

Current Concerns

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Consolidating the alliance of the confederates Uniting the intra-European forces as it happened exemplarily at the Rütli

by Dr phil. René Roca

In an article in *Current Concerns* (27 December 2011, no. 30) H. W. Gabriel writes about the new wars which are at hand again and at the end he comes to speak about the “duties of the Europeans”: “*The development of security policy and economics requires a new setting the course by the policymakers in Europe in order to fulfill the population’s interests. A first step must be to unite the intra-European forces as it once happened exemplarily at the Rütli.*”

For Switzerland the Rütli is more than the mythic place where the groundwork for the Swiss Confederation was laid in 1291. If you read the Federal Charter today it becomes clear that it has an ethical dimension, which was and is significant for our country, a dimension that Europe must as well know.

Rütli 1291 as a guide

The *Federal Charter* of 1291 was not a constitution, which made a nation out of the central Swiss cantons. It was rather a “peace order” for the country that *established a tradition of ethical and political culture*, which later provided the essential groundwork for the development of the “nation of Switzerland”. The three original cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, as part of the Roman-German Empire, already possessed the so-called “charters”, which means that they were under the direct rule of the emperor and were therefore “self governing under the empire”. In fact the cantons were several valleys that had formed a cooperative and thus could keep “Reichsvögte” (imperial governors) at bay. The Federal Charter was necessary because on the one hand the valleys wanted to make peace with each other: “If disagreement arises between the confederates, the most reasonable among them shall settle the dispute between the parties.” On the other hand, with the opening of the Gotthard Pass, central Switzerland had won geostrategic importance. Powerful neighbors tried to put their hand on the politically and economically important alpine passes. When the German emperor died in 1291, the Confederates were not

sure what the successor was up to. Therefore, they renewed their federation, thus wanting to actively counter the “malice of time”, as it is written in the Federal Charter. “Everybody must know that the people of Uri, Schwyz and Nidwalden in view

“Ever and again in its history the Swiss Confederation experienced situations in which decisions were needed, that guaranteed the existence of Switzerland and its survival. Thus forward-thinking individuals were required who consistently rejected the pathway of slavery. Even in today’s economic crisis, which already produces extreme social dislocation, the rejection of power politics is crucial.”

of the malice of time so that they can better defend themselves, want to stand by each other with help, words and deeds, with body and goods, both within and outside the valleys against anyone who wants to inflict violence or injustice on them.“ With the so-called “Richterartikel” (judge article) the Confederates made sure that they could exercise their rights autonomously and that they would not hand over their right to decision.

“In common advice we have also disposed that we accept no judge, who might have acquired his position by any prize or by money or who would not be our fellow-countryman.”

The Federal Charter did not miss its effect. With Lucerne the first city joined the Federation already in 1332. Until 1513 ten further “Orte” (localities) followed. In this way a proper confederacy network of “Länderorte” (country localities) and cities developed. The remarkable thing was that this network – contrary to other alliances in Europe – lasted and proved very sustainable and successful. The decisive factor was that the responsible persons in each case internalized the ethical contents of the “Rütli” and thus an actual Swiss identity was more and more consolidated.

Independence in 1648 – as a basis of sovereignty

That was also true in the 17th century, when in the first half of the 17th century the Thirty Years’ War raged, which devastated large parts of the German Empire and brought incredible suffering to the ci-

vilian population. The Swiss Confederation was able, to some extent, to keep out of the ravages of war, because as one of the first countries in Europe it had been able to settle the religious strife between Catholics and Protestants – “Kappeler Milchsuppe” (Kapel milk soup) – as early as in the 16th century. Even then the old friendship was stronger than the new faith. And even now, the Confederates did not interfere with the war and *clung to neutrality, which had grown to a constant factor within the Swiss Confederation since the 1515 defeat at*

Marignano. Thus Switzerland, although it was surrounded by war and misery, stayed an island of peace and, after the Thirty Years’ War – within the framework of the *Peace of Westphalia* – was able to appear on the scene strengthened and as an independent country. It was *accomplished by the Swiss delegation that their country was included in the Westphalian Peace Treaty in 1648 and was now capable of separating de jure from the German Empire*. It was mainly the Basel mayor *Johann Rudolf Wettstein*, who possessed the rare foresight to recognize the opportunity and who knew how to take advantage of the favorable situation. This way the Swiss Confederation gained full sovereignty as a confederation of states and was then able to constantly strengthen their inhabitants’ citizenship and the structure of the state, which was based on the ideas of the Rütli.

Congress of Vienna 1815 as a starting point of everlasting neutrality

Within the context of the *Second Peace of Paris* in 1815, concluded after *Napoleon’s* final defeat, the European powers recognized the everlasting neutrality of Switzerland and guaranteed the inviolability of its territory.

As the noted jurist Prof Dr *Hans-Ulrich Walder* emphasized repeatedly: this international agreement was never repealed and is still valid.

"Consolidating the alliance ..."

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For Switzerland, some prudent personalities achieved a good solution in stubborn and persistent negotiations.

In a long Diet, lasting from April 1814 until August 1815, the Swiss Confederation was now turned into a confederation of 22 equal sovereign cantons.

With the federal contract, the first self-given Swiss-wide political system, and following the Federal Charter of 1291, the persons in charge stipulated the following:

"The XXII sovereign cantons of Switzerland (follows the enumeration of the cantons) by the present federation amalgamate in order to assert its freedom, independence and security against all attacks of foreign powers and to handle peace and order at home."

With the federal contract the country saved important democratic achievements (including the annihilation of the relations of subservience) – and was later on able to gradually expand the political rights of the population in the cantonal framework.

A federal army, which was composed of contingents from the cantons guaranteed the external security.

**Federal Constitution of 1848:
ideal basis for federalism
and direct democracy**

Then, in 1848 Switzerland accomplished the transformation into a federal state. After the "Sonderbundkrieg" (Sonderbund War) in 1847 the moderation of the liberal winners reconciled the defeated conservatives with their defeat within a short time. *With a federal system appropriate to Switzerland the founding fathers found a viable equilibrium.* As early as in 1834, the philosopher and physician *Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler* had described this ideal solution as "The one and true confederation" in one of his articles.

"It now appears that *the right center* is just as little the confederation as the unitary state, *but the federal state [...].*

Autonomy and independence of the confederates in their communities, in their cantons and in the whole fatherland, that is the secret [...]. Each confederate individually and all of them together have their special characteristic and their similarity with others. By the first characteristic he is and they are canton citizens, by the second they are Swiss citizens."

For the first time, of Switzerland's own free will, from the former federation a state emerged. "*The Federal Constitution of 1848 is one of the most prosperous creations of Swiss history,*" says the renowned Swiss historian Prof Dr *Wolfgang von Wartburg*. It was only then that the century-old national feeling obtained a political form. The Constitution as well makes this perfectly clear in its preamble: Switzerland had accepted the Constitution "with the intention to *strengthen the alliance of confederates.*"

Wolfgang von Wartburg continues:

"The constitution does not create anything new; just as little as the letters of freedom of the Middle Ages have created freedom or the neutrality document has created neutrality, nor does the Constitution create the confederation. The confederation is reality that persists independently from each constitution and from any paper. But the purpose of the constitution is to "consolidate" this confederation."

The confederation consists of the citizens of Switzerland, who in an act of volition can fasten or loosen the ties of their nation. These ties were loosened again and again in stormy times, and political decision makers were in demand, who again gave confidence to the people, and fastened the tie; as was the case as well during World War Two.

**Guisan's Rütli report 1940
as a clarion in a difficult time**

Switzerland, with its militia and its perpetual armed neutrality was the only country besides Germany – the Great Powers not excluded – that was pre-

pared for war. When in 1939 the Second World War broke out and the political mood in Switzerland swayed, the "Rütli report" of General *Guisan* had the effect of a clarion call. In case of an attack on Switzerland *Guisan* had developed the "plan of the Réduit" as a defensive concept whereby the inferiority of tanks and planes would not carry too much weight. Therefore *Guisan* put the emphasis on the defense of the Alpine region ("Réduit"). On 25 July 1940 the General announced the new concept to the senior officers, on the Rütli-meadow (Rütliwiese) and by this "Rütli-report" he demonstrated the will of Switzerland to defend itself and successfully incited the country's spirit of resistance. With this he rejected any politics of annexation (Anschlusspolitik) of the Great Powers, and he convinced the officers to proceed on the pathway of independence together with the Swiss population, in the sense of the ancient oath of the Rütli (Rütli Schwur). In his famous biography of *Guisan Markus Somm* writes:

"Where defeatism had spread, the certainty of being able to do something against the Germans prevailed afterwards. The sacrificial lamb, as Switzerland had increasingly envisioned itself, had become a hedgehog."

And today?

