies and that the country is prepared to ward off the most dangerous threats.

How do you see the future of our army?

We will reject the initiative, I assume, in principle. Then immediately the next front will arise. The development of the Army (WEA). I think it is based on a completely wrong starting point. We will probably then have to fight it. Frankly, I'm skeptical that we can enforce it politically, because it needs a radical change of heart. It cannot be that the army and the security policy are ranked 17th out of twenty positions. Probably the general and specific situation are still not dramatic enough, so that the people realize what is going on there. And hopefully we will not be late again, as unfortunately has been a constant in Swiss history. We're fighting that. We cannot reach for the stars. It is a proper work in terms of raising awareness. I

Gotthard Association

On 20 June 1940 the “Gotthard Association” was founded in Berne. It concerned a reputed spiritual resistance movement which engaged as an institution beyond party boundaries for the untarned will of Switzerland to defend herself, later for the support of the project Wahlen and the transformation of “Erwerbssatzordnung” (Regulation for income compensation) for soldiers to a genuine public insurance for the whole of Switzerland, later called AHV. Their common program was the unconditional commitment to Switzerland. *Gonzague de Reynold, Denis de Rougemont, Walther Allgöwer, Gottlieb Duttweiler* (founder of the cooperative of Migros); *Robert Eibel, Christian Gasser*, but also trade unionists like *Charles Ducommun* (Swiss Trade Union Association); and *René Leyraz* (Association of the Christian Trade Unions), and the “father” of later Swiss Plan to extend agriculture, later Federal Councillor *Friedrich Traugott Wahlen*. The decisive impulse was given by university professor *Theo Spoerri*.

tural diversity, the federative character of democracy and the reverence for the dignity and freedom of man. The defense of these spiritual values was primarily decla-

continued on page 8

am cautiously optimistic that it might be possible, but we're talking about periods between 10 and 15 years.

Mr Suter, thank you for the interview. •

Letter to the Editor

I believe there is only one answer to the GSoA initiative:

Those who live in Switzerland and benefit from our achievements like communities, cantons and state are liable to military service!

The initiative is therefore to be rejected!

So NO on the ballot!

Kind regards,
Hans Versell
Münsingen

"Perseverance in malicious times"

continued from page 7

red the citizens' task, not that of the state. Etter's message ended with the words:

"The Swiss idea is not a product of race, i.e. of the flesh, but it is the mind's work. It is an admirable fact that a big idea, a European, universal idea, originated at the Gotthard – the mountain that separates and the pass that unites – and that it has become a political reality: the idea of a spiritual community of peoples and Western cultures."²

"The desire for a plan of perseverance which contains all measures to sustain the war hardships and which implies all measures vital to wartime economy, a desire that emerges time and again, is a further testimony of the consciousness given to a lot of people who say that they would like to be team members in a systematic and organized whole and that they would like to strive for a common aim if the big stages of marching direction were being traced out in advance. *It must not surprise you that this need is present just in the Swiss man's soul. It is always that his critical spirit that has matured through a democratic training taking several generations, wants information about the whys and the hows on which the authorities' measures are based. It would certainly be wrong to judge the call for a systematic and organized wartime economy as a concession in direction of collectivization and massification.*"

Wahlen, Friedrich Traugott: Unser Boden heute und morgen. Etappen und Ziele des schweizerischen Anbauwerks, Zurich (Atlantis) 1943, preface, p. 11 [emphasis by the author]

At the *National Exhibition* in Zurich in 1939, the Swiss national defense, the so-called "Landi Spirit", sharply fought by *Goebbel's* propaganda, found its effective expression. It met with large consent among the people. Federal Councillor *Obrecht*, who in the 1930s had changed the Swiss army into an effective force along with Federal Councillor *Minger*, expressed this very natural will to resist against the arrogance of power that was firmly anchored in the Swiss population, in the following simple and straightforward formula. "None of us will go on pilgrimage".³

The Swiss peoples' determination to resistance was manifested in impressive form on the occasion of this national exhibition in 1939. Reading through the documents about it today, especially the two-volume manual, we encounter evidence of the pride for Switzerland as a nation forged by the will of the people and what the people have achieved through their openness and their will to assert themselves in their direct democratic character. The "Landi Spir-

it" was the spirit that made all those many sacrifices and privations possible, which the generation in active service taken on. The post-war and prosperity generation owes everything to them, including their opportunity to benefit without any own effort from the fruits of the sacrifices their parents' and grandparents' generations have made. The entire post-war Switzerland has to bow to the courage of the active service generation, their discipline, their willingness to make sacrifices for the common good, even sacrifice their own lives.

The Rütli Report: The Swiss response to the pressure to conform

In the second year of the war, after the unexpectedly rapid collapse of France, Switzerland found itself completely surrounded by national-socialist and fascist totalitarianism. Thus, not the military situation, but also the economic situation was desperate.

Switzerland's decent response to the oppressions did not come from the political side, but from the military. On 25 July 1940 General *Guisan* ordered all higher force commanders to gather for a report on the historic grounds of the Rütli meadow above Lake Lucerne, the place where the three original cantons had adopted the Federal Charter in 1291.

