

Current Concerns

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European integration (Part 3)

Making resound the “European orchestra” “Method Schaffner” as a key to understanding Switzerland’s success

by Dr rer. publ. Werner Wüthrich

In part 1 of this article we recognised the “method Monnet” as a key to the understanding of the euro-crisis (Current Concerns No.31 of 31 December 2011). In part 2 we got to know two different concepts of the “European integration”, on one hand the concept of the EEC respectively of today’s EU and on the other hand EFTA, the European Free Trade Association (Current Concerns No. 4 of 6 February 2012). We learned about the politicians who wanted to establish the “model” EFTA. In Switzerland these were the Federal Councillors Hans Schaffner and Friedrich Traugott Wahlen above all who were in charge of the “Europe dossier” with their closest co-workers Albert Weitnauer and Paul Jolles. Debating the two different concepts some éclats of different kinds occurred. Thus, the ink on the EFTA’s contract of 1960 had hardly dried, when Great Britain wanted to switch over to the EEC and the other EFTA’s countries were about to follow half-heartedly in the wake of the great power. Today’s documents show that the US government had pulled the strings in the background. The French president Charles de Gaulle thwarted the plan when by finishing the negotiations about the accession of Great Britain on 14 January 1963 with a “drum beat”. Only now EFTA could begin with her real work.

A struggle about the “right” way of economic integration could be observed not only in Europe. Another theatre was the GATT negotiations. Here too, there were different ideas how the economic life between the countries could be interlinked worldwide in a better way. Here, too, Hans Schaffner with his co-workers were on the front-line; after all, 45 percent of the exports of Switzerland were determined for non-European countries. Here too, a similarly paradoxical situation as mentioned above occurred. Federal Councillor Hans Schaffner headed the so-called *Kennedy-Round*, the most important round of negotiations of GATT after the Second World War, although Switzerland was not at all a member of GATT. How was this strange situation brought about?



Federal councillor Hans Schaffner (on the left) and Federal councillor Willy Spühler (on the right), successor of Friedrich Traugott Wahlen at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, during a meeting of the EFTA States in London in December 1966. – With good negotiating skills and great sense of responsibility the best was achieved for the country. (picture keystone)

General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT)

23 countries founded GATT in 1947 with the aim of gradually diminishing high duties and trade barriers worldwide. At that time the USA, for example, charged sixty percent of customs for Swiss watches. The highly-developed industrial nations of the West, agrarian countries like Australia and Brazil, developing countries and some communist countries belonged to the founding members. All members had equal rights and every country had one vote. The contracts could be changed only if everybody agreed.

In the post-war period, Switzerland exported – similar as today – about forty percent of their products and services and was interested in joining. It did not come to that. In 1947 the Swiss voters had agreed on the new economic articles in the Federal Constitution. They obliged the federal government to take measures for the

protection of a healthy farming community and an efficient agriculture (Art. 31 to paragraph 3 BV). The agriculture law of 1951 protected the subsistence of the local farmers with customs and contingents. Therefore, an accession was not possible. Hans Schaffner’s task, at that time head of the *trade department*, was to negotiate consent for an exception regulation. In 1958 he had almost reached this goal. Almost all members of GATT agreed to take up Switzerland with a special regulation. However, the agrarian countries Australia and New Zealand put in a veto, and Switzerland was accepted only as a provisional member without the right to vote.

This did not prevent Hans Schaffner from co-operating actively. Thus he headed the conference of ministers of GATT from 16 to 21 May 1963, which put up the set of rules for the so-called *Kennedy-Round*.

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He succeeded in winning over the general manager of GATT to support the full accession of Switzerland with a special regulation. On 1 April 1966 the time had come: All members of GATT agreed. Hans Schaffner described this situation in the "*Bundesblatt*", the official Journal of Switzerland, as follows: "Our partners consented to it partly because they did not want to obstruct the way to GATT for a country of the stature of Switzerland in spite of its firmly established peculiarity which did not fit in no pattern. [...] In this sense freedom, which was conceded to Switzerland for the continuation of their agricultural policy is not unrestricted. The barriers arise from the fact that our country leads no isolated existence, but is connected with its economic environment in the minutest detail." (*Bundesblatt* 1966, p. 713)

Some months later *Albert Weitnauer*, leader of the Swiss negotiating delegation, described the occurrences in GATT even more exactly in the ambassadors' conference: "The general agreement in its exact wording is observed by nobody, so to speak. In the granting of exceptions or dispensations from the obligations of GATT the organisation has always proceeded after the principle to act the stricter, the stronger the respective country is in economic terms. Developing countries enjoy a special statute that relieves them from the obligation to comply with all of GATT's regulations. The highly developed countries on the other hand whose balance of payments is in order have great trouble to receive dispensation from their obligations from the GATT according to the admitted Accord Général. Under these circumstances after we had had to be content during more than seven years with the status of a provisional member, we could register it as a success of our trade policy that we succeeded to be taken up as a full member of the organisation by a decision of the GATT's contracting parties on 1 April of this year, although the Swiss agricultural policy with their varied import restrictions is by no means compatible with the GATT's statute." (Ambassadors' conference; 1 September 1966, www.dodis.ch/30835)

Hans Schaffner and *Friedrich Traugott Wahlen* had championed the conviction in GATT that the principles the free trade could not be transferred one to one onto agriculture because the differences were too big between the individual countries and because self-subsistence might have an existential meaning for many countries. Switzerland had experienced this very intensely during the Second World War. This conviction had already flowed into the statutes of EFTA. History was to prove this point of view right. In the field of agriculture free

trade was actually never carried out precisely in GATT. This has not changed until today. In the *Doha-Round*, WTO as a successor organisation of GATT has tried to transfer the rules of the global free trade on agriculture for eleven years and has failed. Since 1960, EFTA has kept to the rule of leaving the agricultural policy to the individual member countries.

Let us come back to the "European integration". In this area, Hans Schaffner and his co-workers succeeded with their politics, too. It is striking how skilfully they moved in international circles and how actively they helped to form the political proceedings as representatives of a neutral small state (although or just because Switzerland was not a member of the UN at that time).

Free trade treaty of 1972

After the veto of the French president *de Gaulle* seven EFTA countries took up their original plan again to create a broad foreign trade zone, which enclosed the countries of the European Community as well as EFTA as equal participants, a project which had been prevented by the USA in the 1950s. In 1969 Hans Schaffner withdrew from the Federal Council for health reasons. Before however, he had succeeded in strengthening the treaty system of EFTA during the last years of his government participation. *Paul Jolles*, head of the *integration office*, was involved authoritatively when in 1972 the planned free trade treaty was concluded between the EC and the EFTA countries.

For Hans Schaffner and his co-workers the contract had also a personal meaning: At that time a relatively small group of people in the Federal Council and the administration conducted the negotiations of European policies. Therefore, it was a great satisfaction for them when the Swiss voters agreed to these policies and accepted the free trade treaty with the overwhelming majority of 72.5 percent of affirmative votes and with the majority of all cantons.

In the period that followed, the EC and EFTA experienced their best years. The great free trade treaty of 1972 was complemented during the next years with numerous other contracts from the tertiary sector, with the big insurance agreement of 1989, for example. *Agriculture was left to the individual countries*. The project, to integrate the countries of Western Europe economically, had been successful. However, the supposition of 1960, Brussels would begin to diminish its bureaucracy again, did not come true, to the contrary: things were to turn out quite differently.

New edition of the "Jean Monnet/USA-Concept"

When Charles de Gaulle died in 1971, the "*Jean Monnet/USA-Concept*", as Al-

bert Weitnauer had called it, was reactivated again. This meant that the EFTA countries were to be integrated bit by bit into the EEC for political reasons following instructions by the USA. In 1973 both NATO members Great Britain and Denmark left EFTA and switched to the European Community, the EC, as they had already planned in 1960. In 1995 both neutral countries Sweden and Austria followed. NATO member Norway did not join as had been planned because the voters rejected the step. Nevertheless, it participated in EEA which intended the automatic takeover of EU law and a close connection to the EU, a step which was rejected by the voters in Switzerland in 1992.

Therefore, in the middle of the 1990s, Switzerland was the last founder member of EFTA that had not followed the "Jean Monnet/USA-concept" and held on to the initial way of co-operating as a sovereign country in a liberal manner with like-minded people. Presumably, it did not happen accidentally that Switzerland was attacked massively by the USA only a short time afterwards. With a well-orchestrated campaign and contrary to the facts, Jewish circles accused the country of being chummy with *Hitler* during the Second World War. This attack came at a convenient moment to the "Monnet's networks" in the Swiss media and among some politicians of Switzerland, because it offered them the chance to undermine the feeling of independence and self-confidence of the Swiss citizens so as to pave the way for an accession. It did not work. The disappointment of these circles might have been a bitter one as in 2001 the Swiss voters declined the opening of negotiations of accession with 76 percent of the votes, with about the same percentage by which they had agreed to the broad European foreign trade zone 30 years before which enclosed EFTA and the EC countries as equal participants. Today, negotiations of accession would probably be rejected even much clearer.

Monnet mania

As already mentioned, the European Community and EFTA experienced their best years during the years after the end of the great free trade treaty of 1972. The official historiography of the EU which follows the Monnet doctrine, however, views this differently. There is talk of 25 years of euro-scepticism ("euro-sclerosis"), which has begun with the election of de Gaulle as French state president in 1958. Only the French socialist *Jacques Delors*, who was appointed commission president in 1985, had led the community out of the

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"deep crisis". This is how *Wikipedia* puts it nowadays.