*Ever and again in its history the Swiss Confederation experienced situations, in which decisions were needed that guaranteed the existence of Switzerland and its survival. Thus forward-thinking individuals were required who consistently rejected the pathway of slavery. Even in today's economic crisis, which already produces extreme social dislocation, the rejection of power politics is crucial. Therefore we Swiss citizens, based on a strengthened democratically constituted nation-state, must unite – across borders as *Gabriel* writes – "the intra-European forces, as it was done paradigmatically on the Rütli."* ●

Austria

Victory for freedom of speech and state based on the rule of law

**Edmund Entacher again chief of staff –
Entacher clearly for maintainance of compulsory military service**

hep. Because he advocated the continuance of compulsory military service, Chief of Staff *Edmund Entacher* was recalled in January by the Austrian Defense Minister *Norbert Darabos* (SPÖ). This removal from office has now been found to be illegal, and the respective order was cancelled by the Appeals Commission at the Chancellor's Office without any compensation.

Victory for freedom of speech

In an interview with the weekly magazine *Profile* in January, the General had spoken strongly in favor of maintaining compulsory military service, whereas the SP-Minister after a 180-degree turn on this issue last year had started to set the points in direction of a professional army. After the discharge – the Commander of the Armed Forces, Federal President *Heinz Fischer* (SPÖ), had as well expressed concerns with respect to its legality – Entacher (also a member of the SPÖ party) turned to the Appeals Commission at the Chancellor's Office, which has now decided. The general regards this decision as “a victory for the freedom of speech”. He reassumed his service in the Defense Department.

Biting criticism of SP-Minister of Defense

Criticism of the questionable methods the Minister had applied came from the employed union as well as from *Friedrich Klocker*, former military spokesman for the Social Democrats.

Also the *Austrian Officers' Association* (ÖOG) was satisfied by the judgement. For ÖOG President *Eduard Paulus*, the “democratic state based on the rule of law” was the winner. He emphasized his demand to withdraw Darabos. Darabos had lost “all the trust” by the Armed Forces, stated Paul. “Federal Minister Darabos' undemocrat-



Austrian militiamen build a bridge. Chief of Staff Entacher: “There are many fellow citizens, who prefer compulsory military service because they are in favor of demanding young people to complete a service for the general public.”
(picture Austrian Armed Forces)

ic and illegal terrorizing of public opinion must be stopped now,” says Paul.

Why give up a successful model?

The concerns of the General expressed in the *Profile* interview in January, did not only refer to the frequently put forward argument that a cost reduction could be reached by transforming the mandatory military service into a professional army, but also on issues of recruitment of young people. Entacher doubted the Minister's calculations for his professional armed forces model. The officer pointed also to experiences made in other countries: “We constantly receive warnings

from countries similar to ours that we are well advised to maintain our compulsory military service: The Netherlands and Belgium have made unfavourable experiences with the professional armed forces. Far too few suitable volunteers enlist.”

When asked whether he thought that a referendum would be useful and how he assessed the mood of the population on this issue, Entacher said: “I think it is possible that compulsory military service will prevail. There are many fellow citizens, who prefer compulsory military service because they are in favor of demanding young people to complete a service for the general public.”

Source: *Profile* of 22.1.2011

Officers and prominent political groups for maintainance of conscription

by Major General Ret. Dr Günter Hochauer

It was during the graduation ceremony of the young lieutenants at the *Theresa Military Academy* in Wiener Neustadt in early fall of last year, when the Federal Minister of Defence and Sport *Norbert Darabos*, maintained in his speech that the general compulsory military service is “set in stone”! He also made known, that a “deviation from this position was completely out of question for him.” These programmatic and pathetic statements presented were certainly welcomed by the majority of those present and taken up with satisfaction.

When shortly afterwards on the occasion of the Viennese state elections, the mayor of Vienna, Dr *Michael Häupl*, proclaimed the abolition of compulsory military service as a campaign gag, the fighting began. Behind the campaign was mainly the party secretary of the Social Democratic Party *Mag Laura Rudas*. As a good party soldier and also driven by the newspaper “*Kronenzeitung*”, *Darabos* immediately fell in with the new line and started to propagate the abolition or suspension of general compulsory military service and the transformation of the federal army into a professional army of volunteers. In this move *Darabos* was supported by renowned political figures across the political parties as well as relevant officers of the Armed Forces. The latter took this position mainly because the Austrian military service basic training was unfortunately reduced in the past from eight to six months while militia training was abandoned in 2004 completely, so that the general compulsory military service no longer seemed to be of any practical sense. In contradiction to this position, the majority of officers and notable political groups continue to support the general compulsory military service, albeit in a reformed form. The most important military figure of this group was and is the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, General *Mag Edmund Entacher*. As Chief of Staff, he is by law the first military advisor to the Minister, who in turn is required to listen to his Chief of Staff and should incorporate his expertise into the decision-making process. *Entacher* made no secret of his opinion that such a serious change in the system, like the abolition of the general compulsory military service, needed to be discussed very thoroughly and that it is reasonable to prefer the current well-proven system of compulsory military service and a strong vocational component to a new concept with many

unpredictable effects and risky uncontrollable developments.

Entacher's firm opinion and his unwillingness to divert from his opinion ultimately led to the withdrawal of confidence by the Minister. It was therefore obvious, that the “unruly” chief of staff should be removed from his function and replaced. However, since a mere difference of opinion, albeit in a central question of the military system, is not sufficient to justify a dismissal and transfer of a high officer, it was necessary to construct “misconduct”. So he was temporarily removed of his duties as chief of staff and other duties. It then took several months until finally *Entacher* held a decision with his dismissal in his hands. *Entacher* appealed and finally the responsible supervisory committee at the Federal Chancellery approved of his appeal. Thus, *Entacher's* dismissal was invalid and had to be repealed. After a meeting with the Minister, *Entacher* rejoined the Army in early November again as a Chief of Staff. The further development of the future relationship between the Federal Minister and the Chief of Staff is very uncertain.

Recently things seemed to have calmed down in this affair. Given the political majorities, a rapid abolition of general compulsory military service is no longer to be expected, as it would require a constitutional provision of a two-thirds majority in parliament. We will therefore probably have to wait until the next national election in 2013 for a final decision in this matter.

Meanwhile, *Darabos* plans three pilot projects in three different troop bodies to test essential elements of his professional and volunteer army by early 2012. This way he wants to gather “success stories” for a subsequent general implementation. One project concerns the merging of current only scattered presence squad units (squad- and longer-serving soldiers) to a single unit in one location. The second project concerns the trial operation of military property and units without resorting to recruits for “system-sustaining” activities. The third project is to demonstrate that it is possible to set up units in the form of a volunteer militia with annual training obligations. As an incentive a corresponding bonus is provided. As we hear, the Chief of Staff is now responsible for the implementation of these projects. There is nothing wrong

with this. However, doubts about their usefulness exist, as possibly successful individual cases – at the time being it is not clear at all whether these tests will be successful – would be used to generalize for the whole army and under the pretext of a successful “test”, legal measures for the elimination of compulsory military service could be launched.

How should the behavior of General *Entacher* be judged? Federal Minister *Darabos's* charge against his Chief of Staff that he had objected to so-called “primacy of politics” is absurd. The “primacy of politics” means the precedence of politics over all other government actions which may take place only within the framework given by law. It is therefore strange if *Darabos* accuses his Chief of Staff for insubordinate behavior, just because he defends current legislation and doesn't pay homage to opposing personal views of the Minister. In fact it is *Darabos*, who breaks the “primacy of politics” when he reprimands his Chief of Staff for insubordinate behavior only because he obeyed the laws. Actually, he and his ministry have the task to carry out the laws and not to condemn his subordinates to act according to goals set by the political party aiming at a change of the constitution. After all, the general compulsory military service is a constitutional provision that needs to be respected as long as nothing else is set. Of course, discussions about the general compulsory military service are possible and allowed – by whomever. Trial projects with troops, as discussed above, can be legitimate and reasonable. But forcing the chief of staff, who is appointed by law as a direct advisor to the federal minister for military affairs, to compel in unwarranted obedience by means of disciplinary measures, stretches the limits of bearable behavior and certainly can be qualified as a misuse of power.

The reinstatement of *Entacher* in his former position has clearly demonstrated the derailment and headless reactions in the ministry's leadership in this case. The vast majority of army members and broad strata of the population took notice of the reinstatement of the chief of staff with joyful satisfaction. It means nothing less than the victory of an upright and manly stance erectness over political corruption. This is very encouraging for future challenges. ●

Youth unemployment

“What are the Swiss doing right to be so successful?”

by Florentino Felgueroso, Asturias

gl. In order to find ways out of the crisis, we do not always have to look across the Atlantic. Thanks to the variety of cultures and traditions, which our continent has developed successfully for centuries – sometimes only a few hundred kilometers from each other – it is possible to find practical models for the future in many fields inside Europe. We can learn a lot from each other as sovereign peoples capable and willing to decide about their states and societies independently.

Vocational training is a good example for this. In the German speaking countries, we can hardly imagine that in most other countries there is no vocational apprenticeship. What they call an apprenticeship there is essentially taking place in schools, in courses taking one to three years. The practical part of the training is taking place in the school workshops and in internships of varying length in companies. The apprentice, however, always remains a student or, at best, an intern; he never is a real member of the staff as an apprentice in the dual system. In real working life, we are facing real challenges – dissatisfied customers, annoyed colleagues, delayed deliveries, unsatisfac-

tory repairs. The apprentice is carrying responsibility in the business. In case he or she is not willing to learn and to do qualified work, the business has no use for him or her. This is the serious side of life!