The 25 July 1940 marked the end of the army's redeployment, associated with the withdrawal of part of the army units into the so-called "Réduit". For *Guisan*, this seemed to be the right time to oblige the officer corps and the Swiss population to put up unconditional resistance. After being transported by paddle steamer from Lucerne to the Rütli the commanders of the army units and military units aligned in a semicircle. The General outlined the difficult political and military situation in the country after the confinement by the Axis powers, gave national reasons for the withdrawal into the Réduit and called upon the people and the army to offer *unconditional resistance*. On the return trip, an order was distributed in which the army was asked not to lend their ear to those who spread defeatist messages. Instead, they should believe in their own strength

"In the military sector this question [the question of perseverance, the author] had been answered in the sense of a 'high-spirited pessimism' by the idea of the 'réduit national'. Social perseverance was decisively strengthened by the insurances for the balance of salaries and earnings, the creation of which as a new great act of solidarity will open a new page in history. In the economic sector the main question was the delivery of the daily bread."

Wahlen, Friedrich Traugott, Unser Boden heute und morgen. Etappen und Ziele des schweizerischen Anbauwerks, Zurich (Atlantis) 1943, preface, p.8

"It will be a matter for the future historiography to analyze the transformations which our people underwent as to its moral attitude during the varied, eventful years of 1939 to 1942. In the retrospective the occasion to reflect and strengthen ourselves on a national basis seems to us to be a gift offered by heaven, that is to say in form of the unforgettable national exhibition in 1939. Certain things that would have had to be said and felt at the outbreak of the disaster in September 1939, at a moment when the pressure of events did not leave the time to do this – had been said in advance and felt in advance, had become the good of millions of people who would not lose it, these people who had not only seen, but also lived and experienced this way. *The outbreak of war met our people in a state of determined will which our people had scarcely ever reached before, a will to maintain and defend our spiritual and political and economical integrity.*"

Wahlen, Friedrich Traugott: Unser Boden heute und morgen. Etappen und Ziele des schweizerischen Anbauwerks, Zurich (Atlantis) 1943, Foreword, p. 7 [emphasis by the author]

to put up successful resistance. The *Rütli Report* was published in the Swiss newspapers and met with overwhelming popularity among the people and the troops, even with enthusiasm. It was the redeeming word that overcame the paralysis.

The Wahlen cultivation plan – closing the ranks and putting up resistance

However, not only in the army but also in large parts of the population, the Swiss wanted to oppose the Nazi demon. On 15 November 1940, in the "Zunftsaal zur Schmieden" (guild hall for forgers) in Zurich, a federal official who was not well known at that time gave a presentation of fateful importance to the *Society of Swiss Farmers*. It was *Friedrich Traugott Wahlen*, the "father of the cultivation plan", as he was later called, later on he was Cantonal Councillor and longtime Federal Councillor. At that time he was appointed to the War Office of Food, where he was asked to study the conditions under which Switzerland could maintain its food sovereignty under war conditions. With great seriousness *Wahlen* patiently set off to tackle this gigantic work. His findings showed: Survival was possible, but only by a great effort, of which the principal effort was to dramatically expand cultivation areas in Switzerland. The *Wahlen Plan* was born in its fundamentals. In late autumn 1940 *Wahlen's* plan was ready to

continued on page 9

"Perseverance in malicious times"

continued from page 8

be realized. With his speech he deliberately chose the path towards the public. He wanted the plan to "catch on" so that also the doubtful ones would be willing to dare tackle the common work. Its courageous endeavour paid off. The plan hit like a bomb.

"The 'Anbauwerk' (cropping work) has defended efficiently the border between frugal nourishment and famine."

Gedanken und Überlegungen zum Abschluss des Anbauwerkes, Presentation by F.T. Wahlen, held on 8 February 1946 Zurich, p.11

Both the Federal Councillors Obrecht and Minger, who in the 1930s had methodically enhanced and strengthened the Swiss army, were aware of the fact that Switzerland would only have the chance of surviving a future war, if there was not only a well-armed and well-trained army, but also food in sufficient quantity for the population and the army. The then head of the Department of Agriculture in the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Dr *Josef Käppeli*, who also supervised the War Office of Food, had appointed Dr F. T. Wahlen, *Head of the Section for Agricultural Production and Home Economics in the Federal War Office of Food*. Wahlen, who had studied agronomy at the FIT Zurich and had been actively involved in agricultural development projects, as well in South America, had already been director of the *Agricultural Experimental Station Oerlikon* for some years. He retained this post even after his appointment. From the very beginning Wahlen was devoted to his enormous task. Initially, he and his staff aimed at get-



1940–1945: J.R. de Salis on Radio Beromünster: "Perfect example of a radio station of the Free World"

Letter to  the Editor

I am very glad about the reprint of the articles containing the analyzes by Professor J.R. de Salis in *Current Concerns*. He has meant a lot to me since my youth during the Second World War, and I used to remember him once and again later on. The thing was the following: My father had been a determined opponent to the Nazis. His influence resulted in my being a politically interested person from a very young age on (at the end of the war I had been 14 years old): I looked for foreign broadcasts on our radio receiver in order to be informed about the events and things that were hidden by national socialist propaganda. I knew that this was forbidden and that listening to foreign broadcasts was severely punished. It was *Radio Beromünster* that I found beside *BBC*. It may have been by chance that I had switched on this broadcast on a Friday at 19.10 and that my father joined me who normally had always been in his practice at this time. (My father was a physician). It was the two of us that listened to the weekly commentary by Professor de Salis. We were so taken in with his declarations that on every Friday evening,

as far as my father could take some time off for these minutes, we sat in front of the radio receiver. My father attracted one of his friends' attention to this broadcast, as well. He also became a regular listener of Professor de Salis. I remember very well his calls: "If your father has got the time, he shall come in the evening to me and bring 19,10 Mark." In the interception of telephone calls the Nazis were great, and thus certain declarations were transcribed.