Delors did not diminish the escalating bureaucracy, as expected, but extended it massively. In June 1989 he presented a 3-step plan aiming at establishing an economic and monetary union and set the course to the mess we are stuck in today. Even before, money played a crucial role in this policy: In the course of decades billions had been channeled, well intentioned, via the different structural funds and later the cohesion funds to the southern countries "to strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit" as nicely stated in the official programmes. Today we know that a lot of money did not serve its purpose. On the contrary, the independence and the self-responsibility of these countries have rather been undermined, as we see today. It is doubtful whether the money which will again flow into these countries within the framework of the EFSF and the ESM, will achieve more success.

We know all developing stages of the last years: the contract of Maastricht, EEA, the introduction of the euro, the contracts of Schengen and Lisbon, the "Bilateral Contracts I and II" with Switzerland, the project of the tax and economy union, the EFSF and ESM – nothing but steps in the direction of a ever-closer political union, as this had already been planned in the preamble of the Treaties of Rome of 1957. From the currently available documents we know that this development follows a political strategy which finally comes from the USA and has its cause in the cold war.

Jean Monnet experienced his "golden years" after years of disregard in the time of de Gaulle (from 1958 to 1969). His "mind" and his networks conquered the editorial staff rooms of most media, many party headquarters, governments and also the universities, in Switzerland as well. Today there are about 200 Jean Monnet's chairs at the European universities. Most media reported onesidedly for many years. When Jean Monnet died in 1979, François Mitterand had his corpse transfer to the Panthéon where he now rests beside the notabilities of French politics and intellectual life. The foundation "Jean Monnet pour l'Europe" awards every year a medal of honour. Members of the Swiss government like the Federal Councillors Adolf Ogi and René Felber rank among the prizewinners beside Jacques Delors and Helmut Kohl. Jakob Kellenberger, who was negotiations leader of the "Bilateral I" few years ago, is now the vice president of the foundation "Jean-Monnet pour l'Europe".

Contempt of true greatness

Hans Schaffner and his co-workers who had shaped the face of modern Switzerland decisively, however, fell more and more into oblivion, or the remembrance of their policy was pushed consciously aside. His party, the FDP, changed its face and has trouble to find its profile today. After the EEA vote they took up the EU accession in their party programme (and deleted it again recently). At that time Federal Councillor *Didier Burkhalter*, today responsible for the foreign affairs, joined the Nebs (and later separated from it again). The goal of the "New European Movement Swiss, Nebs" is the EU accession. Since their "re-orientation" the party lost about one quarter of their electorate in the 90s.

It became quiet around Federal Councillor Hans Schaffner. Actually, there does not even exist a biography about him. In his final years of life Hans Schaffner was even intentionally overlooked. The historians of the so-called "Bergier commission" who were supposed to review the events of the Second World War more exactly even avoided consulting him as head of the *Federal Headquarters for Wartime Economy* at that time. Presumably they feared «that their prejudices would have been disproved by his judgment» as former State Secretary. Later, *Franz Blankart* wrote in his obituary on Hans Schaffner ("NZZ"; 30 November 2004). It was not Hans Schaffner's habit to give up, but he became active – like just so often – and travelled to New York at the age of 93 years and stepped into the lion's den. He expressed his indignation about the misplaced attacks in an article in the "New York Times". ("The truth about Switzerland", "New York Times", 6 April 1998; www.nytimes.com/1998/04/06/opinion/the-truth-about-switzerland.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm). The first lines should convey an impression:

"Once again debate has arisen concerning the measures that should be taken by Switzerland to settle the claims of Holocaust victims whose stolen property made its way into Swiss banks. The compensations provided by my country to date have been widely portrayed not as an honourable act of compassion but as evidence of a guilty national conscience. – This confusion comes after two years of accusations that Switzerland collaborated with Nazi Germany in World War II by stealing Jewish property and mistreating refugees. These charges were not based on any new information. All the relevant details have been available since 1946. But what is new is the surge of resentment against Switzerland, and the ignorance that underlies it. Since I directed the Swiss war economy during the menacing years of World War II, when we had to prepare against Nazi aggression, I'm appalled to

see Swiss wartime actions misrepresented so consistently. It is time to set the record straight:[...]"

Autonomous population

The population of Switzerland did not allow themselves to be infected with *Monnet mania*. In spite of the constant one-sided stream of the media they usually remained objective. In 1992 the Swiss voters rejected EEA, although the parliament had spent tax money on a massive Yes-propaganda the first time in the history of the federal state. In 2001 they rejected the opening of accession talks by 76 percent. The voters agreed to the "Bilateral Contracts I and II". Nevertheless, these bilateral contracts have another quality than the former ones. Old state secretary Franz Blankart, the negotiations leader of EEA, recently declared: "The [bilateral] contracts with the EU were negotiated under the implied assumption that Switzerland would be a member of the EU in the foreseeable future, which is why attention was hardly given to the formative co-operation." (*NZZ on Sunday*; 25 October 2009) – "Switzerland sometimes has a hard time finding its way".

In most countries the electorate were not asked at all about the European policies, or the vote was influenced by means of gigantic government propaganda like recently in Switzerland as well.

The "method Schaffner" as a key to understanding the success of Switzerland

Many things look different today. The EU is in the crisis. The euro also does not work and many other things in the EU do not. The "method of Monnet" is in the process of being tested. EFTA – today with only four members – continues their free trade policy. They have concluded a multitude of individually negotiated free trade treaties during the last years with states in the whole world, which consider the peculiarities of the respective contracting partners. The negotiations with China have recently been concluded. The contract with India is shortly before its conclusion. Negotiations with Russia are on the way. (Compare also: "Europe at a crossroad: More responsibility and liberal cooperation between sovereign nations" in *Zeit-Fragen*; 24 October 2011).

Today, the vast network of the contracts comprises the most of the globe. Therefore, EFTA need not fear the comparison with WTO. For many years the World Trade Organisation has tried in vain, to tie the free trade into a uniform, global corset which obviously is not fair to the individual members. Compared with that, the "method Schaffner" deserves to be taken note of. It is a key to the understanding of the success of Switzerland.

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The American imperialism manifests itself in manifold and different forms

The following text, attached to the letter of de Gaulle by the authors of the book, is intended as a guide to the reader and in each case it addresses de Gaulle himself, in order to call the historical situation to mind, in which the document was drafted by him.

10 June 1942. The forces of Free France are fighting against the tanks of the Africa Corps, the Stukas and the Air Force at the front of Bir Hakeim, a strategic water point in the middle of the Libyan desert : simultaneously the troops of *Koenig* and *Messmer* are confronting *Rommel* and the Italians and scarcely escape the encirclement. In Madagascar at the same time, British troops – without having informed you [this means de Gaulle] – have been fighting during seven months in fierce battles against the troops of Vichy and the Japanese sub-marines.

In the metropolis on radio Vichy, *Laval* will confirm before long, that he wishes the victory of Germany, while for the last two months the Gestapo has been raging in occupied France. Thanks to the efforts of *Jean Moulin*, the National Committee of Free France is finally accepted by all resistance movements in the interior: Free France and the occupied France soon become "militant" France. You will actually be forced to fight at all fronts: against your enemies, and sometimes even against your allies, who sometimes have the tendency to surround you. You discuss the problems of Madagascar with

Churchill, but especially the American policy regarding Vichy and the unspeakable egoism of the United States. Four days earlier in a secret note to *Molotov*, the Soviet foreign minister, you laid it on the line: "The American imperialism is expressed in manifold and different forms. Some of his representatives think in terms of U.S. American domination over the Western world. Other representatives advocating the economic imperialism, desire that the U.S. implement a lifestyle for the whole world and universally control and manage the resources and the trade."

On 10 June 1942 General de Gaulle writes to General Eboué and General Leclerc, members of his staff.

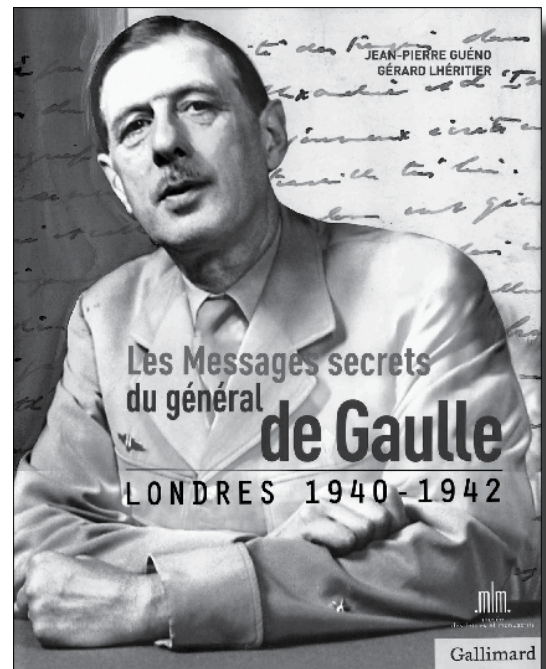
In my telegram No. 5219/B CAB of 6-6-42 I communicated to you my fears regarding the imperialistic plans of the United States and, although in less extent, those of England, which concern the unity and integrity of our empire.

By the way these plans are far from meeting with undivided acceptance in their own governments and in the public opinion. Nevertheless just now the inexpressible egoism in their politics prevails. In this regard the fighting France is the barrier to their intentions. They try to manipulate France from the inside, by weighing the serious disadvantages, which in the worst case would be the discontinuance of the relations. In particular they purport to regulate the questions of the common actions with the local authorities. They calculate on finding the wanted facilities with them without being obliged to provide any

compensation to the French in their own country or in the whole empire.

I warn you against such an approach of our American and English allies. It is absolutely necessary that we preserve a close collaboration against them.