On the other hand, real work allows him to experience real success. In the first six months of their apprenticeship most youths make great progress in the development of their personality. They are part of the company community, treated no longer as children but as young adults. Appropriate performance and conduct are expected of them. Youths who have had little success during their mandatory school education may develop abilities which went unnoticed before.

The youth's relationship to the master craftsman and the colleagues at work is also different from the relationship to the schoolteachers. It is about working together in order to solve the daily tasks. At the same time, the apprentice has a person at his side to guide him with respect to all the tasks he is not yet capable of doing.

Meanwhile, in many countries there are considerations how to improve vocational education. Also in Spain, where youth unemployment has reached the un-

bearable level of 45%, there is a broader discussion. Already before the parliament elections in November, both the socialist party PSOE and the big conservative party PP included the improvement of the vocational education into their party programs. The PP, which now has won an absolute majority in the parliament, is planning an educational reform towards a strengthened practical experience. The dual system of vocational education which has been working very well for generations in the German speaking countries and which is a basis for their economic success may offer a perspective also for Spain's youth.

A first pilot project has been started in the Madrid region where a number of youths are being trained in aircraft manufacturing and in computer science. In the Basque region there have been earlier initiatives trying to bring vocational education closer to practice.

In northern Spain, Florentino Felgueroso, Professor for Economy at the University of Oviedo has started an interesting blog on the homepage of the economic research institute Fedea, titled: “Youth Unemployment: What are the Swiss doing right to be so successful?”

Yesterday, the Fedea had important guests: Urs Zizwiler, Swiss Ambassador to Spain (and Andorra). He had been invited to explain one of the advantages of his country: Switzerland has the lowest youth unemployment in Europe.

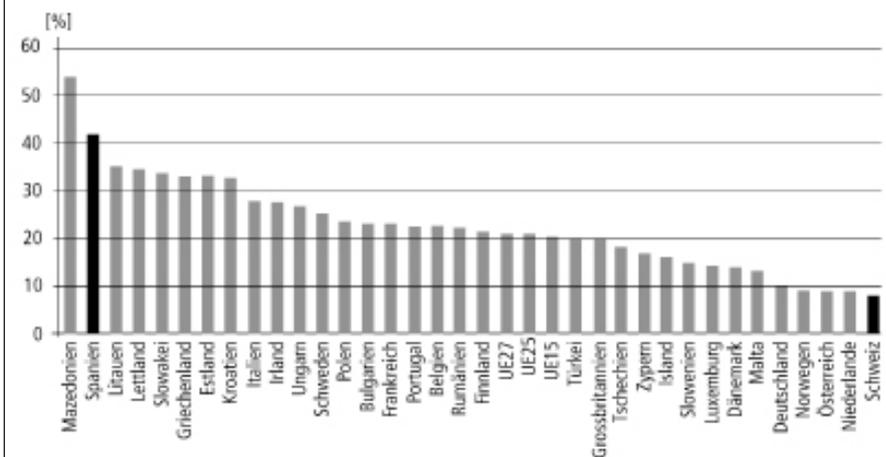
According to his statements, the main reason for this is the vocational education system in Switzerland combining school education with a paid apprenticeship in a company [the so-called dual system].

This model, which focuses on the apprentice as a person, goes back to the Middle Ages, to the guilds, and has been continued to this day. With some changes, it has been further developed towards a regular educational system.

According to the OECD report *Education at a Glance*, in Switzerland 65.5% of the students in secondary education are in vocational training, 60% in education courses combining school and work. The low number of 7% of drop-outs shows that more than half of the young population is undergoing this educational system. In Spain, only 43% of the 70% of youths that have not dropped out of school pursue a professional education, only a small minority of 2% receive a dual education.

The Swiss dual system is oriented towards the job market, which has two big advantag-

Youth unemployment rate (15–24 years, 2010)



Source: European Labour Force Survey (Eurostat)

es: It prepares the youths for their entry into professional life, at the same time catering the needs of the companies by ensuring the future supply of sufficient specialists and leaders. “The tight connection with the labor market could explain why Switzerland has one of the lowest rates of youth unemployment in Europe,” the ambassador explained.

Switzerland is not the only country favoring a controlled dual professional education. De facto, this education system is a well-known specialty of the German-speaking countries Germany, Austria and Switzerland and Denmark which adopt-

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"Youth unemployment"

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ed it in the 1980s. As can be seen from the graphics, the four countries are all among the countries with the lowest rates of youth unemployment.

From my perspective, the main advan-

fied youths have a low pay (which they are willing to accept in order to get a job) than those with a degree and simultaneously it is most probably "more acceptable" for the social partners [e.g. the unions] to negotiate lower wages for an apprentice aged 16 than for a graduated 18 to 21 year old, who has completed his professional train-

of the youths' internships; there is no regulation for it in the present education system.

The system can only work if companies, social partners and education authorities offering the courses are fully committed to it. An apprenticeship market is required with the state acting as facilitator. In Switzerland, about a third of the companies take part in this process; the small and medium-sized businesses playing a bigger role than the big enterprises. Over a long term, the supply in apprenticeship positions has to cater the requirements of the businesses (short-term these requirements are covered by the active education policy) which is not easy. For Germany we know that only half of the population with a completed professional education are working in positions for which they have been educated.

Could we implement this in Spain?

It is a good starting point that the trade unions would support the implementation of a dual system in Spain from the start, likewise the political parties. Currently it seems like the latter would not agree. The PP (Partido Popular) would support an implementation as a rule. In fact, this attitude has allowed for a first pilot project in the Madrid region. The current government [this was still the PSOE] and its future candidate are more in support of the current system, strengthening the dual system for those youths, who have dropped out of school without a professional qualification. There is no doubt that the current structure is very complicated. The requirements of both sides have to be considered; there has been a lot of damage, but one thing is for sure: It will become even more difficult if we do not get down to it soon.

Source: www.fedeablogs.net/economia/?p=14960

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Experiences from Basque Country

gl. In the Basque Region, one of the most prosperous regions in Europe, improvements in vocational education have been discussed and put into practice for a considerable time. The unemployment rate is 11%, half of the total Spanish unemployment rate.

The Confederation of the Basque Entrepreneurs CONFEBASK had realised in 1988 that vocational education conducted by vocational training centres did not comply with the real requirements of their enterprises. Therefore two surveys were carried out. On the one hand reality of the professional education in the Basque Region and on the other hand positive experiences of other European countries were to be analysed in order to implement the best of all.

The results of the first survey showed three basic shortcomings of the Basque vocational education:

- it did not meet the real requirements of the enterprises
- the numbers of trainees did not match the demands for manufacturing specialists

- the trainees were badly trained

The conclusions of the second survey showed that the dual system of vocational training in the German-speaking countries yielded the best results. There practical training is performed in the enterprises whereas theoretical instruction takes place at vocational schools. The trainees visit the vocational schools once a week to acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge.

As a result for the Basque Region several action plans were initiated. One project was the "Dual Education", where the trainees had to complete at least 500 hours a year of practical training in an enterprise.

The former education manager of the CONFEBASK reported that it took a lot to convince the enterprises and trade unions. But finally it was working out and youth unemployment could be reduced.

Sources: <http://formacion.confebask.es> and *El Pais* 29.5.2011

tage of the dual system with respect to our Spanish education system is that the transition is not delayed until the end of school education. This clarifies the advantages of the dual system, at least theoretically. At the end of secondary education, i.e. mandatory school education, the students already have a broad experience in professional life. Both in the Spanish system as in the dual system, the student can acquire a diploma or a qualification at the same age, but in the dual system the students have acquired two kinds of additional human capital. One is more general: the first experience of professional life, which will be of use in other companies as well; the other advantage is more special, depending on the kind of business he is working in. The probability that he may stay on in the company after the end of his apprenticeship is high.

To fully understand the dual system's benefit we have to call to mind a basic rule of operative economy: Due to the risk of labor piracy i.e. the enticement of a fully trained youth by another business, they have to pay for their own education by way of lower wages. Not yet fully quali-

ing. Compared to this, the alternative to the dual system boils down to internships. If they imply lower wages, either they are considered "undue" and hence invalid or they have to be subsidied by the state. In the end, the costs for the state are the same. In addition, there is the issue of supervision

Pilot project Madrid

gl. In 2011, after the journey of *Esperanza Aguirre*, President of the District Government of Madrid, to Germany to learn about the local dual teaching system on site, a pilot project for a dual system of professional education was established in two vocational training centres in Madrid. Since September 2011, the Vocational Training Centre, Professor *Raúl Vázquez* trains aircraft mechanics in cooperation with Iberia, Cassidian and Swiftair, who offer the corresponding traineeships in their companies.