My father and I listened to the great commentaries by Mr de Salis even beyond the end of the war. *Radio Beromünster* with its objective broadcasts became an incarnation of a radio station of the Free World. That I always cherished warm feelings of sympathy for Switzerland is not only due to *Friedrich Schiller*, but also much more to *Radio Beromünster* and Professor J.R. de Salis. For that reason thanks to *Current Concerns* to have attracted attention to him once again.

Prof Dr Werner Gumpel, Gilching

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

ting an accurate view on the current agricultural production capacity in Switzerland. A meticulously land register map was designed in a year-long of effort, which provided information on the existing farming yield for each of the 3,000 communes, as well as on soil and land reserves. This information was verified by Wahlen's employees in each commune and charted on register maps and inventories. Then the demand was calculated including the latest figures and statistics, while the circumstances of the war reality limited the personal consumption to the absolute minimum for the maintenance of the person's health. It was found that the available acreage was not enough; it had to be increased dramatically as soon as the important imports would stop due to war blockades and border closures.

One thing was clear to Wahlen from the onset: The cultivation plan could only be realized with the greatest effort and willpower of the entire population. For Switzerland this was an option of to be or not to be, whether they could successfully pass the test also in this sphere. Therefore Wahlen agreed that his plan was sometimes also called the "cultivation battle" with reference to the military language, although he mainly talked about the "cultivation work". As in a battle it was in fact about existence or perdition. In his retrospective presenta-

tion of 8 February 1946 in Zurich, when it came to evaluating the overall performance of this important work, Wahlen said, "No matter how good the General Staff is, it cannot achieve anything without a strong army. And so let me now sing the praise of

"Recently, you are hearing the opinion that it is negligent if not criminal to pronounce the thought of a coming new war, and you may reproach me to justify the new production program also with this reference. May God wish these people to be right! Unfortunately the development of humanity so far has not provided any evidence that the increasing atrocity of war events from one use of weapons to the other that there would be a preventive effect thanks to. The world has never been so full of signs of the worst omen."

Gedanken und Überlegungen zum Abschluss des Anbauwerkes. A public lecture given by F.T. Wahlen to the Society of Swiss Farmers on 8 February 1946 in Zurich, p. 15

this army, which eventually won the day: the praise of our farmers and their supporters in the cities and the countryside."

continued on page 10

"Perseverance in malicious times"

continued from page 9

"Ruthless restriction of non-vital activities"

It shows Wahlen's political and psychological sensibility that he chose the public for the presentation of the Swiss cultivation plan, which was now developed in detail, and he also showed much skill in determining the realization date for mid-November 1940. In his lecture, which is considered a kind of ignition spark to the cultivation plan, Wahlen set up the following demands:

- Extremely economical, comprehensive management of all stocks with a view to their extension as long as possible.
- Utmost utilization of the natural resources of the country, including waste and scrap material recycling.
- Strictly organized use of all existing material means of production.
- Strictly organized use of human labor in the field of food production, "while ruthlessly restricting non-essential areas of activity".

The second point primarily included the targeted surplus cultivation in agriculture. The rationing of 250 grams of bread per head of the population and the extending of wheat flour by 10% potato flour required a doubling of the crop area for food grain; the area for potato production had to be increased to 63,000 hectares. The 7 stage conversion of pasture land into arable land was dramatic for some cantons and regions. Thus in the early years of the war, the Canton of Obwalden increased its production area from 55 hectares of arable land to 959 hectares in 1945; during the same period Nidwalden reached a fiftyfold of arable land, while the two Appenzells, which had had 23 ha of arable land in 1934, achieved an area of 1,620 ha towards the end of the war.⁴ In areas with flatter land, the increase was even more dramatic. So, for example, the Canton of St. Gallen increased its 2,051 hectares of pre-war arable land to 14,529 ha. Wahlen comments on such extraordinary achievements, "Without the situation of trust, created by the productive agricultural land register, a differentiation so contrary to previous developments would never have been possible." According to Wahlen's own figures and calculations, his cultivation plan provided 700 calories more per day per capita for the Swiss population during the war years. While the quantity of calories declined to 2,000 in the years without cultivation plan, Wahlen's cultivation work defended "effectively the border between scarce food and hunger".

The cultivation plan required a dramatic increase of planting vegetables which was associated with a corresponding increase in the work to be invested because of its labor intensity. At the beginning they faced the tricky question if agriculture with its then

nearly 200,000 individual farms could provide the sufficiently efficient workforce. According to Wahlen's calculations they needed an additional number of 30,000-40,000 workers, whereas the mobilization of the army withdrew twice that number.