The local agreements with them, whether in economic or in military terms, may apparently mean to us, certain advantages. But for the sake of a superior interest, I think it is essential that all queries or forays of a foreign authority, concerning in any way their use of our territories or armed forces or the equipment of these territories or armed forces affected by them or joint actions of these territories or forces with theirs, or even the stay, the arrival or the departure of their own people in these territories or



Felix Eboué

From 18 June 1940 on, *Felix Eboué*, Governor General of Chad since 1938, declares himself a supporter of General de Gaulle.

On 26 August, he officially declares with Colonel *Marchand*, military commander of the area, the annexion of Chad to Free France and thereby he gives the "signal for the re-erection of the whole empire".

On 12 November he is appointed Governor General of French Equatorial

Africa and is one of the first five people who are honored by General de Gaulle with the *Ordre de la Libération*.

He transforms French Equatorial Africa into a genuine geopolitical hub, from where the first troops of Free France start off under the command of the generals *de Larminat*, *Koenig* and *Leclerc*.

From Brazzaville, he forms an army of 40.000 men and promotes the war economy.

within these armed forces, are under control of the National Committee's decision. That is targeted mainly at the missions of Taylor and Cunningham.

Being practical people, the Anglo-Saxons will soon bow themselves to the inevitable, and I will have the possibility of benefiting from our competition for the common good of the empire and the country.

Général de Gaulle

Source: *Les Messages secrets du général de Gaulle, Londres 1940-1942* Gallimard 2011, S. 226 ISBN 978-2-07-013597-4

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

The Free Democratic Party (FDP) in Germany is leaving the SME (Small and medium sized enterprises) behind without political representation

by Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer, Germany

If after the highest approval of its history – as was the case in the last federal election – a party experiences its deepest downfall, there are really only two consequences:

- The party will disappear from the parliaments and thus from the political process, or
- the party is fundamentally reformed in order to win approval again, especially with its traditional voters. The latter, however, requires that the party returns to meeting its voters' needs.

The first alternative, of course, will happen automatically if the second alternative – a reform of personnel and contents – will not be carried out rapidly.

The FDP's staff

How could the FDP fall for the mistake to present – instead of the principled *Guido Westerwelle* – a man who is not characterized by competence but by uncertainty due to a lack of professional and life experience and who also lacks a convincing message that is credible to the traditional FDP clientele of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). They would have acted more wisely by presenting the principled *Guido Westerwelle*. The FDP urgently needs another leader who is more credible to the main target group of the FDP – the small and medium-sized businesses. A *Rainer Brüderle* and a *Frank Schäffler* cannot compensate for the lack of trust in the party leader.

As the example of Schäffler shows, there are credible and persuasive politi-

cians among the FDP politicians. At lower levels, the FDP is even more convincing than the four socialist parties due to its sociological roots among middle class people. And there are outstanding entrepreneurs and scientists among the sympathizers of the FDP. Why does the FDP not go for one of its popular economic professors to head the Department of Economy and make him act knowledgeable in the crisis instead of stammer about?

The persuasiveness and credibility of the FDP, therefore, most of all requires credibility and persuasiveness of its representatives. Without changing the top ranks, the FDP will not regain its attractiveness among voters.

The FDP must have a message for the middle class

The FDP also does not provide their traditional target audience with any political message. This must also be altered.

The main target group of the FDP has always been the SMEs. As neither the socialist parties nor the assimilated CDU cared for this target group, the SMEs were left to the FDP who in the last federal general election helped to bring about the CDU's success hoping for a civil government. The FDP, however, did not meet the expectations of the SMEs:

- Its best SME politician Brüderle as well as SME politician Schäffler are being bullied by the leading "boy group".
- Instead of tax cuts, the FDP was seduced by its coalition partners to increase the burden for the middle class.



Why do we let that happen? Euro crisis: The desire to join; with contributions from Prof. Dr Eberhard Hamer, Dr Eike Hamer and Member of Parliament (MdB) Frank Schäffler (FDP, Free Democratic Party).

- Neither is our democracy credibly defended by the FDP. Contrary to Schäffler the party leadership wants to shift our national financial sovereignty to the Politburo in Brussels (fiscal union) through a second "Enabling Act" (ESM), i.e. hand over the most important national right to self-government and make it a centralized law.
- If in such an important area of politics they do the opposite of what they had previously promised or what they had fought

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Global challenge

In the East the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations ASEAN work successfully together in a similar manner like EFTA. 1998 these countries were in a heavy crisis like today the EU which went down in history as the Asia crisis. On their own responsibility they managed to gain control of their gigantic mountains of debt without having to use questionable instruments like EFSF, ESM or euro-bonds. Most are practically free of debt and have formed reserves during the last years to take up the challenges of the future. "Europe" cannot afford to ignore that.

As the documents show today, the "Jean Monnet/USA-Concept" is a product

of the cold war and has been acted out following US-orders to a considerable part. It is high time to critically question this concept and to take up the challenges of this century. The cold war has been history for a long time. Maybe the population needs, a sort of "Fall of the Wall" in the EU as in the GDR twenty years ago to exit the restricting structures and the foreign control.

Or as one says with *Voltaire* or with *Immanuel Kant* so nicely: "Enlightenment means exit from irresponsibility due to one's own fault."

In the fourth and last contribution to the subject "European integration" we return to 1969. Minister *Albert Weitnauer*, a close colleague of *Hans Schaffner*, gathered the Swiss ambassadors together on 5 September 1969 and delivered a real lesson in political science on the subject Eu-

ropean integration" (dodis.ch/30861). He raised the fundamental issue: Are there in Europe enough state-constituting elements which allow to walk further on the way to the "United States of Europe"? He pointed to the fact that the European solidarity, the political will of the population, the work of leaders and that sort of thing would have to exist as indispensable elements for building up a kind of federal state. He developed a farsightedness rare in the politics 43 years ago. More of the same in the next article. •

¹ GATT organisation carried out rounds of negotiations to adapt and to develop their contracts, like today their successor organization WTO – at intervals of several years. The best-known ones are the *Kennedy's round* (1962–1967), the *Uruguay round* (1986–1994) and the *Doha round* (2001–2011) today.

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for, they should not be surprised if the voters turn away in frustration.

The FDP needs clear messages for its constituents again. It is important to clarify first, where the potential voters of FDP can be found:

The Mittelstandsinstitut of Lower Saxony has just released a book (*Eberhard and Imke Hamer*, "Mittelstand unter lauter Räubern. Die Plünderung der Selbständigen" [SMEs among robbers. Plundering the self-employed] *Aton-Verlag*, 2011) in which the authors pointed out that we now have become mainly a transfer society. Only a third of our population (33.9%) is still earning and living on market income, i.e. they must fight for their livelihood in business enterprises, in freelance offices, agriculture and forestry or in the service sector – that is on the market. They include 4.1 million entrepreneurs and their 23.7 million employees. This third of the population has to finance with their market revenues 37.7% transfer income earners – public servants, pensioners, unemployed and people living on welfare. That means that more than one other person who lives on the taxes or social security contributions of his market income is kept by each worker on the market.

Moreover, 28.4% members of both groups ultimately live on the market income of the former group, which implies that, on balance, two-thirds (66.1%) of our population live on taxes and social contributions of the first third – the entrepreneurs and their employees.

Anyone who calls for tax cuts threatens the public services income of two thirds of the voters – the transfer income earners. The majority of transfer income earners is interested in higher taxes and social security dues, because it is the only possibility for them to expect higher transfer payments.

Conversely, those who call for general tax cuts like the FDP will be regarded as a threat by two-thirds of the population. Either the FDP would only have been allowed to reduce only those taxes that everyone will benefit from – such as abolition of the solidarity surcharge – or they would have had to call for the reduction of those taxes that discriminate against the SMEs, i.e. higher taxation of personnel enterprises in relation to corporations or changing the concept of profit solely on revenues. Only then the FDP could regain credibility of fiscal policy in the SME sector, without antagonizing the majority of the population.

The above division of our society into market performers and transfer income earners is therefore forcing the FDP to stake a basic decision: all four other par-

ties are mainly fighting for the transfer income earners, however, none of them specifically for the market performing SMEs. So if the FDP like all other parties also tries to feed the transfer income recipients, it becomes obsolete. If it cared, however, about the SMEs, it would be the only party that would and could take over their representation. The electoral potential of the SMEs is still more than 30%. Those who are able to bind this potential are safe.

The FDP would have to win back the SME voters because they are not served by other parties. And if it serves this group of voters in a more credible and more concentrated way than the other parties, it can stabilize itself again.

Credible SME messages look different from what the FDP currently formulates:

- In the euro dispute the MP Schaeffler has publicly shown that the FDP allows more intra-party democracy than any other party. The survey within the party could have been a great moment in our democracy and for the FDP, if it had not been sabotaged by *Philipp Roesler*.
- The FDP also had to fight against the assumption of debt and the redistribution by alleged rescue deals and against the abandonment of our financial sovereignty in favor of a fiscal union in favor of the central committee in Brussels. The central redistribution is a basic socialist principle, which is always directed against the hard-working SMEs, whether national or European. Here, the FDP had its opportunity and responsibility. If it spoke out against with the new "enabling law" of the ESM together with Schaeffler, this law would nevertheless be decided by a majority of the three majority parties, but the FDP would remain credible and innocent as a timely admonisher of euro crisis that will be deepening in future.
- On the occasion of their annual meeting at Epiphany Roesler promised that Germany should be free of debt – but at the same time he advocated a transfer union and multiple debt assumption for all EU countries by Germany; it would constitute the largest debt that has ever threatened Germany.
- He also hoped for "growth through immigration". However, the majority of the immigrants is a burden to the social system and would represent the market-based response to labor shortages rather than a wage increase in the deficit areas in order to attract the workforce in the shortage sector.
- Why has Roesler just formulated at all that "economic growth" was the main message of the FDP, while the economy is already slipping into a crisis, and while unfortunately the debt union co-sponsored by the FDP will lead to a

crash of the euro and to recession. All this is counterproductive; it is the right slogan at the wrong time and the FDP is more likely to ridicule itself rather than become trustworthy.