In the vocational training centre, "Clara de Rey" young people are trained as computer scientists in co-

operation with the companies ZED, Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard. The students are selected and paid for by the associated companies.

In the vocational training centres, the preexisting curricula are still used for instruction, whereas the companies training convey additional training contents. The curriculum, concerning timing and contents, was defined by the teachers of the vocational training centers together with the technicians of the participating companies.

Sources: *Comunidad de Madrid, Consejería de Educación y Empleo; El Pais* 19.7.2011, *Swissinfo* 8.11.2011

What role should the economy play in our society?

by Reinhard Koradi, Dietlikon

A small group of 15 wine-growers from Suisse Romande presents their federal initiative “Towards an economy for everybody’s benefit” at a time when ways out of the economic and financial crises are searched for worldwide. This highly interesting proposal, which our fellow citizens from Western Switzerland put forward, is a courageous step but also a consistently thought-out concept. The vintners around *Willy Cretegnny* have been opposing the politically motivated pressure on our farmers exerted by the so-called “free market” for several years now. They already fought against the “Cassis de Dijon”-agreement with the EU, which had been unilaterally ratified by the Swiss government. This agreement allows for food to be imported into Switzerland as long as it is approved of on the EU market, even if there are discrepancies with Swiss laws and guidelines (some exceptions have to be submitted to the *State Secretariat for Economic Affairs* or “Seco”). A corresponding privilege for Swiss producers was not actually negotiated with the EU. The wide-spread opposition against this agreement had been toppled by pressurizing the members of parliament and by federal minister *Doris Leuthard’s* promise that Swiss consumers would save up to 2 billion francs that way, a promise we no longer hear anything about.

Competition by deregulation

The leitmotiv – more competition for agriculture – has shaped agricultural policy in recent years (in Switzerland and abroad). The world market prize of agrarian products became the measure of all things. Swiss farmers were advised to aim for EU prize levels for their products despite different overall conditions (legal obligations: ecology, animal welfare, higher production costs etc.). Deregulation of the agricultural market is used to achieve this aim. However, the Swiss people have to pay a “dear” prize for this and the structure of the farming communities has already suffered devastating consequences (dependence on foreign imports with insufficient self-sustainability index, loss of farms including suppliers and secondary producers, depopulation of the countryside, loss of valuable jobs, overgrowth of the Alps by weeds etc.)

Adhering to the free market logic further deregulation measures by means



“The originators demand an economy which saves resources – above all the domestic ones – and respects local, social and economic structures. Protection of the domestic economy is made a goal in itself. A culture of fair competitiveness is to be created, without dishonesty or dumping.” (picture reuters)

of free trade agreements are in preparation. Parliamentary initiatives may have slowed it down here and there – still the economic doctrine of an unlimited market is underlying economic theory and practice in Switzerland and world-wide, despite many negative experiences.

Countering with an initiative

And now an initiative breaking with the free trade taboo is put on the table. Remarkably, the originators chose a comprehensive approach. Their concern is not agriculture alone but they ask some fundamental questions about the prevalent economic system as a whole. They demand an economy, which saves resources – above all the domestic ones – and respects local, social and economic structures. Protection of the domestic economy is made a goal in itself. A culture of fair competitiveness is to be created, without dishonesty or dumping (selling below the production costs or state subsidies to prop up exports). Competition yes, but no time-limited bargain offers to secure entry into the market and force competitors out of business. The protection of domestic producers, and with that the training and job positions they offer (including wage level and social benefits) is another goal of the originators. They suggest instruments which have proven useful in the past (customs, import quota). There used to be a

time when protecting domestic production and charging market entry bills for foreign goods were world-wide regarded as legitimate measures of national economic policies. Custom profits served, among other things, to finance the national budget and to relieve the tax payers.

Same length of spears for all is what the initiative demands, in order to prevail in competition. Imported goods have to meet Swiss product standards. That way quality protection is guaranteed: no compromise in quality for the sake of prize or competition. Big monopolists abusing their market power are rejected more explicitly than in the current text of the constitution.

The initiative “Towards an economy for everybody’s benefit” invites us to think about future structures of our economic policies and find sensible answers to the following questions: What role should the economy play within our society? Can the economy be allowed to distance themselves from responsibility towards the common good, or are they a part of our society and have to shape and shoulder the social and political challenges like everybody else?

Let us be open-minded in our approach to these questions and not shy away from fundamental controversies in order to put things on the right track to future! •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Cassis de Dijon” is not worthy of our Constitutional State

by Jean Luc Kissling*

The “Cassis de Dijon”-principle, which was introduced one-sidedly by our country, is a blackspot on our judiciary.

Badly set up between the European right and ours, this hybrid system, which was essentially pieced together by our *State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SSEA (Seco)* upon the requests of the food importers, is not worthy of our constitutional state.

The administrative mechanism, which was installed, in order to be able to manage the unmanageable does not have anything to do with the normal legal procedures in our democracy.

The *Federal Office for Health (BAG)*, which is entrusted with the implementation, deals with the requests for food imports, which are manufactured according to the standards of the European producer countries.

The examination of the requests must furnish the proof that the food corresponds to the regulations of the country of origin, that it was brought on the market of this country legally and that it does not object to any predominant public interest, especially considering the criterion of the consumer’s health and integrity of trade relations. All these points must be clarified by the BAG within two months (!). The issued certificates are universally valid. Therefore they must be as little precise as possible, when issued. Once a Swiss businessman receives a permission, the permission is valid for all producers. In this case the food can be manufactured and distributed in our country in accordance with the regulations of the other country.

Subjected to impossible deadlines, the BAG issues the permissions in ex-

press speed: Tiny writings on the label, Aflatoxin content in almonds and pistachios four times higher, twentyfold (!) higher pesticide content in rice, cancellation of the temperature upper limit for the sale of sausages, nothing to say about Maizena bound cheese varieties and syrups produced with sugar water. It would be legitimate to know the reasons for such decisions. But nothing of the sort! With reference to the federal law on transparency (sic!) the authorities refuse to publish the reasons for admission and keep the identity of the receivers secret.

Only a few exceptions, specified in the law, allow the BAG to refuse a permission. One of it was enforced at the end of the parliamentary procedure. This covers the denomination of the country where the food is produced and where the raw materials come from. Now, suddenly, this obligation covered by the law has been abolished. By simple cancellation of the executive order (prettily shortened as *VIPav* [regulation concerning the trading of products according to foreign regulations]). The reason is – as it was explained to us – redundancy. It has to be known that the denomination of the producing country is covered by the food act. This is presently being revised. In the context of the hearing, the *Federation of the Swiss Food Industry* (fi) has made known its determination to abolish the systematic denomination of the origin. Those are two disturbing signs which suggest that the obligation to indicate the “nationality” of food shall be liberalized.

The “Cassis de Dijon”-system induces the food manufacturers and dealers to examine the different European legislations looking for the less strict regulations. The

powerless consumer has to face the adjustment of the food product quality towards a downward level, be it the composition, the pollutant content or the clarity of the information. He has also trouble to find out about price reductions in the shops. Concerning the producer, he probably gives heed to the official statements, that he should pit on the quality of his product, while markets are only minimally regulated by the state. Simultaneously, he experiences however the power of the said “markets” – meaning the greed of the food manufacturers – who set all means into motion get the permission to sell the cheap import products in Switzerland corresponding in no way to our standards – in order to afterwards offer these with increased margins, in the large scale businesses.

This swindle has lasted long enough, now. It is urgently needed to completely exclude our foodstuffs from the application domain of the “Cassis de Dijon” principle. This is demanded by the parliamentary initiative of National Councillor *Jacques Bourgeois* and 86 co-signatories.

Already in January, the new parliament, in its responsible commission of the Council of State, made this proposal. By doing so, it had the possibility of expressing its efforts for justice towards the producers and his respect towards the legitimate requirements of the consumers. •

* Jean Luc Kissling is Secretary-General at Pro-méterre, Association for the promotion of the agricultural professions in the canton Waadt.

Source: *Le Temps* of 19.12.11

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Towards an economy for the benefit of all”

Launching the Swiss federal initiative

by Laurent Aubert

A group of approximately 15 wine farmers from the western part of Switzerland, led by the Genevan *Willy Cretegny*, launched a federal initiative entitled “An economy for the benefit of all”, on 1 November 2011.

In 2009 the same committee fought against the one-sided acceptance of the European Union’s “Cassis de Dijon” principle by Switzerland. The related referendum had narrowly failed, despite the support of

the Green Party and the Swiss Peoples Party SVP.

However, this time Willy Cretegny and his friends have even more significant goals. They suggest to change articles 94 and 96 of the Federal Constitution, meaning a radical turn in favour of an “economic system, which will consider the environment and the local societal and economic structures”.

In particular the regulations hampering fair competition shall be profoundly changed.