Although Wahlen confronted the farmers in his initial presentation of November 1940 with an increase in hardship and performance, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Hermann Wahlen describes this in the following words, "It was a lecture, which was given at the right moment. The entire Swiss population, including the non-agricultural population, took a deep breath. There was nothing but enthusiasm. Suddenly, Wahlen had become the most famous Confederate."⁵

Hard times and problems

The cultivation plan met with great approval among the population. Many followed the call to cover their requirements for vegetables as far as possible through self sufficiency⁶. In many gardens an original flower bed was converted into a potato field. After initial skepticism the farmers were also won over for the great work. They realized that the loads had to be equally distributed according to their strength. They addressed the problem of attracting additional workers for intensive vegetable cultivation. From a certain point of time on companies had to send a proportion of their employees to help in agricultural production; this was also a great sacrifice, because there was a general shortage of labor. The teaching staff in agricultural schools were consistently and permanently trained regarding the use of machines, fertilizers and other methods of intensifying methods and then sent to the farmers to make them familiar with it. The population accepted the restrictions in consumption by the food stamps because they were all concerned and those who were economically better-off how could not – as had been the case in the First World War – provide themselves with benefits. However, during the whole period of implementation of the stages of the cultivation plan Wahlen complained that there had repeatedly been isolated misuses in the food black market or through unauthorized trade "underhand". He described this behavior as a form of "treason".

There were also problems from other sides. Despite great efforts labor shortages prevailed in the agriculture during the whole period of time. It was not so much caused by too little helping hands, although the conscription of men in the active service, of course, constantly caused problems. The main problem was that agriculture, which was now encouraged to maximum performance, did not have enough skilled workers at its disposal. Again, the men were missing, not only because of their physical strength,

but because of the long-standing different know-how they had acquired for each farm. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that the economy, especially the unexpectedly active construction industry, had paid noticeably higher wages for some time in the first years of the war than a farm had. This resulted in a considerable migration of unskilled labor from the agricultural regions to the industrial centers during the first years of the war.⁷ Moreover, it took some time before a certain flexibility in the use and replacement plans of the Army eased the biggest hardships caused by the absence of the farm managers. The obligation of labor service people to work in agriculture, the use of internees for road construction and deforestation⁸ and the compulsory service of apprentices since 1942 eased the situation. The problem that these workers often lacked the skills necessary to work efficiently in agriculture remained until the war ended.

**1943 until the end of the war:
Surviving!**

Despite the efforts of all forces, the individual stage goals could not quite be reached everywhere. Weather conditions, scarce fertilizer and pesticides supply, slower growth and the lack of skilled workers were responsible that cultivation objectives could not be met in some cantons. Others, however, where the conditions were favorable, exceeded the prescribed obligatory amounts, which did not balance the overall negative outcome. With an increasing duration of the war, there was also fatigue. Especially women, young people and older workers in the country had to cope with years of superhuman efforts. Still no relief was in sight. In the year 1942 and at the beginning of 1943, when despite Stalingrad there was only little hope for the axis to be decisively beaten militarily in the foreseeable future on the continent and in the Pacific, the motto was "perseverance". This was also true for the cultivation plan.

Just at this time, the Swiss virtue of concordance once more proved successful. As early as 1940, when the situation became dire, the *Gotthard-Bund*, a private association of firm and steady Swiss personalities, had called for abandoning the differences resulting from professions and party affiliation in the interests of the whole and reaching out to each other everywhere for the benefit of the required actions. This appeal, which independent personalities from business and trade unions joined in, such as *Konrad Ilg*, the longtime chairman of the *Metal and Watches Workers' Union* and later first Socialist Federal Councillor, did not fall on deaf ears. In some cantons commissions were established during the war, in which representatives of the authorities, business and industry regularly met with represent-

continued on page 11

"Perseverance in malicious times"
continued from page 10

atives of the working class to take common decisions regarding the survival of the people and the country.⁹ In those years it was mainly the economic issue, which was the cause for greater differences, thus creating a considerable internal conflict potential.

The farmers demanded better prices for the much-needed agricultural products, ultimately securing their livelihood. Industry and commerce did not at all want to grant emanating demands for wage increases in view of the tense situation of the economy during the war. And the representatives of the workers could not close their eyes to the prevailing misery among workers and their permanent call for wage increases. Despite many measures to alleviate the suffering, the situation in many Swiss families was desperate at that time. Although they had enough food stamps, they simply had no money to redeem them. Despite all measures the price spiral, especially in terms of food prices, steadily moved upward.

In May 1943, the situation was ready for an agreement that was made on the grounds of the following principles and decisions of the Federal Council:

1. The agricultural prices are to be stabilized on the (relatively high) level in the spring of 1943. No further price increases will be granted.
2. The Swiss Federation of Trade Unions is denied the demand for wage increases.
3. The Swiss peasantry will be granted guarantees for the Swiss post-war economic policy.