It just does not suffice, if you always call yourself a centrist party, for neither the leaders nor the program do convincingly represent this point of view.

However a party for the SMEs would be essential, because none of the other parties will take care of the SMEs, but all are instead dedicated to serve the majority of transfer recipients.

A decline of the FDP would also have implications for the SMEs. A real SME party would at least have a voter potential of more than 30%. Although all parties claim to stand for "the middle of our society", but none of them take this "middle" seriously in fact. The parties are all leering at the majority of the state-funded transfer-income recipients (redistributive policy).

This voter potential of the SMEs should again be credibly served by the FDP, or a new party will be entering into this free space of voters and replace the FDP. The decision in the FDP must be taken at short notice – and will determine its political destiny.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Current Concerns

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USA want to use Asia for themselves

km. Internationale Politik (IP Journal) is an influential foreign policy journal of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is published by the “*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik (DGAP)*”. In allusion to the US *Council on Foreign Relations* the DGAP also calls itself *German Council on Foreign Relations*. Issue No. 1 2012, deals with the German Iran policy in a lengthy article. In it, the German government is accused of playing down the dangers posed by Iran and of trying to avoid war by all means and of criticizing the US government unfairly because of its policy towards Iran. The accusation particularly aims at the German Foreign Ministry.

There have been attacks against the German Foreign Ministry since the office has been taken over by FDP politician *Guido Westerwelle*. They range from the quotations emanating from the German US Embassy, published by *WikiLeaks*, or a US intelligence agent as the Foreign Minister’s office manager, to the campaign after the German abstention from the Security Council vote about the military operation against Libya, mainly due to the Foreign Minister.

Already more than ten years ago, in an article for the “*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*”, *Guido Westerwelle*, at that time still secretary of his party, had called for a

modification of Germany’s one-sided ties to the West and for making Germany an increasingly independent “hinge” between the West and the East. In a position paper by the Foreign Minister after the overthrow of the Libyan leadership in the summer of 2011, *Westerwelle* also advocated new global balances and recommended that the trend towards a multi-polar world should nevertheless be taken into account by a future German foreign policy.

Obviously that does not suit the plans of US policy, as formulated in the same issue of the *IP Journal* by US Secretary of State *Hillary Clinton*. In an article entitled “America’s Pacific Century” *Clinton* called for shifting the focus of US foreign policy towards the Asia-Pacific region – with “more economic, diplomatic and strategic resources”, to “make Asia utilisable for the US yield the biggest returns” and “renew our leadership”. If the hitherto most important “allies” in Europe decided to cease supporting US interests in Europe, but to go more autonomous ways instead, a serious weakening of the United States would be the consequence.

Could it be that the fact that the German FDP currently is worried whether it still be represented in parliament after the next general elections has to do with

a foreign policy (designed by FDP foreign minister *Guido Westerwelle*) that has found little approval across the Atlantic?

Probably not only, because the German FDP no longer stands for a convincing liberal policy (see also the article above on this page), and also the foreign policy positions of the party have become less independent. Interesting, however, that classical liberalism, with the free citizen feeling responsible for the common good and for justice as the indispensable sister of freedom, in the centre of their ideas, is hardly an issue of public opinion any longer. Recent surveys show that for the majority of people “freedom” and “liberalism” are still very important. This is why a public debate about what is the content of these values shall be prevented. Many Germans would like the political processes in the country to be looked at and discussed more thoroughly and honestly. That the citizens make themselves more independent from the twisted and nebulous standards of the Empire. To think and act freely in the sense of a true liberalism! And strengthen and unite the forces that (within many parties *and also outside*) stand up and work for it. •

Replica to “Serious problems for the Air Force”

by *Alfred Ramseyer, Brigadier General retired, former Chief of Staff of the Air Force.*

“*Servir et disparaître!*” This is what I intended to do 14 years ago. The report of the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” dated 15 January 2012 caused me to change my mind this time.

Everything that was “revealed” in this report of the *Federal Department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sport DDPS Inspectorate* (original report of the Inspectorate DDPS) and *Andreas Schmid*, could have been found and read in the Federal Archives or the archives of the Air Force as a warning against the likely consequences of the reorganization euphoria at that time – already many years ago and it might also have been cheaper.

For about two decades we have fought to establish a responsible airfield commander on our operational airfields, as it is a common practice in all other Air Forces in the world. This goal was finally reached, but in the meantime that commander’s means have been withdrawn to ensure air operations in an efficient and timely manner. Today he still has some airplanes and pilots as well as aircraft deployment per-

sonnel at his disposal. The airfield, all facilities, air traffic control, local air traffic control, aircraft-maintenance as well as the general logistics of today belong to other units, no longer to the airfield commander’s subordinate organizational units.

The airfield commander has degenerated into a coordinator/administrator, who has to try to reconcile all of his allotted departments, which is very time consuming and will – regarding today’s organization – be definitely too late in a case of emergency.

However, for air defense operations in our small country with little spatial depth minutes and seconds decide about success or failure. An F/A-18 or perhaps even a Gripen can take off 4–5 minutes too late, because according to Swiss and administrative concurrent procedures on the ground much time has been lost, a pilot even with best fighter control cannot identify or fight his target in time.

How could things come so far?

In the beginning of the 1990s, when the “*Army 95*” was planned, there was still

a *CMND (Commission for Military National Defence)*, which took decisions and was conducted by the *CSMD (Chief Swiss Military Department)*. In this Commission, a single person had actual expertise in the field of air warfare. This was the Commander of the Air Force. At that time he defended his well functioning organization vehemently until it was no longer possible. In most cases, he was supported by his comrades. At that time *FMD/GDS (Federal Military Department/ Group for Defence Services)* wanted to reorganize according to purely economic criteria.

At that time, foreign “experts” were deployed costing us several million Swiss francs, they primarily introduced economic aspects and searched for saving potential. Operational requirements seemed to have no priority at that time.

Under the political savings, reorganization and reduction pressure, the Air Force was taken apart piece by piece:

Media release

Switzerland: Financial Directors of the cantons take an active role

Bern, 27 January 2012: The “Finanzdirektorenkonferenz” (FDK) agrees to the opening of a new tax dialogue with the EU. It expects that this dialogue will be conducted by the EU and its member states in a constructive and contained way and that it will be restricted on single, specific conversation items. The consent of the cantonal governments to the tax dialogue remains reserved. In the presence of the head of the Federal Department of Finance, Federal President *Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf*, the FDK acknowledged the result of the so-called dialogue about the dialogue on 27 January

2012. The FDK paid tribute on the basis of its conditions adopted on 28 January 2011, which have to be complied in a possible new dialogue with the EU on issues of corporate taxation.¹

With its consent, the FDK confirms the clear expectations that the tax dialogue

- includes specific, individual issues, but not the acquisition of the EU Code of Conduct and its principles,
- ensues under active, systematic and close political integration of the cantons and that possible extensions of the dialogue will only ensue with the consent of the cantons,

- is managed constructively, i.e. that there will be no threats, that existing bilateral commitments of the EU Member States are observed and no discriminatory measures against Switzerland will be taken.

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¹ See www.fdk-cdf.ch/110128_coc_position_fdk_wording_def_d.pdf

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Replica to...”

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- Firstly the area of aircraft maintenance, repairs and technical systems testing to the today’s RUAG (the RUAG Holding AG is a Swiss technology group with its seat in Berne)
- later the air traffic control to “Skyguide”
- it was followed by the infrastructure given to “armasuisse” (a Federal Agency of the Swiss Confederation)
- Logistics requirements of the Air Force to the logistics base of the Army
- and most recently aerial surveillance (FLORAKO), the electronic reconnaissance of the Air Force, as well as the Flight Information Service had to be delivered to the Command Support Base of the Army (CSB).
- By the way: the parachute reconnaissance troop was taken away from the Air Force as well.

This process of “downsizing” and the constant reduction in personnel continued with the planning of the “Army XXI”.

By the way it can be proved that these “saving” exercises in daily practice of today cost far more than in the old and proven organization.

What remains is an organization at our airfields, which is almost sufficient in the quiet time of peace, in larger operations, for instance “WEF Davos (World Economic Forum Davos)” (4–6 days) the limits were already stretched and in the case of emergency it will almost certainly fail right from the start.

The well proven and globally accepted military principle “One space – one task – one military leader with appropriate resources” has been criminally ignored for years in this case.

This did not happen because the Air Force wanted this! But because at the level of parliament and army decisions were taken in the area of security policy, which encouraged this development. There are not many parliamentarians who have an actually well-founded expertise in this field gained from their own experience. The younger generation of our “representatives” grew up in prosperity and the imagination is obviously missing that the long lasting peace with an excessive standard of living will come to a bad end, sometime.

In my humble opinion, on highest Army level there was and there is not enough expertise gained in years of own experience, which so that organizational requirements of our Air Force in connec-

tion with air warfare can be explained convincingly to those who take the decisions. The new “head structure of the army”, which is currently under investigation, proves that in this area obviously nothing has changed.

The organizations and political parties, which officially want to abolish our army and want no new aircraft – because it was unnecessary! –, will belong to the first crying to the Army for help some day. But also our responsible parliamentarians will no longer be persons of position and authority then and will unfortunately get away with it.