Increasing opposition against the free trade

The committee with the name “La Vrille” wants to protect inland production by regulating the market over tariffs on imported

Swiss Federal Initiative: “Towards an Economy for Everybody’s Benefit”

Comparison of the amendments requested by the initiative and the corresponding relevant articles in the Federal Constitution, “Section 7: The Economy”:

Art. 94: Principles of the economic system

Relevant:

Abs. 1 The Confederation and the Cantons shall abide by the principle of economic freedom.
Abs. 2 and 3 unchanged

Abs. 4 Any divergence from the principle of economic freedom, and in particular measures designed to restrain competition, shall be permitted only if they are provided for in the Federal Constitution or based on cantonal monopoly rights.

New:

Abs. 1 The Confederation and the Cantons shall take a stand for an economic system, which considers the environment and the local social and economic structures.

revealed

Art. 96: Competition policy

Abs. 1 The Confederation shall legislate against the damaging effects in economic or social terms of cartels and other restraints on competition.

Abs. 2 It shall take measures
a. to prevent abuses in price maintenance by dominant undertakings and private and public law organisations;
b. against unfair competition.

Abs. 1 The Confederation shall legislate against unfair competition and dumping.

Abs. 2 It shall legislate to protect the domestic production, in particular;
a. regulates the market by taxes on imported goods;
b. regulates the market by import quotas;
c. standardizes that the imported goods meet the requirements in the environmental and social sector and concerning the production that meet Swiss requirements.

Abs. 3 (new) It takes measures:
a. to prevent fraudulent use in pricing by powerful companies and organizations of private and public law;
b. to fight detrimental social and economic effects of the cut-price competition.

Art. 100: Economic policy

Abs. 1 The Confederation shall take measures to achieve balanced economic development, and in particular to prevent and combat unemployment and inflation.

Abs. 2 It shall take account of economic development in individual regions of the country. It shall cooperate with the Cantons and the business community.

Abs. 3 In the field of money and banking, in foreign economic affairs and in the field of public finance, the Confederation may if necessary depart from the principle of economic freedom.

Abs. 4–6 unchanged

unchanged

unchanged

superseded

Art. 101: Foreign economic policy

Abs. 1 The Confederation shall safeguard the interests of the Swiss economy abroad.

Abs. 2 In special cases, it may take measures to protect the domestic economy. In doing so, it may if necessary depart from the principle of economic freedom.

unchanged

Abs. 2 It may take measures to protect the domestic economy.

Art. 102: National economic supply*

Abs. 1 The Confederation shall ensure that the country is supplied with essential goods, and services in the event of the threat of politico-military strife or war, or of severe shortages, that the economy cannot by itself counteract. It shall take precautionary measures, to address these matters.

Abs. 2 In exercising its powers under this Article, it may if necessary depart from the principle of economic freedom.

unchanged

superseded

Art. 103: Structural policy*

The Confederation may support regions of the country that are under economic threat and promote specific economic sectors and professions, if reasonable self-help measures are insufficient to ensure their existence. In exercising its powers under this Article, it may if necessary depart from the principle of economic freedom.

Second sentence superseded
(In exercising its powers under this Article, it may if necessary depart from the principle of economic freedom.)

Art. 104: Agriculture

Abs. 1 The Confederation shall ensure that agricultural sector, by means of a sustainable and market oriented production policy, makes an essential contribution towards:
a. the reliable provision of the population with foodstuffs;
b. the conservation of natural resources and the upkeep of the countryside;
c. decentralised population settlement of the country.

Abs. 2 In addition to the self-help measures that can reasonably be expected in the agriculture sector and if necessary in derogation from the principle of economic freedom, the Confederation shall support farms that cultivate the land.

Abs. 3 and 4 unchanged

* With transitional provision

unchanged

In addition to the self-help measures that can reasonably be expected in the agriculture sector, the Confederation shall support farms that cultivate the land.

Children's Aid by the Swiss Red Cross

by Erika Vögeli

As *Cornelio Sommaruga*, friend of the author and former president of the ICRC rightly states in his foreword to the book "La Croix-Rouge Suisse au secours des enfants 1942–1945" by *Serge Nessi*, the book is "a comprehensive answer" to the question about the role of the *Swiss Red Cross* during the Second World War. Nessi presents an impressive result and we can only underline Sommaruga's words: "The results of the Swiss Red Cross' guardianship of children are remarkable. It could only be achieved by the altruism of their staff and the mobilization of the Swiss population. Up to now, too little has been talked and written about that."

With his book, Nessi made another contribution to put right the distorted historical picture of Switzerland during the Second World War. The attacks of an entire generation of so-called intellectuals did not even spare the Red Cross.

To measure the achievements of Switzerland in total, of the Swiss Red Cross and the Swiss population, we have to call to mind the following facts: In 1936, *Hitler* invaded the Rhineland and re-militarized it, the annexation of Austria in 1938 followed. In March 1939, he occupied the Sudetenland prior to taking the remaining national territory of Czechoslovakia – despite of the assistance treaty, England and France did not interfere. In August he concluded a pact with *Stalin*, next attacking Poland on 1 September. On 9 April 1940, Denmark and Norway capitulated, the Netherlands on 15 May, Belgium on 28 May, and France on 25 June. The French army was known to be one of the strongest on the continent. On 22 March 1941 Yugoslavia capitulated and on 30

April Greece. On 4 June 1940 the British fled the continent, on 25 June 1940 the defeated French-Polish army corps fled to Switzerland. Between 23 June 1940 and September 1944, Switzerland was entirely enclosed by the axis forces. Against this background, today's "historians'" comments seem more than other-worldly: Germany had never seriously intended to attack Switzerland; hence there had been no reason to be afraid; only a brisker policy would have been necessary to confront Germany. Every officer, every politician or Red Cross representative, had he made such remarks in view of that reality, would rightfully have been charged with defeatism, if not treason.

At the beginning, the self supply with foods amounted to 52 per cent. Thanks to the *Wahlen Plan*, it rose to 70 per cent. The remainder had to be imported. Fuel and coal were also in short supply and thus the country depended on foreign import. In 1944/45, the supply situation became "crucial", as *Gotthard Frick* writes in his book "Hitler's war and the Swiss self-assertion 1939–1945". He gives the following example: "In the author's parents' home in Zurich, in the lack of coal all water pipes and heaters froze and burst. In 1944/45, the family celebrated Christmas in winter coats and gloves beneath icicles hanging from the ceiling". (page 30)

The generation of that time had the strong will to protect and defend their grown democratic communal life in freedom. By reality and history, they proved to be right in all points. In his book, *Gotthard Frick* explains convincingly and concisely that the Second World War would have

been much different and shorter if the same willingness and resoluteness politically and militarily had prevailed in other countries, as well. The book on "Children's Aid by the Swiss Red Cross" impressively shows that without ensuring neutrality, which was only possible on the grounds of that determination to defend their own independence, the Swiss Children's Aid would not have been possible either. The will to self-determination and freedom are the prerequisites for living humanity. As *Serge Nessi's* book shows, it was the Swiss population that acted this way in such hard times as a matter of course and without making a fuss.

Instead of attacking a whole generation that made impressive achievements in a historically most difficult and dangerous situation, maintaining dignity and living humanity at the same time – as the *Bergier*-ideologues did – one should in all modesty raise the question today, whether the generation that grew up in economic boom and unseen prosperity could be at all capable of achieving something like this. The material preconditions, intellectual capacities, and the mental agility might be existing. Maybe, just a bit of courage would be required to break free from that unfortunate dulling of the mind by the Anglo-American cultural draw-down and consumption craze that has stifled any awareness of identity in the past decades. Maybe "only" some awareness of one's own responsibility for the common good is required and some respect of history, in order to positively tackle today's challenges.

Serge Nessi's book is very helpful here. •

"Towards an economy ..."

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goods and over import quotas. As a side line the "Cassis de Dijon" would be again abolished, since all imported goods would have to comply to the social and environmental regulations and to the production prescriptions valid in Switzerland. Neither are the wholesalers spared, since the abusive pricing by "market-dominating companies and organizations" would be forbidden.

According to the initiators the free trade encounters increasing opposition – voices are being raised, asking for a certain amount of protectionism. As they now expand their request to the entire economy, they believe to have better chances than in 2009, for at least the pe-

riod for the collecting of 100 000 signatures is much longer compared to that of a referendum. "La Vrille" must have col-

lected the necessary number of signatures by 1 May 2013. [...] •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

A network of bilateral contracts

In the past decades Switzerland has established a large network of free trade contracts. In the area of agriculture, they are:

Agreement on the trade with agricultural products (Agricultural Agreement). This agreement with the European Union has been in operation since 2002 and led to a complete liberalisation of the cheese trade in 2007 and to the partial liberalisation of the trade with wine, meat products, fruits and vegetables.

Agreement on processed agricultural products. This text supplemented in 2005 the preceding agreement. The European Union

abandons import tariffs and export duties, Switzerland reduces them partially. A new agreement on agricultural products must be worked out with the European Union. The Doha-Round. It was launched 2001 by the World Trade Organization on a multilateral basis. However, it has not yet been finished due to different opinions of the World Trade Organization members. These negotiations concern processed and raw agricultural products.

