

Principality Liechtenstein

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Liechtenstein is for the Swiss not just like any other country. The two states have relations which are far closer than is common even between good neighbours. In that way Switzerland represents Liechtenstein abroad. In Liechtenstein one uses the Swiss currency and the Swiss Post Office is in charge of the postal system. Finally the Swiss customs border includes Liechtenstein. The close cooperation between the two countries is justification enough for an exhaustive article on Liechtenstein in this magazine.

Any description of Liechtenstein must begin at the outset with a reference to its diminutive size: its population of 26,000 today lives on an area of 160 square kilometres or 61 square miles. And yet this country and its people claim to be a sovereign state.

Models are essential for any major enterprise. For all his uncommon powers of imagination, Michelangelo needed models of clay or wax for direct carving of the marble. Draft systems, whatever their nature, should be diligently compared with models, which enable the eye, and hence the mind and the judgment, to obtain a synoptic picture. Thus it is that sages, philo-

sophers and poets have praised the virtues of the small state. It was Lao-Tse who said:

«Let the country be small, the people few, let it have officials for ten and a hundred people and never use them.»

And Lao-Tse, an official in the great empire of the Chou dynasty, continued:

«Neighbouring countries should be viewed one against the other, the voices of cocks and dogs should be heard one against the other.»

These insights of the oriental sage are closely reflected in the basic structure of the Greek city-state, the polis. The Greek despised ostentation, pomp and circumstance; he valued measure, canon and harmony more. In his «Politics» (politeia) Aristotle writes: «that it is difficult if not impossible to administer a too populous state with good laws. At all events we do not see among those states that are accounted good any single one that strives for an excessively large population.» Aristotle continues: «But to form a true judgment and to be able to give offices to those most worthy of them the citizens must know each other for their qualities.» Basic to Aristotle's political philosophy is the statement. «We see that every state is a community and that every community exists for the sake of an aim. For all creatures

The 60th Conference of the Swiss Abroad will take place in Siders in Canton Valais on August 20–22, 1982, and is dedicated to Swiss women abroad. You will find the application form in one of our next issues.

Dr. Georg Malin

Dr. Georg Malin was born in 1926 in the principality of Liechtenstein. He studied history and art history at the universities of Fribourg and Zurich. He is the author of important historical works on Liechtenstein, for instance reports on archeological excavations, an art guide and a record of historical documents. In addition to scientific work, Mr. Malin works as a sculptor. He has created several sculptures for public and religious buildings. They can be seen in some cities and collections. Exhibitions in Europe and South America have made him known far beyond the boundaries of the principality. As a graphic artist Mr. Malin has created some fifty of the well known stamps of Liechtenstein. Georg Malin is a resident of Mauren.

do what they do for the sake of what seems worthwhile.» To this end the individual needs the community: first the community of the home and then of the state.

Autarky, the ability to provide from its own resources for the needs of all its members, set, as Aristotle saw, an upper and lower limit to the city-state: «autarkic», as he says, «for the perfect life.» Modern technology and civilization, however, have made autarky relative everywhere, and its place has been taken by dependencies and involvements which are usually styled interdependencies. This development was a danger to the small state but did not prove fatal to it. Indeed, imaginative power and fantasy today can even discern a world model in the small state. I quote the modern dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt: «... I can imagine a ... writer, a writer who takes immense pleasure in being a Liechtensteiner and only a Liechtensteiner, for whom Liechtenstein is very much more, and infinitely greater, than the mere 61 square miles it actually measures. For this writer Liechtenstein becomes the model of the world, he will condense it by expanding it, and make a Babylon out of Vaduz and, for all I care, a Nebuchadnezzar out of the prince. The Liechtensteiners will, of course, protest, think everything is hopelessly exaggerated, and note there is no reference to Liechtenstein yodelling and cheese production, but this writer will not only be acted in St. Gall, he will also become international because the world sees itself reflected in his imaginary Liechtenstein. This Liechtenstein writer will always need fresh inspiration and have to continually renew Liechtenstein as a world model; he will, as a dramatist, have no choice but to follow revolutionary paths, and these new paths will be right because for him there are no longer any other paths to take.» Thus

Dürrenmatt in a speech he made in



The Prince and Princess of Liechtenstein (Photo Wachter)

1960. He was thinking, prematurely as it happens, in terms of basic patterns which are peculiar to evolution and by conforming with which those systems that are sufficiently remote from the statistical mean may look forward to a growing diversification and wealth of forms.