Hopefully, Andreas Schmid’s report and the findings of the Inspectorate DDPS will finally achieve something and the Air Force will regain those funds including staff, which put them in a position to fulfill their complex task on time and with appropriate persistence.

*Alfred Ramseyer, Brigadier General retired,
former Chief of Staff of the Air Force,
Corcelles-près-Payerne*

*Published on 19 January 2012, Blog of the
Swiss General Staff officers,
<http://blog.ggstof.ch>*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Communes in the Upper Valais want to remain autonomous

Model of a successful resistance by the population

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich, Switzerland

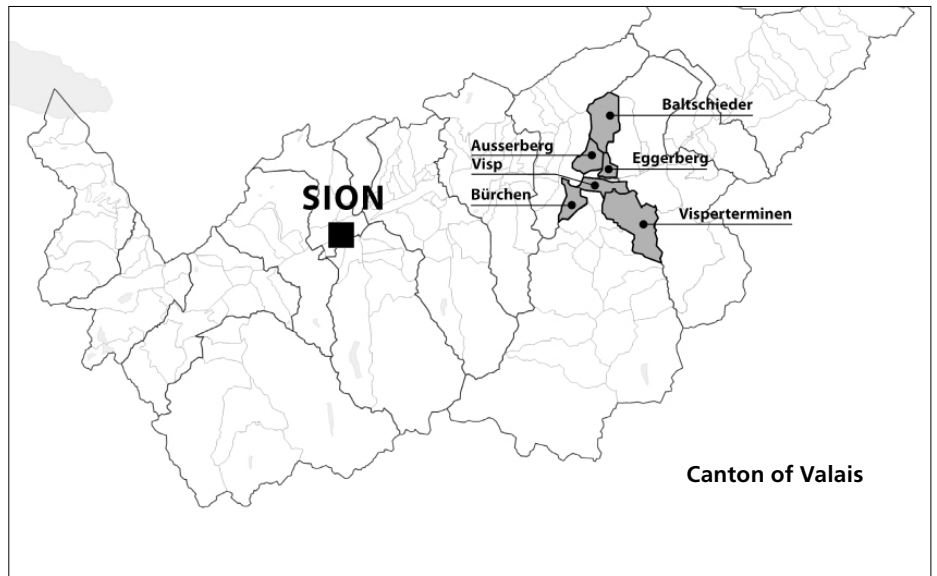
Despite years of manipulation by cantonal authorities and so-called consulting firms, the merger of the six Upper Valais communes Visp, Visperterminen, Baltschieder, Ausserberg, Bürchen and Eggerberg into a large commune called Visp in February this year failed. Visperterminen, Ausserberg and Baltschieder rejected the merger of the residential communes: Visperterminen with 70 percent no-votes, Ausserberg with 58 percent and Baltschieder with 54 percent no-votes. Voter turnout was extremely high: in Visp, 63 percent of the inhabitants went to the polls and in the five other communes between 80 and 92 percent. The people are in control of their destiny.

According to Article 135 of the Valais Municipalities Act, the Great Council (the cantonal parliament) is able to force a commune to merge under certain conditions, even against the will of the citizens. According to the merger agreement, however, a merger would only have been possible in this case if all communes would have had agreed. The voters of three communes, however, resisted the financial lures of the Canton: the cantonal authorities wanted to channel off 7.2 million francs out of the tax system as so-called “financial assistance” for the new greater commune. So much for the *common claim – albeit long recognized as false – that a merged greater commune would be cheaper than six small ones. Obviously not, if the Canton has to spend such a sum!*

What’s the purpose of these greater communes?

The six communes should have merged by 1 January 2013. The new greater commune would have included about 11,000 people in an area of 13,000 hectares. For comparison, the most populous commune of Switzerland, the *city of Zurich* with its almost 390,000 inhabitants, occupies 9,188 hectares, including the share of the lake.

The question arises who benefits from such a large commune in the Alpine area with many open spaces. Do the propagandists from the Brussels experimental kitchen hope that a single commune with a single executive and a single referendum would be more likely to be persuaded to establish a nature park, including the resettlement of wolves and lynx, and the ensuing severe restrictions for the population? Obtaining the consent of the sovereign in six communes is certainly more



The planned merger would have included an area of 13,000 hectares. (Graphics: Zeit-Fragen, Source: wikipedia/Tschubby)

difficult, as demonstrated by the example of the vote on the Wallis vote.

To make the people agree with the merger, they were fooled into believing that the commune of Visp as the second largest commune in the Upper Valais, would “gain prestige, importance and influence to the outside” (see background report of the *Beratung, Planung und Treuhand AG Visp* of September 2010). This claim is absurd. Maybe this is true for the EU bureaucracy that a commune with a few thousand more inhabitants has more prestige, greater importance and influence than a smaller commune. In small-scale, federal and direct-democratic Switzerland however, each commune has its meaning and place as the smallest unit of the entity. In the meantime everybody should have learned that small communes are more identity-forming, more social and yet less expensive than large ones. Therefore the small communities are entitled to the highest reputation.

Definite ‘no’ of all six “Bürgergemeinden”

Besides the voting results of the residential communes in Visp and its five neighboring communes, the votes of the “Bürgergemeinden” (citizen’s community) were also tallied on the occasion of the referendum on the merger. It had been expected in advance that they would oppose the merger. This was actually the case, and the result was in fact massive: Between 61.5 and 91.96% of the residents said no to the merger of the “Bürgergemeinden”. A merger of the political com-

munes would have also led to the absurd situation that the new extended commune would have led its artificial existence in addition to the six communes which are deeply embedded in the population.

In the canton of Valais the “Bürgergemeinden” are of particular importance. They have mostly existed since the Middle Ages and have always fulfilled basic tasks in addition to the resident commune. The “Bürgergemeinde” is defined in the Constitution of the Canton of Valais of 8 March 1907, Article 80, as a corporation under public law; it has a separate organization with a Citizens’ Assembly and a Civic Council (executive branch). The Citizens’ Assembly includes all the citizens of the municipality and has decided on the naturalization of new citizens until recently. Today it still holds most of the common property. Each of the six “Bürgergemeinden” of the failed merger has its own large forest and some of them own vineyards and alpine pastures. Accordingly, citizens have a right to a share of wood or wine. Similar forms of “Bürgergemeinden” also exist in several other cantons.

What matters for the citizens?

In the Valais commune Visp and its neighboring communes neither the promised financial aid from the canton nor the hope for a lower tax rate could convince the majority of the population. “There are things that matter more than taxes”, said some residents of Ausserberg in a

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The wolf in Obergoms

bha. The wolf kills sheep in Obergoms. Sheep in the Alps often die miserably after a wolf bite. The wolf does not eat its prey; it may be hurt and bleed to death. The discovered dead sheep is examined for traces left by the attacker. In Grenoble, DNA analysis is performed. But already a day later, long before the analysis results are available, someone says: “The wolf comes from Italy, it is a male.” The wolf roams along the young Rhone River. Without fear, he roams the small villages. There he finds a dog that he chases. Wolves are said to cross the mountains, but this is denied by locals. “The wolf arrives on four wheels”, they say. Before long, there will be a pack of wolves.

The cooperative of sheep farmers graze their herds on the Grimsel Pass during summer. If they want to get compensation for torn sheep, they must set up a protection fence. Many smaller sheep farmers give up after their herd has been attacked by a wolf. This leads to an overgrowing of the pastures, and thus to increased danger of avalanches. The pastures are cultural landscapes, which make life in the high valleys possible. The grazing herds of sheep preserve the landscape. If the grass is not fed down, it grows into long grass, which does not provide any support for snow. The farmers in Obergoms have taken to organic farming and consider the whole thing an undesirable development. •

Decision of the Federal Court of 9 August 2007

«I ricorrenti hanno il diritto a che la votazione consultiva, che di massima rappresenta l'unica possibilità attraverso la quale essi possono esprimere la loro volontà, rispetti il loro diritto di voto.»
(pag. 4, sotto)

“The claimants have the right that the consultative vote, which basically represents the only possibility to express their will, respects their voting rights.”

(page 4 bottom)

“Communes in the Upper Valais ...”

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radio broadcast of 31 January 2011. “I do not believe that the tax rate should determine a yes or no vote on the merger.” The power to dispose of the water, which belongs to the communes, is of greater importance to the mountain people – an Ausserberg resident added that they did not know what would change in case of a merger. What matters for the people is that they can retain their identity, their village life, their village character: “I think that many fear that we would lose our identity, that after the merger they would no longer be Ausserberger; they fear that you are someone and no one at the same time.” – “Unit now, Ausserberg has always been independent and giving this up would really be hard – that’s why we say no.”

And the Ausserberger people then said no two weeks later at the ballot box, together with the sovereign of Visperterminen and Baltschieder.

Decision on municipal mergers must remain a matter for the citizens

In the case of the planned merger of Visp the Canton of Valais has assured the communes involved that they would not be forced to merge against the will of their populations. That should be a matter of course in direct-democratic Switzerland, with its highly distinctive elements of federalism and local autonomy. In some cantons, the voluntariness of communal mergers is embodied in the Constitution, for example, in Schaffhausen and Zurich:

Constitution of the Canton of Schaffhausen, Article 104

¹For the merger, the division and the re-division of the communes, the consent of affected communes and the approval of the Cantonal Council is required.

²The Canton may encourage the voluntary association of communes.

Constitution of the Canton of Zurich, Article 84

¹For the merger of communes the support of the majority of voters of each participating commune is required.