Source: *Tribune de Genève* 2.11.11

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Intervention in favor of several thousands of children harmed by war

Extracts from the book "La Croix-Rouge Suisse au secours des enfants 1942-1945"
(The Red Cross helping children 1942-1945) written by Serge Nessi

Our women companies, French women and Swiss women could not refrain from weeping bitterly; one child said: "You could think that we were kings."

"The echo to the arrival of the first special convoy from Paris transporting 642 children on 25 March [1942] from the North of France [under occupation] was great. It was early in the morning that the political and military authorities were present in the [Geneva] station of Cornavin, as well as the representatives of the general consulate in France. Dr *Oltramare* was present, too, as he was at every convoy, which followed, every time he had prepared a number of words to welcome the children and some words of consolation. But in his speech on 25 March he expressed [...] his hope, as he was aware of the obstacles which were imminent already, hoping that the activity of the *Children's Aid of the Swiss Red Cross* would develop into a truly humanitarian enterprise.

"Children from France, Belgium, Germany and Italy; children from the countries struck severely by war, you have to know that Switzerland, within the realm of means and her capacities is looking forward to opening its boundaries, to receiving you." (p. 91 et seq.)

The atmosphere at the arrival of this first special convoy has vividly been described by *Odette*

Micheli, responsible organizer in Paris who accompanied this train:

"The population had been informed by the newspapers, and what a surprise for us, to see people waving a welcome to us almost from the last German border control of Pougny-Chancy at railroad crossings and along the tracks. The children gathered at the windows wondering anxiously: 'Have we arrived in Switzerland?' As we approached Geneva, we could not believe our eyes: all embankments, the bridges which crossed the tracks, were black with people waving small flags, and children, who shouted: 'Long live France!' Ours replied: 'Long live Switzerland!' And the train reached the station in a fever of singing and welcome calls. Our companions, French and Swiss women, could not hold back their tears; a child told me: 'You would say we are kings!'" (p. 92 et seq.)

The results were remarkable. In all cantons students, Samaritans and volunteers were walking from door to door weekly to collect donations.

"The Propaganda Commission, which also dealt with the press and fundraising, was commissioned to organize a campaign to raise financial and material resources. The cornerstone of this campaign was the "week's wads" (a weekly donation of 10 cents), an idea that the *English Red Cross* had developed at the beginning of the war, which now yielded very satisfactory results. This approach offered a two-fold advantage. On the one hand, it allowed people from the least privileged backgrounds to participate every week with a symbolic but important contribution of 10 cents on the national effort; on the other hand, these regular payments did not compete with the annual collections of other associations. The results were remarkable. In all cantons *students, Samaritans and volunteers* were walking from door to door every week to collect donations. At the end of 1942 the week's wads, which had been called into being in April, had amounted to a total of 1.3 million francs, and at the beginning of 1944, the average yield amounted to 200 000 francs per month. The action of the weekly wad was enlarged, especially in 1942, to in-

clude the groceries (*Migros, Coop*, etc.) from where they started to sell goods of certain brands to customers.

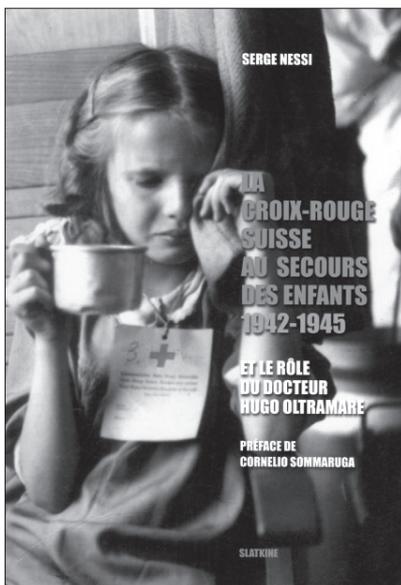
If we examine the finances of the *Children's Aid Committee*, we find that the revenue of the weekly wad (2.18 million) was the second largest revenue source after the sponsorships (2.38 million), of which we shall speak later; however it represented a figure that was higher than all the other donations and collections combined (1.81 million). The people of Switzerland continued their financial efforts until the end of 1946; at that time the weekly wad had amounted to 8.67 million francs. In the following years the contributions decreased considerably, as the country expressed its international solidarity by the *Swiss Donation*. (p. 97 et seq.)

Apart from the weekly wad the Swiss population was also encouraged to donate rationing coupons in order to procure for the children's necessary food, clothing and soap. All coupons, even expired ones, could be given to the *Children's Aid Committee*, since their equivalent in goods had not been used.

Due to their impact and their moral value, the collection of coupons was preferred to a reduction in the amount of goods, which the state made available to the people. The results of this collection were such that the *Swiss Red Cross* agreed several times that some of the coupons should be released to buy foodstuff that was destined for foreign countries. Collections of food and clothes completed the activities of the Swiss Red Cross in public." (p. 98 et seq.)

These activities depended primarily upon the approval of federal authorities because they were not to put a negative strain on the country's foreign policy nor violate the principle of neutrality.

"During the entire examined period the activities of the *Children's Aid of the Swiss Red Cross* were determined by numerous external factors. They were subject to the approval of the civil or military authorities of those countries in which they wanted to be



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"Intervention in favor of ..."

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active. These activities depended primarily upon the approval of federal authorities because they were not to put a negative strain on the country's foreign policy nor violate the principle of neutrality in order not to compromise the position of the Confederation in the eyes of the belligerent parties. This policy of strict neutrality, whose compliance was monitored by the Federal Council Delegate for International Legal Assistance [Edouard de Haller], was a burden on the work of the Children's Aid. Furthermore, its president declared as early as in spring 1942 that he had to move on "slippery political ice". But would it ever be different? Some people find it difficult to remember or to abstract from the present to try to understand the past, and they can hardly imagine the years of war. In a time that puts the humanitarian issue first, in which the interference on behalf of the victims is threatening to become a dogma, in which the theoretical and philosophical flights of fancy mostly cover an ignorance of reality, the compliance of humanitarian action with national interests, especially in times of conflict, is called into question. But in 1942 the alternative for the *Swiss Red Cross* would have meant to remain inactive.

As a semi-public institution – which it was often reprimanded of – and due to which it was committed stronger than others to respect legality, the *Children's Aid of the Swiss Red Cross* could be effective within the given framework and count on the assistance of the authorities and the support of the entire Swiss population." (page 228 et seq.) *More than 550 000 children were given food aid.* "Despite the narrow scope of action imposed on it, i.e. by its status as a national association as well as by the context in which it had to move, despite the need to avoid any activity that would be inconsistent with the interests of Switzerland or could have been misunderstood abroad – which would have put all of its activities at risk – and despite (if we dare to draw the comparison with the present time) the lack of experience of both its leaders and its delegates, which were confronted for the first time with a conflict of such magnitude and challenges of such complexity, the *Children's Aid of the Swiss Red Cross* provided impressive results.

Thanks to the commitment of its leaders, the motivation and energy of its local representatives, the altruism of thousands of employees and volunteers, the ability of reception and the generosity of the entire Swiss popu-

lation, the *Swiss Children's Aid* was able to intervene in favor of tens of thousands of children affected by war. Until 1945, almost 55 000 children of mostly French origin could come to Switzerland for a three month stay, the majority of them accommodated in families. In 1944 and 1945 there were 25 000 children from the Doubs and Haut-Rhin regions and from northern Italy who found a provisional shelter on Helvetic soil on their escape from the war zones. The taking in was continued in the postwar years, and 80 000 more children from a dozen European countries had been benefiting until June 1949, the year in which the activities of the Children's Aid were taken over by the permanent structures of the *Swiss Red Cross*. As for children with tuberculosis risk or pre-tuberculous children, 5,700 of them were taken care of in specialized Swiss institutions between 1945 and 1949; in the ensuing years, yet another 1,500 children were accepted.

Between 1942 and 1945 the on-site assistance was particularly important. In France, there were approximately 54 000 sponsorships for the benefit of French and foreign children by Swiss families; on the other hand, more than 550 000 children were given food aid." (page 231).

(Translation Current Concerns)

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We need a younger generation that tackle their tasks in life

by Dr Eliane Gautschi, special needs teacher and head teacher

End of August 2011 Suva¹ published the results of a study² about violence-related injuries in Switzerland. This study was conducted by the Central Office for Statistics of UVG accident insurance (SSUV), a subdivision of Suva. It is the follow-up study of a survey published in 2009³ by the same institution showing the results of the last 19 years. Author of both studies is Dr Bruno Lanfranconi, head of statistics at Suva. The facts are alarming: Violence-related injuries in Switzerland have massively increased in the public sphere since the mid-90s. According to the study, a turnaround is not within sight. Such a development is alarming and shatters the foundations of our constitutional state. The riots on the Bellevue Square and at Zurich main station, organized in no time at all via text messages, are alarming; it is likewise alarming if violent spectators of a football match cause the match's break-off, as happened recently with a match of FCZ against GC. We should not allow that a blind is turned on that or ideologized arguing and relativism to prevent a constructive discussion. In a constitutional state, the legal consequences of such illegal actions are clearly defined and offenses must be punished. Our youth however needs tasks and duties they can and must take on which give them meaning and stability in life so that the generation following behind us will tackle its task in social life.