Again, a further internal crisis situation was averted. It must be noted that the unions made a great contribution by renouncing any sharp escalation or making virulent remarks. Objective historians are of the opinion that it was mainly the Swiss workers, who averted the crisis by their acquiescence and acceptance of the prize stops, although they had to bear the main burden economically. Indeed, while the prices for agricultural goods were frozen at a relatively high level, wages were at an all-time low.¹⁰

**Once more effective:
Renewal out of the crisis**

Summing up, Switzerland's situation seventy years ago was as follows: As so often in Swiss history, the threat and endangering of Switzerland's existence led to its focusing on its own strengths. The fact that Switzerland was surrounded by totalitarian, highly aggressive powers only led to a short period of resignation. Then the reflection on the potentials of resistance created a situation in which the extreme exertion of all energies became the dominant motto – not that of the parties or the government, but that of the population itself.

 SCHWEIZERISCHE EIDGENOSSENSCHAFT Ganze Lebensmittelkarte für 1 Person Rationen pro Februar 1942					
30.7 Käse 100 gr					11.7 Butter Fett 100 gr
30.7 Käse 100 gr					11.7 Butter Fett 100 gr
30.7 Käse 100 gr					11.8 Butter Fett 50 gr
30.8 Käse 50 gr					7.5 250 gr Fett oder 2 1/2 dl Öl
30.8 Käse 50 gr					7.7 100 gr Fett oder 1 dl Öl
1.4 Zucker 500 gr					7.8 50 gr Fett oder 1/2 dl Öl
1.7 Zucker 100 gr					20.7 Kaffee- K.-Zusatz K.-Ersatz Kakao, Tee 100 Punkte
3.5 Teigwaren 250 gr					20.8 Kaffee- K.-Zusatz K.-Ersatz Kakao, Tee 50 Punkte
3.7 Teigwaren 100 gr					21.8 Kaffee-Zusatz Frustkaffee Kakao, Tee 50 Punkte
6.4 Mehl Mais 500 gr					21.9 Kaffee-Zusatz Ersatzkaffee Kakao, Tee 25 Punkte
8.5 Reis oder Haler-Gerste 250 gr	H Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	K Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	J Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942		21.9 Kaffee-Zusatz Ersatzkaffee Kakao, Tee 25 Punkte
8.5 Reis oder Haler-Gerste 250 gr	F Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	G Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	4.7 Hülsen- früchte 100 gr		4.7 Hülsen- früchte 100 gr
E 4 Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	P Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	R Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	4.7 Hülsen- früchte 100 gr		4.7 Hülsen- früchte 100 gr
E 3 Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	P Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	R Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	S Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942		S Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942
35.12 Eier 1 Stück	Q Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	R Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	S Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942		11.7 Butter Fett 100 gr
35.12 Eier 1 Stück	Q Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	R Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942	S Lebens- mittel- karte Febr. 1942		10.7 Butter 100 gr

Ration book from the war year 1942. From 1939 to 1948 food, textiles, shoes etc. were rationed in Switzerland. A well designed system ensured that the supplies were distributed fairly. (Swiss Federal Archives, Berne)

The need to defend themselves against aggression from outside and disintegration attempts from the inside cleared the way for unusual, bold solutions. The idea of concentrating the military resistance on the *Réduit* and Wahlen's cultivation work

represent such bold and unusual solutions. The Swiss military's will to resist and the population's will for economic resilience to safeguard the conditions for survival

“Over the last 50 years, Southeast Asia has made all its tremendous progress without war”

by Klaus Umbricht

My friends provided me with a hint at an article in the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” (NZZ) that appeared on 10 August 2013 – “A piece of Singapore for a special price by Marco Kauffmann. He describes a joint economic development project of Malaysia and Singapore, the Iskandar special economic zone. It is located in the state of Johor, on the southern border of Peninsular Malaysia, just opposite of Singapore. Iskandar with its 2,200 km² is about three times larger than the whole of Singapore. Large scale industry is planned to be implanted in this zone which finds no ground in the small city state of Singapore. Also, the lower wages in Malaysia are said to be an attractive asset. And also a new city – Nusabaya – with 3 million inhabitants is planned, with all the necessary infrastructure, schools, university and amenities that a modern city requires. Also the two very important state investment funds *Khazanah Nasional* (Malaysia) and *Temasek Holdings* (Singapore) are making large investments in the Iskandar project.

The article on the Iskandar project, in particular because of the escalation concerning Syria inspired me to contribute some thoughts which I would like to present below.

Iskandar – a huge project

As reported in the “NZZ” article, the Iskandar special economic zone is an economic development project of enormous



View of the embankment which connects Johor Bahru with Singapore.
(picture Nicky Loh, reuters)

dimensions. Singapore, a city-state, is extremely short in territory. After this problem has been handled in Singapore itself by the help of the *Housing Development Board HDB* project within the last 50 years with extraordinary wisdom, a new, far-sighted and very big step in the same direction is now apparently taken. And both countries, Malaysia and Singapore, go a big step further in their economic development so far, which was more than impressive in previous decades.