Some years ago, the cantonal legislation in other cantons, such as the Ticino, the Grisons and Valais, provided the right of the cantonal government or the Parliament to intervene in the fusion process and force some communes to merge against the will of the citizens under certain conditions – for example due to their geographical or financial situation. Cantonal laws are legitimated by the people’s will – however in every canton a referendum can be initiated against a proposed law. Nevertheless, the possibility of forced mergers by the canton remains very problematic. Given the highly direct-democratic rights of citizens and the great importance of communal autonomy such interventions of the higher political level are alien to the Swiss state structure. The fact that a Swiss commune can be forced to merge with other communes by the cantonal parliament or the government, even though its population voted ‘no’ on its own dissolution in a referendum, is pretty rich!

The judges of the Swiss Federal Court are well aware of that fact, as they are repeatedly appealed to by a commune that is not willing to bow to the dictates of the canton, but to fight its independence. In some cases, the Federal Court has protected the commune’s right to self-determination, in others it has – hopefully reluctantly – decided that a forced merger was based on cantonal law and was therefore lawful.

Consultative vote or right to political decision?

Actually consultative votes are exceptional in the Swiss constitutional law, because the legislative power is in the hands of the people. In cantons, whose legislation allows a cantonal decision on mergers against the will of the people, referendums have the character of consultative votes. This happened for example on 30 September 2007: The Ticino communes Barbengo, Cadro, Carabbia and Villa Luganese voted on a merger with the city of Lugano. *Cadro was the only commune that rejected the merger. Even before the vote a group of citizens could bring about a courageous federal court decision that was appropriate to the Swiss understanding of communal autonomy: Despite the cantonal merger legislation, the Federal Court ruled that the citizens’ right to respect their political will was superior.* •

¹ The “Bürgergemeinde” (*Citizen’s Community*) is a statutory corporation in public law in Switzerland. It includes all individuals who are citizens of the Bürgergemeinde, usually by having inherited the “Bürgerrecht” (citizenship), regardless of where they were born or where they may currently live. (Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bürgergemeinde>)

The merging of communes has been imposed from above

Interview with Damien Lachat, Bassecourt

mw. In the canton of Jura – as in other cantons – a wave of communal mergers is in progress. On 5 February the voters decided in Haute-Sorne whether to dissolve their seven autonomous communes Bassecourt, Boécourt, Courfaivre, Glovelier, Saulcy, Soulece and Undervelier and merge them into one big municipality with almost 8,000 people. On the same day, the voters in Val Terbi decided about the merger of the seven communes Corban, Courchapoix, Courroux, Mervelier, Montselvier, Vermes and Vicques.

The next communal merger is already planned on 25 March: it is supposed to convert all 13 communes in the district Franches-Montagnes into a single one. There was increasing resistance against the proposals. Citizens of Haute-Sorne with different political viewpoints wrote letters to the editor. In Val Terbi an association “Pro Terbi val”, which is critical of the merger, had formed. In the Franches-Montagnes the citizens’ movement “Franches-Montagnes, je m’engage” had been very active since already some time before the plebiscite and launched the campaign for this vote on 10 January with a resolution against the planned unified municipality.

Citizens say no to dissolution of their political communes. With this decision they say yes to the preservation of their citizen-oriented government on a small scale, instead of a central office in a big municipality which people do not really identify with. They say yes to preserve their full political rights, and also yes to the unique way an active population is able to contribute to the vivid organization of their commune as militia: in the communal council, in the communal assembly, in the commissions. For in the small communes the design of direct democracy is particularly pronounced: everybody who wants to participate in their commune can actively do so. This high degree of identification with their commune cannot be simply transferred to a large municipality. Therefore, it might not be easy to find people for the government and administration of the merged municipality who totally engage with the needs and concerns of every individual village like, for example, the current communal councilors and the communal council clerks.

Despite the increasing burden of responsibilities and regulations on the part of the cantons, autonomy among the Swiss communes is still extremely large. Moreover, it is an open secret that the small

communes usually have far more control over their budgets than the large ones. Therefore, the argument that a large municipality was more affordable than seven small communes cannot sustain.

How does therefore the canton of Jura – as do the cantons of Grisons, Ticino, Valais, Schwyz and others – come to urge their communes to merge? Where does the idea that the federalist principle of Switzerland was antiquated come from? How can we nurture the absurd idea Switzerland consisted of too many small scale units and required a tighter structure with much less communes, and in the long term less cantons – although thanks to our direct democracy we Swiss have introduced, amongst other things, the effective instrument of a debt brake at the federal and cantonal authorities and therefore have far less debt than other countries?

At this point only this: the idea to replace smaller political units by major regions in the long term – by political entities possibly reaching beyond the country’s borders – has not been thought up by us. Or does anybody believe that the Swiss invented the metropolitan areas and nature parks, which have the purpose of imposing the rule of the executive at the expense of decision rights of the people, the sovereign?

Four citizens of Bassecourt in the canton of Jura in a letter to the editor, published in the “Quotidien Jurassien” on 18 January, argued against the merger in the Haute-Sorne. Current Concerns had the opportunity to meet with Mr Damien Lachat, one of the authors of the letter. He lives in Bassecourt and is a delegate of the Grand Conseil of the Canton of Jura.

Current Concerns: Mr Lachat, many thanks that we can talk to you about the merger in the area of Haute-Sorne. In your letter you say that the merger has been imposed on you from above. That means that it is not the citizens of the communes that ask for the merger?

Damien Lachat: That’s correct, it is an idea of several community council members. The citizens were not really asking for such merger. As a matter of fact, there were some small communes in the Swiss Jura, which couldn’t find people to act as members in the community councils and its commissions. In such a case it makes sense to unite with other small communes. But Bassecourt is a large municipality with 3,000 to 4,000 inhabitants



Damien Lachat
(picture ma)

that never had any difficulties to find such people.

Which of your seven municipalities in the area of Haute-Sorne are small ones?

There are three small communes: Saulcy, Soulece and Undervelier.

And these municipalities did not find people to fill these posts?

Yet, they do find the people! There were other municipalities in the canton of Jura, where no candidates could be found and which merged therefore. There it was meaningful.

If you say that the mergers come from above, do you think that the canton is the one that wants the merger?

Yes, the canton wants it as well – the fewer the communes, the fewer persons can put in a word, when something comes up. Therefore the canton gives a financial startup aid for the merger in the first years, some hundred francs per inhabitant, allegedly in order to “help when merging”, in reality rather to conceal the financial figures a little in the first years.

In terms of money, we are not winning anything by the merger.

And the real costs come up later?

Yes, because as the communes are setting up their budgets now, they put this financial funding into the plus – thus the budgets look marvelous.

At the beginning...

Yes, at the beginning. Later, when there is no longer any support one must look for this money elsewhere. In the context of our merger in the Haute-Sorne there is even a deficit despite this funding, I believe it is around 900,000 francs. Without this funding of the canton the deficit would even be higher. And if one had not wanted a merger, a strong tax increase would have been necessary. So what did they do? They increased the taxes a little bit and including the cantonal funding in the first year the budget provided for

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“The merging of communes ...”

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the merger does not look too bad. As the taxes and fees become a little more expensive it works so-so including the cantonal funding. But from the next year onwards the taxes must be increased in any case, because we cannot continuously incur our debts.

A further serious reproach at the address of the authorities is that they want to merge their communes without requiring balanced budgets before. All villages are poor, except Boécourt. There they have several good taxpayers, entrepreneurs. Therefore they have a tax level somewhat deeper than in the other villages around. Boécourt is the only municipality, whose communal council is pledging for a “no” in the votes. Many poor communes merged will not result in one rich. In terms of money, we are not winning anything

There are however not only financial arguments. Your letter to the editor especially appealed to me, as you are also listing up other reasons against a merger. There are large municipalities such as Bassecourt having 3,000 to 4,000 inhabitants, and then there are the small communes like Saulcy, Soultce and Undervelier with 200 to 300 people. Problems arise from that regarding representation in the merged communal council. If the merger is accepted, a large municipality will be formed with only one communal council. In order to push the merger through the authorities were saying that in the first election each village will get a seat in the communal council. This way all are represented. But in the next legislature the delegation will take place according to a proportional representation system, since there will be only one municipality. Even if all voters in the small communes with 200 or 300 inhabitants would put their ballot for only one person out of their village, there would be no chance for this person because of the proportional election system.

Is there only one constituency for all concerned villages after the merger?

Yes, one for all, except in the first legislative period.

A little “goodie”...

Yes, a further little “goodie”. But it won’t do to cheat the people. That is one of the great problems. If money is needed to build a road or to invest something in the village, and if there isn’t anybody from that village representing it in the council, then there is a great danger never to get to the money. And a village, which does no longer have any people, doesn’t need roads.

Or any school? And what about primary schools in the villages?

Since the small villages do not have many inhabitants, there isn’t a school in every village any longer. The secondary school is in Bassecourt already, others will go to Bassecourt as well.

And the primary schools?

The small villages do not have a primary school, but Boécourt, Courfaivre and Glovelier still have one. But if it comes to distributing money later on, will they not say it’s better to place the whole school (all former village schools) in the same place, i.e. the largest place, which is Bassecourt?

And a school bus will be necessary...

Yes, and this school bus must be paid. And if you don’t have anybody in the municipality representing you, it will be difficult to preserve your interests.

The Communal Secretary of each village knows, what is going on and what is to be done. Don’t you believe that the quality of the communal authorities work becomes better if you have professional civil servants? I quote from your letter to the editor: “The civil servant is the most competent person in the communal administration.”