Accident reports provide unambiguous data

The recently published study by the Central Office for Statistics of Accident Insurance UVG (SSUV-LAA), here referred to as Suva Study, follows an investigation of the same institution of 2009, which had reviewed the data up to and including the year 2006. The new study includes data of 2009. As registration office for accident insurances, the SSUV records all cases of 15- to 64-year-old workers, who have a compulsory accident insurance. They include about half of the permanent resident population of Switzerland. In 2009, the number of employees included approximately 3.9 million.⁴ The data refer to all those people who needed medical care due to their injuries (regardless of a charge against offenders).

For several years the police crime statistics PKS had recorded a growing number of violent assaults. In other studies, these figures were however interpreted solely as a result of a change in reporting behavior and an increased crime clear-

ance rate: Today charges were allegedly filed more often than before and more cases were cleared, therefore the figures were higher.⁵ This argumentation had already been discussed and conclusively refuted in the 2009 Suva Study. The data now available are documented by medical and hospital reports. Injuries requiring treatment can hardly be hidden. You go to the doctor when the injuries make it necessary; however, a file is not charged each time. The figures clearly reveal an increase in cases of violence among young people in Switzerland. The cases of personal injury caused by violence and registered by the UVG insurers in the study show exactly the same trend as the crime statistics.⁶

2009: 16,000 violence-related injuries

Statistics in the Suva Study show that the number of violence-related injuries has increased by 150 percent since the mid-1990s. Even the study of 2009 had shown that the number of violence-related cases⁷ had doubled between 1991 and 2006 with a tripled risk of young men being hurt in violent attacks. The study shows that the number of violence-related injuries has continued to rise and that there is no turnaround in sight.

The accelerated increase in cases of violence is most evident among 15- to 24-year-olds, followed by the 25- to 34-year-olds. The number is relatively small with 15-year-olds, which probably has to do with the fact that at this age only few young people are integrated in the working process and thus insured under the Accident Insurance Act. Among young men aged between 15 and 24, the study notes a 300 per cent increase in new

"Around the mid-1990s the first generation of very realistic computer games with violent contents appeared on the market. The direct correlation between violent media consumption and violent practices has well been shown in literature. It is to be feared that computer games will beat hollow the effects of passively consumed media because they allow true practicing of violent behavior." Lanfranconi, 2009, p.3

cases between 1995 and 2009, with a 118 per cent increase among young women of the same age level. In 2009, 13 of 1000 insured men of this age group suffered from violence-related injuries, while there were only 2-3 cases among women. Even with the men aged 35 to 44 years, we can yet state an increase in cases of violence by

58 percent. The most serious cases of violence involve men aged between 25 and 44 years. This also applies to the women affected by violence; it is assumed that they are mostly crimes of passion. Extrapolated to the entire population⁸ approximately 16,000 people have suffered from violence-related injury in 2009, which made treatment by a physician necessary, the study says.⁹

Young men, weekends and night times

Most often, violence-related offenses are committed late at night or in the early morning hours when young people go out on weekends. Nearly 70 per cent of the injuries of men happen in the night hours after midnight until 6 a.m., the most dangerous time being between 1 and 2 a.m. 50 per cent of all cases happen with women; the most risky time is at night between 2 and 3 o'clock. The number of non-resident victims has also increased. Their share now amounts to 60 per cent of the young men. Anyone who has observed how many young people pace around the city on weekends or late at night is not surprised at these numbers.

High costs

The 2009 study collected data on the costs for the treatment of persons who were injured by violence. They amounted to 6,700 francs per case on average which exceeds the average cost of leisure accidents by 40 per cent. However, the share of cases in which cash benefits were shortened due to personal negligence were significantly higher than for other leisure time accidents. This means that in any case victims were in danger due to actual fault (provocations, involvement in brawls and fights) and therefore the financial compensation was limited. Despite these limitations, the cost increase in cases of violence amounted to 73 per cent from 1991 to 2006.¹⁰ Consisting of medical expenses, daily allowances, disability and survivorship annuity, the cost of violence cases have risen from around 28 million (in 1991) to around 64 million (in 2005).¹¹

Causes of violence

The Suva Study also asks for the causes of the conspicuously accelerated increase in the propensity towards violence among young people. As early as in the 2009 Suva study these issues were discussed in detail. The accidents involving violence reported with the SSUV do not allow any

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direct conclusions about the propensity towards violence of those affected. If we ask the young offenders themselves " [...] a shocking picture of people who do not yet know what is really wrong with them" is revealed.¹² Personal risk or protective factors for violent behavior were worked out by *Ribeaud/Eisner* in the so-called "Zurich Study".¹³

Hints for prevention

The study quotes a number of factors that favor and explain the increase in violent behavior.¹⁴ They provide the reader with important clues for the prevention of violent behavior and show ways in which the fatal development could turn for the better.

According to the study, violent crimes are due to the interaction of various factors. Therefore the question is raised what has changed since the 1990s that could explain the alarming increase in violence-related injuries:

Unlike in the past young people are out on the road until the early morning hours. The consumer and leisure time opportunities have expanded enormously. Public transport offers a full schedule throughout the weekend. Parallel to the "night out tourism" the excessive consumption of alcohol, drugs of various kinds (including so-called designer drugs) and of violent media content have spread. It is therefore not surprising that the number of violence-related injuries has risen dramatically in the so-called party-cities as centers of leisure on weekends and during the night.

Many young people are hanging out in a kind of swarms. A grammar school student casually explained, "What do you think we actually have Twitter and Facebook for?" He said that they meet in groups at a particular time in specific places to consume "their" party drink and then consecrate themselves to other common activities. Knowing each other in person is not necessary for this. A possible guilty conscience is appeased by saying that they just "did what everybody else has done".

"The young people with violent behavior are a small minority among both Swiss and foreign people. However, a small extreme minority can change the rules of an entire society if there is no consequent practice of having a closer look at things." *Lanfranconi*, 2009, p.3

Cocaine often plays a role in serious offenses; according to clinic and hospital data it is taken by ever younger people. This short-term drug disinhibits for a short time, makes aggressive, and reduces self-control.

Some young people are only rarely under parental control; they no longer abide by the parents' request to be home at a certain time and they often do not let their parents know who they go with and where they go; truancy has become more frequent and the time spent together with the family has become less.

These statements are important for preventive considerations. Young people need the relational stability they get from their parents and families. And they especially need a purpose in life, a goal that is stronger than 'tittytainment' made in USA. Even *before* puberty, they must be aware of their positive contribution to the "bonum commune", to the community, to the cultural institutions and associations supporting the general well-being of all; they also need to have their place within these spheres. They all offer sustainable youth work, which again must be duly acknowledged. This will provide our youth with meaningfulness, a sense of inner fulfillment and a peer group that will be integrated into society in a positive way.

Computer games – learning violent behavior

The Suva Study lists the increased media consumption, which now occupies large parts of young people's leisure time, among the causative factors. Parallel to the increase in violent incidents in Switzerland the very realistic – interactive! – violent video games have appeared on the market together with the distribution of powerful computers. Unlike the previously introduced TV, these video games would provide an opportunity to actively train aggressive behavior. The violent content would serve as a model of behavior for everyday life and their consumption would cause desensitization to real violence.¹⁵

No "imported violence" – the study of the research group led by Martin Killias

The Suva Study also addresses the issue of the nationality of juvenile offenders. This is done in a pleasantly differentiated manner. Higher rates of immigration from the countries of former Yugoslavia and Albania is also among the factors that have increased significantly since the 1990s; it is in fact parallel to the increase in violence-related accidents. The study refers to the police statistics, according to which the share of foreigners for crimes such as threat and assault is extremely high in Switzerland compared to European standards. Swiss adolescents among the 15- to 24-year-olds differ little from their foreign colleagues. However, the number of cases in other age groups is higher with persons of foreign origin. Survey studies and UVG data show that this cannot be

explained by foreign offenders appearing more often or being victims of violence more frequently. However, foreign adolescents are more frequently burdened by stressors in their family, their social and educational environment.¹⁶ If young Swiss are likewise burdened, the same effects can be observed. – *Lanfranconi* refers to the very insightful study of *Killias* et al.¹⁷ Comparing young people in Switzerland and in Bosnia-Herzegovina the research group led by Professor Killias found out that these young people commit less crimes in their home countries than their compatriots in Switzerland. So it is not "imported" violent crime that we face with our young immigrants. It rather seems as if these young people are included in their families and social structures in their home countries; they are introduced in their duties as the younger generation and they take these duties more seriously than peers in Switzerland. Immigrant adolescents and their parents

"15 years ago, violent behavior increased in the public sector, and it has been increasing ever since. An adequate reaction has not yet been found. In some places, this problem has not even been completely recognized." *Lanfranconi*, 2011, p. 37

should be better introduced into the local opportunities for leisure activities, according to the study of *Killias*. These preventive approaches would have to be enlarged in my view. It should be considered how a change among the entire young population could be brought about. Among others we have to raise the question why many of our young people spend their free time mostly with fun activities that usually bring about no obligations. This also applies to Swiss teenagers. A thorough analysis of educational practice and the consumer offers to young people would be helpful.