What is still to be added in this context – which met with a great echo in the local media, but the West did not take any notice of it: In February 2013, Malaysia and Singapore signed an agreement to build a high-speed railway line between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, the two capitals. This line will also connect the city of Johor Bahru, the center of the Iskandar project.

continued on page 13

“Perseverance in malicious times”

continued from page 11

through stringent classification of existing inventories and more production through the effort of additional cultivation were the two pillars, which made the survival of the state and population possible despite immense threats. More than that: The joint effort developed new forces, which had a balancing and stabilizing effect in the interior.

Once more the will to consensus and the willingness not to lose sight for the whole thing in defense of one’s own interests proved successful in this crisis. Although the different classes of the former Swiss society – primarily farmers’ organizations, the business community and the trade unions – articulated their own interests and principles, they reached out for consensual solutions under the pressure of circumstances. Thus they not only enabled their own survival and that of the people and the country, but also paved the way for what was widely pursued in the early postwar years.

The improved economic conditions granted to the farmers through guaranteed prices and import restrictions in the early postwar years were crucial to the Swiss economic policy for many years.

Only the approaches to the later created EU and the bilateral agreements negotiated with it changed the foundations of this orientation of the economy towards maintaining a healthy and powerful peasantry. The agreements followed the same agenda, by which also the defensive capacity of the Swiss army was deliberately weakened in order to bring it closer to NATO; with the well-known consequences: today the Swiss peasantry has been thinned out as much as today’s Swiss army. And with the effect that both, as they present themselves today, could by far no longer safeguard the survival of the country in case of a new threat to international security.

² quoted from Gasser, Christian: *Der Gotthardbund*, Berne and Stuttgart 1984, p. 13

³ Hermann Wahlen, *Bundesrat F. T. Wahlen*, Berne 1975, p. 37

⁴ The quotes and figures are taken from the *lecture of F. T. Wahlen* of 08-02-1946 in Zurich, printed without place and year.

⁵ Wahlen, Hermann: *Bundesrat F. T. Wahlen*, p. 46

⁶ From 1941 self-sufficiency was an obligation for each household according to the available area of arable land. The communes as well had to provide additional arable land.

⁷ cf. Maurer, Peter: *Anbauschlacht. Landwirtschaftspolitik, Plan Wahlen, Anbauwerk 1937-1945*, Zurich 1985, pp. 117

⁸ In this context the then 12,000 Polish internees were of particular meaning. Some “Polish path” still existing today carries its name in remembrance of the works by Polish internees.

⁹ A good example was the “Political Working Group of the Canton of Berne” which showed great skills in mediating between the interests of agricultural producers, manufacturers and the unions.

¹⁰ Cf. Maurer, Peter, *ibid.*, pp. 145

(Text and boxes translated by *Current Concerns*)

¹ *Schweiz. Bundesblatt*, No. 90, Vol. 2, 1938, pp. 985-1053

“Over the last 50 years ...”

continued from page 12

At the end of the above-mentioned article the question is raised whether this mega project has not become a tad too big.

In January 1994, the author of this article had the opportunity to view a plaster model on display in bitter cold Shanghai, which showed the planned development of Pudong. Pudong is a large, central district of the Chinese metropolis Shanghai, south of the Yangtze River. All three of us (two Swiss and a Malaysian Chinese, *Pang Shun Pen*) stood astonished and open-mouthed in front of the model, and we could not imagine that such a thing was possible. It was beyond anything imaginable. “They are suffering from megalomania”, that was our conclusion. But not even 15 years were needed to realize the whole thing, even higher than originally planned. Who would have thought it? They taught us otherwise!

The Singaporeans, 80% of Chinese origin, are carved from the same wood as the Shanghai – Chinese. The tremendous economic development of the past 50 years is more than enough proof of that. Therefore, I have no doubt that the Iskandar project will be a great success. It’s just incredible with what determination, tenacity and vision these nations drive their development forward.

And so for us, the question arises: What can we learn from them in the West?

A rational economic policy is possible

First of all, I am just impressed by the fact that a rational, far-sighted, energetic economic policy is apparently possible – which in the end leads to success. In contrast, the US and the EU have led their people into an economic disaster in the last 15 years. Considerable parts of the grandiose, bankrupt EU are actually degenerated into poorhouses. And all people tremble continuously in irrational panic before the juggernaut financial markets, which will plunge us all into the abyss if they get the even slight sniffles. And yet, these financial markets are created by man, not an unchangeable phenomenon such as the Himalayas or the force of gravity. Man should be able to change these financial markets, if they are not to his benefit.

Apparently, there is another way, Southeast Asia (including China) shows it to us. Have you heard of an Asian major bank that had to be rescued in the financial crisis? Certainly not, it does not exist viz. In Southeast Asia, people refuse to be terrorized by this man-made juggernaut. We all, and especially our leaders, should learn from these successes and also lead the West back to genuine prosperity – for

the good of all, not only of the finance industry.

A development in peace

Over the last 50 years, Southeast Asia has made all its tremendous progress without war. Even under the most difficult conditions as in 1965 when Singapore withdrew from the Malaysian Federation a way of a peaceful solution of problems was found.

For decades, however, the West, under the leadership of the US, has always waged some war somewhere or at least has been involved in it. Just now the West is again lying itself into a war in Syria as was the case already before in Iraq and Afghanistan. The economic and moral price which we are paying for this is enormous. But this disaster is even much devastating for the affected people in those countries.