Yes, that is correct. The communal Secretary is the one, who is really concerned with the administration of his commune. But after the merger there will be one only. He will know about his village, thus about Bassecourt, as it is the largest. All others will disappear, and the personnel in the center will no longer know, what is happening in the other six villages and what is really needed. Today in each commune there is a communal president, who knows what’s going on and what needs to be done. He can go to the communal council and state: We must straighten up this and that. They are really those, who are very up to date regarding the administration of their commune. If they are gone, then there is only the individual citizen, who can go to the council and say: We need money for the road – however he doesn’t have any chance. In the small communes the population would lose all power. For the large ones it is not a problem.

I do not believe that we could save up administration costs because of the merger.

And the wages of the professionals are more expensive...

Yes, people must be paid. In Bassecourt there is already one full time wage, but I do not think that in the small communes 100% full-time equivalents must be paid today. They say one could save by centralizing the local administration, but this is not correct. Nevertheless one must have

an office in each village, so nothing is saved. The small villages are in the mountains. You cannot ask the elderly inhabitants to descend to the central administration if they want to go voting or if they have to settle their affairs. I do not believe that we would save any expenses on administration because of the merger, neither on the infrastructure nor on human resources.

Is the militia principle still working in Bassecourt?

Yes, it is working very well. If you look at the elections, there the lists are always well filled. We also have the “conseil de ville”, our small parliament, and there are always enough candidates – more applicants than seats, as well as in the communal council.

One of your arguments against the fusion is the loss of people’s rights. What are the rights the population would lose? For example in case a “conseil général” is introduced replacing the communal meetings...

One can still say, that the conseil général – that is a small parliament – is at least subject to elections; it has 41 seats, so the representation of the population would be maintained. It is correct that municipalities such as Bassecourt are well represented. But the three smallest villages would have a problem: In the conseil général each of them would have three seats out of 41 only. If all others do not want to give a cent to these villages, they will not get any cent. The legislation is one thing, but if somebody wants to change anything, he has to sit in the executive, in the communal council. And there, as I already said, the small villages do not have a chance to obtain a seat. It is meant in that sense if we speak of loss of the people’s rights.

How is a village with 300 inhabitants to collect 300 signatures collected in a referendum?

Moreover I must mention that a referendum against the resolutions of the parliament was introduced replacing the communal meetings. 300 signatures would be needed for the referendum and likewise for the initiative. The communication of the authorities concerning the vote on the 5th of February told us that the small villages would have an advantage! But the question arises: How is a village with 300 inhabitants to collect 300 signatures in a referendum?

Mr Lachat, thank you for the interview, and we wish you and your communes good luck!

It’s the talk of town: Small communes keep house more favorably and more economically than large one’s

It is an open secret: Small municipalities keep better order in their budget than the large ones

mw. It has been the main argument for municipality mergers for more than 10 years: A larger municipality is allegedly cheaper than seven smaller ones. Despite hundredfold repetition this statement is wrong. In the meantime also national institutions and “experts” have realized it. Already the preparation and organization of a merger costs hundred-thousands of francs even in case of smaller municipalities: “On the one hand merger projects [...] need consultancy by external experts, most of the time. On the other hand the reorganization causes expenses (new administrative structures, new buildings, adjustment of information technology).” – said a merger proponent. (*Daniel Kettiger*, “Municipality mergers, a topic with many facets”, Berne 2004)

Professional administration is more expensive and more anonymous

It is clear to each communal politician: The militia system is less costly than a professional administration. The local administrations in the villages work – contrary to the central administration of merged municipalities – more economically, because they get by with fewer employees, usually working part time but with good knowledge of local conditions and little bureaucracy. The communal center including facilities has long since been written off for long. In addition there are the militia workers, working voluntarily or for a small payment – this is done only by those, who feel connected with their village. Everyone knows: The personnel expenditure rises and the bureaucracy increases with increasing size of the municipality. The

civil servant in the village quickly puts a note into the mail box of a family on his way home, something like that is impossible in a greater municipality. Result: A greater municipality is more expensive than seven small ones.

Small municipalities keep better order in their budget than the large ones

In a small commune no school building and no road will be built if the commune cannot afford it. Before planning new infrastructure or facilities, they first examine whether the former ones can be refurbished. Look at the expenditures of a city: There they work “with vast quantities”.

Small municipalities are most favorable – humanely, socially and financially.

Letter to  the Editor

Haute-Sorne: Yes to closer cooperation – no to fusion of municipalities

The fusion was forced upon the very small communes from above, beginning with Montfaverger. The seven communes of the Haute-Sorne always found local councils and communal presidents. None of them was placed under the administration of the canton, and the democratic statement in the commune meetings is protected. The large losers of the fusion would be the small communes and their citizens, who would lose their communal meetings. In the new local council, no seat will be guaranteed to them in the 2nd legislature. Besides, joining a political party would be necessary in order to become a local council member. Today, the citizen can deal with a local council or municipality president in everyday life, but he can also control him or shift him into minority in a communal meeting. For the citizens of six communes the fusion means a loss of their political rights – this is without precedent until today! They were told that they could

launch an initiative or a referendum and would only have to collect 300 signatures.

In a merged municipality the parliamentarians will not watch the expenditures, particularly, because they will not be held accountable for them. Who will claim this later or who will remember the votes of Pierre and Paul? Thus the tax rate will continue to rise, even if the merger committee feigns savings at all corners and ends, without numbering them. The smaller a commune is, the better the public funds are administrated.

Sometimes one can get the impression that fusion rhymes with collective resignation. It seems we could be delighted if our local councils were replaced by professional ones, because certain new local councils would have to face complex administrative matters. This means the depreciation of the full-time town clerk, who is the most competent person in the local administration. In addition, the ac-

cess to public offices is a fundamental right in the jurassic constitution.

With the fusion, each person and each family, who is homeland-entitled in one of the seven villages, loses its place of residence. This one is replaced by the little winsome newspeak term Haute-Sorne.

After the merger of the fire-brigade to the SIS, the micro region has extended its efforts to regional co-operation on the important building zone plan of Glovelier (ZAM), a society for the common property of garbage lorries, a new bus line and a UAPE (*Union d'Accueil Parascolaire pour Ecoliers*), meaning a day nursery.

Let us summarize: Yes to closer co-operation, no to fusion.

*Jean-Jacques Kottelat, Yves Girard,
Damien Lachat und Willy Habegger
(SVP Bassecourt-Berlincourt)*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Haute-Sorne – selling off our community? No thank you!

At the information meetings regarding the merger of our communities we witnessed a lack of democracy of great significance just as the agreement, which will be put to the vote, promises!

No contradictory debate and simply slurring over important questions issues. Too bad! [...]

The lack of specific information had the effect that everybody expressed what was just occurring to him.

For example, a community that doesn't agree to the merger will no longer be able to send their children to a secondary school!

We must especially pay attention to the problematic points of the agreement and we must also observe the content in detail; e.g. with respect to the future implementing regulations in connection with munic-

ipal contributions which will have to be developed within 3 years in connection with the merger (according to the message which was attached to the cantonal regulation on the recognition of the merger agreement) and not within 5 years as it is said in article 8, paragraph 2 of the agreement.

The loss of civil rights — the reduced representation of the now existing communities that will join this new entity, because the municipal assemblies will be abolished and replaced by a municipal parliament — the right to initiative and referendum that can hardly be exercised as was the case in the small communities: the necessary number of signatures can no longer be achieved — the reduction to a single constituency already from the

2nd parliamentary term on, all these are changes that we cannot agree to.

The financial problem is not settled: Allocating half of the merger's money to the reduction of the entire structural deficit of years seems questionable to us and corresponds little with the accounting principles. It is simply an artificial reduction of the deficit of the new large community. [...]

The argument that we will be stronger together is not valid either. Stronger compared to whom? Someone answered us that it is in relation to the canton. Are the relations between canton and communities only limited to a power relationship? [...]

*Maire-Noel Willemin, Saulcy,
Kantonsrätin CVP*

Eric Dobler, Basscourt, Kantonsrat CVP
(Translation Current Concerns)

No to abandoning local politics

The discussion regarding the municipal mergers raises fundamental questions about the future of the jurassic communities. They enjoy an enviable situation, which they should not flog off for a few dollars and for promises of more bureaucratic efficiency!

Just the fact that the state provides financial support is already alarming. They buy the votes in a more or less veiled manner, and this is not an approach that is compatible with democratic freedom. All the more so when one considers that the available money comes from all pockets, that is from the opponents' pockets as well. The finan-

cial argument is insincere, because if you think just a bit: If the fund had not been enforced, the money could be provided for the communes which are in difficulties, without forcing their dissolution.

If the mergers are implemented as intended, they fundamentally change the situation concerning power and administration. The first to benefit from this are the "elites", which are imposed by the professionalisation of community boards, and the parties, which will gain greater power.

The loss of local influence is obvious and desired from above. Therefore, the communities of Upper Sorne would like

to retain the possibility of local votes, but "the cantonal law does not allow it"! No cantonal law is eternal and unchangeable.

I hope that, as in Sursee last weekend, the residents of the Haute-Sorne will maintain their freedom and their responsibility, and will not allow to be overrun by the wave of dissolution which is intended by an ill-advised advised political elite. The reactions of relief in Sursee after the rejection show, that another way is possible: no to dissolution, no to the merger!

Pascal Prince, Soybière

(Translation Current Concerns)

Haute-Sorne – a bluff package

All of us together "we are stronger", that is the slogan of the Haute-Sorne committee.

Would we be stronger if we sold off the industrialized country in Glovelier to a multinational corporation, instead of considering the enterprises in the region?

Would we be stronger in our request to preserve our old traditional hometowns?

Would we be stronger with a tax rate of 2.1 at a projected deficit of one million francs, knowing that some communities are probably not going to join the new entity?