What is to be done?

First, we must honestly consider the facts. "For incomprehensible reasons, smooth-talk is still popular"¹⁸ the author says. "An appropriate response to continuously increasing violence in public places in the last 15 years has not yet been found."¹⁹ In his final considerations he focuses less on possible approaches to the prevention for younger children than on the question of how the existing violence among young people can be contained.²⁰ He raises the question of the effectiveness of punishment.²¹ Violent behavior is one of those crimes with higher re-offender rates, which increase with each previous conviction. The deterrent effect increases with the severity of punishment and also with

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the probability of being convicted. Provided however, that young people also know when they are delinquent and what consequences this will have for them. This requires education, among other things, as 42 per cent of the young people surveyed in the St. Gallen Study²² said they did not fear the police because they were still minors (in Switzerland, a child of 10 years is of criminally responsible age!). Relatively moderate sentences as ordered by the court seem to be most effective with the individual offender. Existing data do not ensure that social service is more effective than unconditional, short custodial sentences. Similarly, conditional fines instead of short prison sentences often seem counterproductive. The perpetrators must know and learn that something incisive will happen if they become violent; otherwise they conclude that they can violate laws without having to face any consequences. This requires a clearer answer of society to violent behavior, because as the author says, "[...] the unabated rise in violence in the public sphere suggests that the common practice is no message that is sufficiently clearly worded. This is of considerable importance taken into account that the criminal law practice influences the moral development of our society as a whole."²³ The study's data are clear and point to a worrying development. We owe it to our

country to stop it. "The violent young people form a small minority, both among Swiss citizens as well as among foreigners. A small extreme minority may change the rules for a whole society if there is no consistent culture of having a careful look."²⁴ Each of us can fulfill this task in his personal and social sphere of influence!

- ¹ Suva – Swiss Accident Insurance Fund
- ² Lanfranconi, Bruno. *Neuer Höchststand der Gewalt unter jungen Menschen. Ergebnisse der Statistik der Unfallversicherung nach UVG* (New peak of violence among young people. Results of the statistics of accident insurance with UVG). Published by the Central Office for Statistics of UVG accident insurance (SSUV), 31 August 2011
- ³ Lanfranconi, Bruno. *Gewalt unter jungen Menschen. Diskussionsbeitrag auf der Basis der Daten der Unfallversicherung*. Published by the Sammelstelle für die Statistik der Unfallversicherung UVG (SSUV), 16 June 2009
- ⁴ The figure includes all employees working at least 8 hours a week with the same employer as well as apprentices and the registered unemployed people.
- ⁵ This applies to the otherwise revealing study *Zürcher Studie*. Cf. Ribeaud, Denis and Eisner, Manuel. *Entwicklung von Gewalterfahrungen Jugendlicher im Kanton Zürich*. Universität Zürich, December 2007
- ⁶ Cf. Lanfranconi, 2011, p. 3 and p. 6 ff.
- ⁷ Accidents and injuries including violence are defined by the causes of brawl, quarrel, assault, criminal activity, among them brawl, stabbing, murder, homicide. They do not include cases of violence against oneself (suicide), and crimes and offenses in connection with traffic accidents (e.g., under the influence of alcohol or drugs).
- ⁸ The data collected by the Suva and the PKS figures were extrapolated to the entire resident population, based on the assumption that the incidence of violence-related injuries in the non-insured UVG members is not significantly different from the non UVG members.

- ⁹ Cf. Lanfranconi, 2011, p. 3 und p. 13 ff.
- ¹⁰ These figures referred to the ensured wages and were cleared of inflation.
- ¹¹ Cf. Lanfranconi, 2009, p. 15f.
- ¹² Lanfranconi, 2011, p. 38
- ¹³ Cf. Ribeaud, Eisner. 2007
- ¹⁴ Lanfranconi basically follows the argument of Killias et al.: *Grundriss der Kriminologie. Eine europäische Perspektive*. Bern, 2011
- ¹⁵ Lanfranconi, 2011, p. 40 and Lanfranconi 2009, p. 24
- ¹⁶ The author refers to the study of Ribeaud/ Eisner in this context
- ¹⁷ Killias. Martin et al. *Importierte Gewaltkultur oder hausgemachte Probleme? Zur Delinquenz Jugendlicher aus Südosteuropa in der Schweiz im Vergleich zur Jugenddelinquenz in Bosnien-Herzegowina*. www.rwi.uzh.ch/lehreforschung/alpha-betisch/killias/publikationen/Bericht_importierte_Gewalt.pdf
- ¹⁸ Lanfranconi, 2011, p. 37
- ¹⁹ Lanfranconi, 2011, p. 5
- ²⁰ I would like to refer to the excellent material published by the Bernese professor of pedagogic Françoise Alsaker. I would likewise refer to the brochure *Jugend und Gewalt. Unsere Kinder und Jugendlichen brauchen Erziehung* published Alfred Burger and Eliane Gautschi, edited by *Current Concerns*.
- ²¹ In his statements on the effectiveness of punishment, Lanfranconi basically refers to Martin Killias, 2011
- ²² Killias, 2011, p. 189
- ²³ Lanfranconi, 2011, p. 46
- ²⁴ Lanfranconi, 2009, p. 3

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Will snow avalanches come after the mudslides?

Appeal for donations to the *Rauber* family, *Blausee-Mitholz*

On 10 October 2011 torrential rain and additional melting of the snow caused great damage in the *Kandertal* Valley and the *Lötschental* Valley. The *Hinterwald* breeder family *Heinz, Silvia* and *Urs Rauber*. in the *Gasterntal* Valley were also severely hit.

Many of you may have experienced the damage caused by the violence of the element water, be it mudslides, washed-out paths or roads, disrupted water supplies, damage to buildings or machinery, flooded farmland etc. These include as a consequence insurance applications and the financial worries by income losses and reproduction costs.

The extent to which the storm has hit the *Rauber* family is way beyond all afore mentioned. The consequences cannot yet be assessed.

By mudslides the *Gasterntal* has been transformed into a lunar landscape and cut off from the outside world. The cattle, cows, and baby calves were taken to *Seiden* by helicopter and then to *Mitholz* into the winter quarters by a borrowed cattle trailer and tractor, since their own lay under the rubble. In *Mitholz*, where the *Raubers* spend the winter months, they were spared. Apart from *Silvia's* laying hens, which couldn't be saved, no animals were harmed.

We wish to express our concern by initiating a donations account and to call on you, dear readers, for a donation. We thank you very much for donations on the following bank account: *Raiffeisenbank Kiesental, IBAN Nr. CH98 8081 1000 0034 98532 in 3533 Bowil*.

The *Rauber* families from *Mitholz* have lived and worked for generations in the *Gasterntal* Valley during the summer months. For a long time the alp has been made use of by up to 80 goats. Gradually cows have been introduced for summering, too. With the *Hinterwälder* breed *Heinz* und *Silvia Rauber* found a perfect cow ideally suited for this area and these are cows milked by hand, that fit well in the stables because of their small size.



By mudslides the *Gasterntal* has been transformed into a lunar landscape. (picture www.heimritz.ch)

The “*Heimritz*”, one of the *Raubers'* mainstay, is a mountain inn with a simple but “wholesome” food and overnight accommodations. Many hikers have already enjoyed the “*Heimritzer Merängge*” there. The *Raubers* run this mountain inn in such a way that tourists get an insight into the life of alpine herdsmen. For example, guests can experience how the butter is still battered.

In spring 2009 *Urs Rauber* took over the home in *Mitholz* and the alpine inn in the *Gasterntal* Valley in the fifth, if not the sixth generation. The parents *Heinz* and *Silvia* have always helped energetically. In fine weather, just at the time when the hungry and thirsty hikers visit the *Heimritz Inn*. *Urs* is on duty with his round baler. This is a side business *Urs* built up in the ninth grade.

In *Mitholz* stable there are currently five cows, one beef and five baby calves of the *Hinterwälder* breed. They are taken care of this winter. It is still doubtful whether at all and how many of the animals will be able to return to the *Gasterntal* Valley next summer. The largest part

of the agricultural land is covered by rubble and debris. The stable is also buried underneath.

There is hope in the mountain inn. This building was spared. The water supply and the access have to be repaired, however, carry on the inn.

Work won't come to an end for the *Raubers* and many of *Urs'* plans are “buried”. A tough start for the young farmer.

The *Raubers* expect the next spring with hope and fear. Who knows which way the snow avalanches will take after all the topographical changes caused by the mudflows.

Confidently, we wish the *Rauber* family that the *Heimritz* will not only survive this winter, but all coming weather vagaries. We hope to give a glimmer of light with our donations. The board warm-heartedly recommends this donation!

Katrin Berger Hinterwälder Zuchtverband
(*Hinterwälder Breeders' Association*)
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

For further information and pictures about the *Gasteintal* visit www.heimritz.ch