It should be our most important and most urgent objective to peacefully solve the problems of this world, as was done in Southeast Asia. I am fully aware that this will only trigger a cynical smile among many. But where are we going if we give up this goal? And it would be quite possible, just as in Syria right now.

Cooperation between independent nations

Beyond peaceful coexistence the Iskandar Malaysian project shows how much is possible if independent nations really and truly cooperate.

It is mentioned in the “NZZ” article that the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore had again and again been accompanied by persistent crises since 1965. According to my limited knowledge this was greatly exaggerated. It had been the case that the Malaysian Bumiputra and the Singaporean Chinese were always getting on each other’s nerves with their profoundly different mentalities. Of course, there were economic divergencies, as well. But dialogue never stopped. There was always that much positive strength left in their relationship so that great common projects like Iskandar or the high-speed railway Kuala Lumpur-Singapore were possible and still are.

If we think of the unspeakable show which Germany and Switzerland performed because of the Airport Zurich-Kloten we must be ashamed. Switzerland bashing has become very fashionable, lately – due to immanent election campaigns? There is so much we could learn from Singapore and Malaysia.

It will be a question of survival for us in the Christian-occidental cultural sphere, to become fully aware of the fact that there are alternatives and must be so. A peaceful coexistence of peoples is possible and a

rational and reasonably planned economic development and cooperation towards prosperity is possible, as well. Our current Western policy, however, will lead to great suffering, above all.

And the environment?

With such huge development projects, we, the Europeans, ask immediately and with good reason the question: And what about the environment?

I ignore how well the Iskandar project is planned with respect to environmental compatibility. There is one thing I have learned on my many journeys to the Southeast of Asia: the governments are very aware of this problem – a lot more than is presented in the tendentious western medias. And they also undertake enormous efforts to solve this problem. Above all Singapore is a model in this regard. That’s why I am confident that the aspect of the environment will also be taken care of in the Iskandar project.

Where is the place for the fragile human being?

I would like to discuss a critical aspect, which is not mentioned in the western media.

During my last stay in Singapore in February 2013 I met my dear old friend Pang Shun Pen for dinner. Pang is a Malaysian with Chinese origins, out of poor relations, who has been living in Singapore since 2006. He is a respected man with good relations to the government. Years ago I was working a lot with him.

We discussed the development of Singapore and the consequent problems. Pang pointed out two aspects: the excessive commercialization and linked to it the “high-performance-society”.

This excessive commercialization made a depressive impact on me: In Singapore (as in Shanghai, Hongkong and in the other big cities of the southeast of India) life seems to be composed of quests for ferrari roadsters, Louis-Vuitton-handbags and Armani-clothes. Consumption above all, everything as cool as possible, as glaring as possible, as expensive as possible. In this hectic confusion man seems to digress and to degenerate to a doll of consumption and commerce.

Pang pointed to the tendency that in Singapore is coming up a two-class society, a “high-performance society” as he calls it:

“High-Performers and Losers” – the ones, who show high performance and the ones, who fall by the wayside. So far the government only cared for the high-performers in order to promote the development. Schools, universities, just every-

“A culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue: this is the only way to peace”

ANGELUS, Saint Peter's Square Sunday, 1st September 2013



picture reuters

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Hello!

Today, dear brothers and sisters, I wish to make add my voice to the cry which rises up with increasing anguish from every part of the world, from

picture reuters

every people, from the heart of each person, from the one great family which is humanity: it is the cry for peace! It is a cry which declares with force: we want a peaceful world, we want to be men and women of peace, and we want in our society, torn apart by divisions and conflict, that peace break out! War never again! Never again war! Peace is a precious gift, which must be promoted and protected.

There are so many conflicts in this world which cause me great suffering and worry, but in these days my heart is deeply wounded in particular by what is happening in Syria and anguished by the dramatic developments which are looming.

I appeal strongly for peace, an appeal which arises from the deep within me. How much suffering, how much devastation, how much pain has the use of arms carried in its wake in that martyred country, especially among civilians and the unarmed! I think of many children will not see the light of the future! With utmost firmness I condemn the use of chemical weapons: I tell you that those terrible images from recent days are burned into my mind and heart. There is a judgment of

God and of history upon our actions which are inescapable! Never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake. War begets war, violence begets violence.

With all my strength, I ask each party in this conflict to listen to the voice of their own conscience, not to close themselves in solely on their own interests, but rather to look at each other as brothers and decisively and courageously to follow the path of encounter and negotiation, and so overcome blind conflict. With similar vigour I exhort the international community to make every effort to promote clear proposals for peace in that country without further delay, a peace based on dialogue and negotiation, for the good of the entire Syrian people.

May no effort be spared in guaranteeing humanitarian assistance to those wounded by this terrible conflict, in particular those forced to flee and the many refugees in nearby countries. May humanitarian workers, charged with the task of alleviating the sufferings of these people, be granted access so as to provide the necessary aid.

What can we do to make peace in the world? As Pope John said, it pertains to each individual to establish new relationships in human society under the mastery and guidance of justice and love (cf. John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, [11 April 1963]: AAS 55, [1963], 301-302).