Let's stay calm: all that is nothing but deception tactics, a sham. Let's not sell our soul to the devil.

The citizens of Haute-Sorne can't be fooled: 5 February they will place a confident NO into the ballot box.

Frédéric Juillerat, Courfajvre

(Translation Current-Concerns)

Val Terbi – too fast and too inaccurate

It is extraordinary that 10 days before the vote on a merger of the communes in the Val Terbi, a part of the proposals of "Pro Val Terbi", where the merger committee issued "No is not possible" now seems possible nevertheless. For example: to extend the preservation period of the constituencies in each community for 5 years (Article 9.3) and the possibility to exit again from a merged community. In recent briefings the statements of the communal presidents regarding these is-

ues generated even more confusion about the merger contract (Merger Convention), which will be submitted to a vote.

In fact, the text of the document that will be submitted to the vote, shows that those rules are not in it, therefore his draft is no longer up-to-date. There should have been a debate on these clauses to specify the conditions. That means the people will be asked to sign a blank check. In addition there are all the other items mentioned by "Pro Val Terbi". I firmly believe that the

entire fusion study, which led to this vote went too fast and that it lacks accuracy. It's not about enumerating all details, but to decide the future of our region, and this on the basis that remained vague. I can not content myself with the so often repeated "We'll see" and "it will work out in the end". More time for reflection would allow for more clarity.

Cécile Vuillemin, Courchapoix

(Translation Current Concerns)

Schmallenberg virus

Many malformations in newborn lambs

In the last days an increasing number of shepherds reported the higher incidence of malformed lambs. The cause of this seems to be an infection with the Schmallenberg virus (SBV)

End of the last year in a sheep farm in Hesse (Germany) a complex of different malformations in newborn lambs could be observed more frequently. The symptoms did not fit with the disease-complexes in lambs having occurred up to now. (see table). The number of lambs with malformations in this farm rose within a very short time. In cooperation with the state-owned company *Hessian Regional Labor*



Dead lamb with a short lower jaw, twisting of the neck, stiffening of both front legs in the carpal, tarsal joint stiffening of both hind legs with additional strong flexion above the left claw. (picture by Dr Wagner)

the affected lambs were examined systematically.

At the same time there was a report from the Netherlands that newborns with malformations were observed there as well and that it was suspected that the cause relates to an infection of the mothers with a virus which received the name *Schmallenberg virus* in Germany. This virus has been isolated in different cattle farms in North-Rhine Westphalia in November 2011. The cows had fever, yielded only little milk, showed a reduced general condition and a loss of appetite. These symptoms were not observed in the mother sheep.

Samples were taken of the malformed lambs in Hesse and were examined for the Schmallenberg virus in the *Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI)* on the isle of Riems. In all lambs the virus could be detected. The same result was obtained during the examination of malformed lambs in other federal states and in other Hessian sheep farms. Therefore it can be assumed with a high certainty that a virus infection led to

the increased occurrence of malformations in this lambing season.

Monitor birth!

Typically in a herd several mother sheep (10 to 15 percent) are affected. According to the data available to us, the mothers, after finishing the physiological duration of pregnancy start lambing without disturbances. Delay up to a total stop of the birth process (parturition process) can occur caused by the malformations of the lambs (see photographs). The problems cannot be solved without help. But it is also possible that malformed lambs are born in a normal way.

In every case it is most important to carry out a monitoring of birth to recognize stagnations in time. Due to malformations in this lambing season an increased occurrence of difficult births is expected.

The lambs affected show different changes in their skeleton. Stiffening of fore and or hind legs are striking. This unphysiological position can be more or less distinctive. Often the joints are stiffened in a stooped posture. Furthermore the neck can be turned down laterally. The spine is twisted in an S-shaped way, reductions of the lower jaw may occur. Deformations of the skull are possible, too. In most cases these lambs are not viable or already born dead.

The lambs who are born alive have a sucking and a swallowing reflex but are not able to drink naturally due to the malformations.

Examine cautiously!

Interesting is the distribution of sick animals in case of multiple birth. Besides malformed lambs normal, alive and vivid lambs can be born which show a normal development. But all animals of a multiple birth can be affected as well. According to this fact the obstetrical examination becomes especially important. So one has to distinguish between a stooped joint which time and again occurs as "normal" obstacle of

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birth and a stiffened joint belonging to a malformation complex.

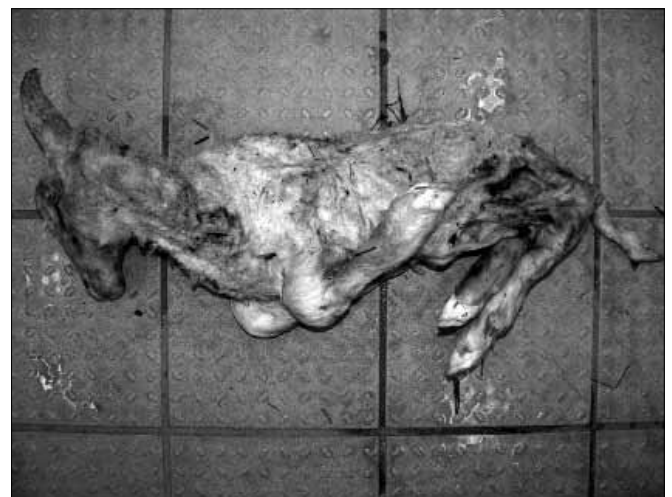
When assisting at the birth of multiples the examiner has to match the already visible extremities correctly to the healthy or to the possibly sick animal.

After having seen clearly if and how many malformed lambs are in the uterus the targeted pulling out can begin.

Up to now mother sheep do not show any recognizable clinical symptoms of the infection at the time of birth or the days before. Because the assistance at birth can lead to injuries of the mother affected sheep should be observed closely to be able to intervene in time if the general condition is worsening.

The Schmallenberg Virus

Due to the phenomena described above the higher frequency of birth defects is



A naturally raised lamb with the typical stiffened changes in all limbs, head tilt, and spinal curvature. (picture by Dr Wagner)

suspected to be the result of an intrauterine infection with the so-called “Schmallenberg virus”. This is a virus of the genus of Orthobunya viruses. It can be subsumed to the Simbu serogroup (Shamonda, Aina, Akabane viruses). The highest genetic similarity was found with the Shamonda virus. The previously observed clinical picture was described as “Arthropo- sis-Hydranencephalic Syndrome.”

So far these viruses that cause the above-mentioned symptoms were only found in cattle in Australia, Asia and Africa.

It is not a zoonotic agent, and thus no risk for humans is assumed!

The transmission of the Schmallenberg virus – as with other viruses of the Simbu group, too – happens namely via gnats and mosquitoes. Therefore, the use of repellents appears as a possible prophylactic treatment. Due to the transmission of the virus by gnats, a similar geographical spread of the infection – as was found during the Bluetongue infection in the peri-

od from 2006 to 2007 – is to be expected.

In Hessen, the virus could not be detected in goats up to now, but actually, there exist some descriptions of the occurrence of such symptoms in newborn animals. Further investigations are needed to demonstrate whether these defects are due to viral infection. Recently, it became a notifiable disease, to be provided to the veterinary office. In Hessen, the department and ambulatory of *Veterinary Obstetrics, Gynecology and Andrology* of large and small animals (KGGA) of the *Justus-Liebig-University of Giessen* investigates the cases.



A lamb born by caesarean section showing a twisting of the neck and an extremely inclined position of the front and hind limbs. (picture by Dr Wagner)

Source: First published in *Schafzucht*. The magazine for sheep and goat farmers (www.schafzucht-online.de) from 28.2.2012

• (Translation *Current Concerns*)

Possible reasons for deformities in lambs

Cause	Clinical presentation
Copper deficiency	Weakness of the hind quarters with unsteady gait
Genetic defects (are inherited and can be passed from generation to generation)	Cleft palate, dwarfism, spider limbs, wry neck, congenital absence of the lower jaw, decrease in length of the mandible, congenital absence of the anus
Viral infections	Diverse skeletal deformities in stillborn and born alive lambs
Environmental toxins	i.a. organic deformities
Teratogenic medication	Origin of different defects during the embryonic development of the lamb in the uterus

book review

The approved *aid*¹ booklet, “Gesunde Schafe” (Sound Sheep) has been revised

For all sheep farmers, the health of the flock plays a crucial role for their operating income. Only healthy sheep will show high and consistent performance.

The revised *aid*-booklet, “Gesunde Schafe” (Sound sheep) gives a detailed overview of food related diseases, internal and external parasites and hoof diseases. The focus is on prevention, because the ancient Romans’ motto that “Prevention is better than cure” is still true today. The topics in this booklet range from birth hygiene measures to the best pasture and barn hygiene and need-

based feeding. Special emphasis is put on practical hoof care.

This chapter describes in detail and illustrates with numerous color photographs inter alia the structure of the sheep claw, the fixation of the animals and the correct procedure for claw trimming. In addition, the booklet provides information on the proper use of veterinary medicines and the regulations of animal welfare with regard to sheep production.

Aid-booklet, “Gesunde Schafe” (only available in German), 68 pages.

Order no. 61-1345, ISBN 978-3-8308 - 0981-4.

Orders to *aid* info-dienst e. V., Vertrieb, Postfach 1627, 53006 Bonn, e-mail: Bestellung@aid.de, www.aid-medien-shop.de

Source: www.aid.de

¹ *Aid* – Auswertungs- und Informationsdienst für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten (Information Service for Food, Agriculture and Forestry) provides consumers, teachers, journalists and other interested people with expert and scientific knowledge on various topics in these areas in comprehensible form.