All men and women of good will are bound by the task of pursuing peace. I make a forceful and urgent call to the entire Catholic Church, and also to every Christian of other confessions, as well as to followers of every religion and to those brothers and sisters who do not believe: peace is a good which overcomes every barrier, because it belongs all of humanity!

I repeat forcefully: it is neither a culture of confrontation nor a culture of conflict which builds harmony within and between

peoples, but rather a culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue; this is the only way to peace.

May the plea for peace rise up and touch the heart of everyone so that they may lay down their weapons and be let themselves be led by the desire for peace.

To this end, brothers and sisters, I have decided to proclaim for the whole Church on 7 September next, the vigil of the birth of Mary, Queen of Peace, a day of fasting and prayer for peace in Syria, the Middle East, and throughout the world, and I also invite each person, including our fellow Christians, followers of other religions and all men of good will, to participate, in whatever way they can, in this initiative.

On 7 September, in Saint Peter's Square, here, from 19:00 until 24:00, we will gather in prayer and in a spirit of penance, invoking God's great gift of peace upon the beloved nation of Syria and upon each situation of conflict and violence around the world. Humanity needs to see these gestures of peace and to hear words of hope and peace! I ask all the local churches, in addition to fasting, that they gather to pray for this intention.

Let us ask Mary to help us to respond to violence, to conflict and to war, with the power of dialogue, reconciliation and love. She is our mother: may she help us to find peace; all of us are her children! Help us, Mary, to overcome this most difficult moment and to dedicate ourselves each day to building in every situation an authentic culture of encounter and peace.

Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us! •

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“Over the last 50 years ...”

continued from page 13

thing was trimmed for that target. Those, who did not make it, were forgotten.

Pang himself (he is a wealthy entrepreneur) works one day a week in a benevolent project, who cares about losers. There would be more and more.

Answering my anxious question Pang said that he still felt optimistic. In long dis-

cussions with high government officials he got the impression that they become aware of that problem and are willing to alter course. There is growing awareness for that heavy problem in the whole society, as well.

It is to be hoped that Pang Shun Pen is right. And also that people there learn that a roadster does not have to be the measure of all things.

At the end my dearest wish

Since milleniums the imperialistic striving for power has been the major scourge of humanity. This is the case even today, above all from the USA. We are just experiencing the terrible consequences again.

May the wisdom of the Southeast Asian leaders be great enough, in spite of all their success, to resist that terrible mental plague. •

“Pope Francis – On Heaven and Earth” Dialogues about God and the world

cc. Jorge Bergoglio, the current Pope Francis, and Rabbi Abraham Skorka got to know each other over 20 years ago and initially exchanged views on football. Over time the football fans became friends discussing theological and political issues and those of everyday life. One day they decided to write down their dialogues and to open it to become a conversation with many interlocutors. This book is the testimony of a touching friendship and of an exemplary inter-religious dialogue.

Three years before his election as Pope Francis talked to his long-time friend, the Rabbi Abraham Skorka, about his very personal views on faith, church, politics and society. It is so far the only book in which the new pope operates as an author and it is a highly topical reference for our expectations with respect to his term of office.

The book contains the new pope's personal credo:

Every human being is God's image, be he a believer or not.

The great leaders of God's people were persons who left room for doubt.

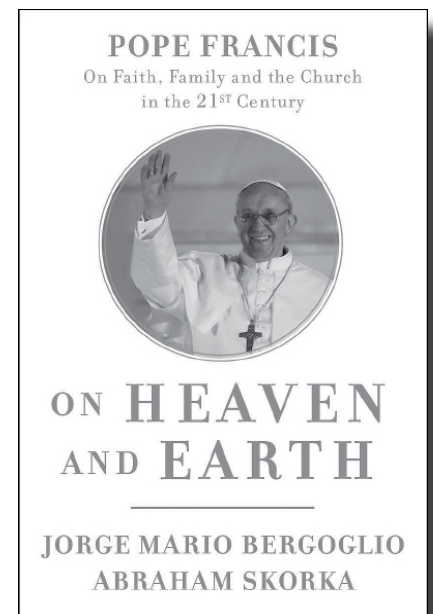
A purely ritualistic religion is destined to die, because it fills you with rituals, but it leaves your heart empty.

“On Heaven and Earth” gathers profound discussions on theological and earthly matters. The basic thoughts of the Pope on such diverse topics as God, fundamentalism, atheism, death, Holocaust, homosexuality, money, capitalism and globalization are expressed here and reflect his great closeness to the people and his unconditional love for human beings.

Abraham Skorka himself commented on the importance of dialogue in an interview:

“Dialogue above all means to put yourself into the other's skin, so developing our capacity for empathy. Stand inside the shoes of the other, to feel him, to try to think like him. In the Hebrew of the Bible, the verb for 'erkennen' (recognize) in some places is the synonym for 'lieben' (to love). To love a woman or to love God. This is the best way to reach substantial elements for a better future. Dialogue has to come to that end that one person unlocks his heart

to the other and that one helps the other, even if both have a very different opinion. That you talk to each other without restrictions and by that you come up to the point from which on you can only remain silent – because in harmony with the other you cannot say anything more, or because actually you are in complete agreement.”



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