It is not my wish to go on thinking about Liechtenstein in such utopian terms – even though every piece of new knowledge begins as a utopian idea – but to supply some dates and facts from the history of Liechtenstein to help the reader to a better understanding of this miniature state. History can explain the present. Kierkegaard said that life was always directed towards the future and the understanding towards the past.

In terms of geology Liechtenstein is located in the fault trough between the Eastern and the Western Alps which geographers call the valley of the Alpine Rhine. And, in fact, this marginal situation has remained a fundamental and invariable constant throughout the history of the region. – There have been human beings living here since the Mesolithic period (8000–5000 BC), as

remains have proved. Neolithic cultures (4000–1800 BC) even went through pronounced phases of development in the Liechtenstein region. In particular the monadnock Eschnerberg, at that time located in the outermost arm of the Lake of Constance, which was silting up, afforded these people an opportunity to practise the earliest forms of agriculture and cattleraising because of loess deposited on its lee slopes. The Liechtenstein area formed the southernmost outlier of the Rössen culture. The Lutzingüttele culture (c. 2700–2500 BC) acquired its name from the Lutzingüttele site on the Eschnerberg and disseminated into the region of northeast Switzerland. The subsequent cultures, such as the Pfyn and Horgen culture, left typical artefacts in our territory and, emanating from the west and northwest, did not proceed farther eastwards. – Archaeologists have found clear evidence in the upper valley of the Alpine Rhine of settlement during the Bronze Age and have been able to follow its development well. In the central Alpine area the late Bronze Age in particular developed a distinct form of its own which is



Vaduz Castle (Photo Wachter)

known as the Melaun culture. The western offshoot of the Melaun culture was located in our area. It seems highly likely that ancient Rhaetia, an entity which is very difficult to define historically, was coterminous with the region in which Melaun ware is deposited. Archeological evidence exists of continuous settlement in the Liechtenstein region during the various phases of the Iron Age. The later Latène culture (c. 500–15 BC) left on the Eschnerberg, which has already frequently figured in our text, a very specific pottery recorded in the archeological textbooks as Schnell pottery. Mention must also be made of the highly significant bronze figures of Gutenberg dating

from the late Latène period such as the Mars with the Etruscan helmet, the boar and the stag.

The two stepsons of Emperor Augustus, Drusus and Tiberius, subdued the Rhaetian tribes in the central Alpine area and also the northern pre-Alpine regions. For about five hundred years it was mainly Rome that determined the fate of our region. The road from Augsburg to Como led from Brigantium to Curia on the right-hand side of the Rhine; along it were strung the farms of settlers in Roman times. The castellum of Schaan, which dates from the reign of Valentinian, is the most important Roman structure in the Liechtenstein area. Traces of a church and a

font of the mid-5th century have been found in the precinct of the castellum. The Latin language is still preserved in the names of places and fields.

After about 80 years of Gothic hegemony (Odoacer, Theodoric) Rhaetia came entirely under Frankish influence in 537. At this time a large manorial building was erected on the church hill at Benden, and during a second phase of building a chapel was incorporated. This discovery, which is still unpublished, has still no parallel on the northern side of the Alps. Meanwhile Alemannic settlers had penetrated into the valley of the Alpine Rhine. However, it was not until the 6th and 7th centuries that the upper part of this valley was infiltrated in the full sense of the word by the Alemanni. Romanized Rhaetians and Alemanni led strictly segregated existences, and marriage between the old-established population and the newcomers was forbidden by the *Lex Romana Curiensis* on pain of death. On the death of the last of the Victorides the Frankish supremacy gave way to a tightly organized Frankish administration under Charlemagne about the year 806. The collapse of the Carolingian empire, however, also affected Rhaetia. It was the Hungarians and Udalrichingers who forthwith determined the course of affairs in Lower Rhaetia. The origins of most of the fortresses and castles in Liechtenstein go back to the 12th century. The southern policy of the Hohenstaufen Emperors made it necessary to secure the Alpine routes. After the extinction of the Udalrichingers early in the 13th century the Montforts assumed the government, rights and claims in the region centred on Chur, now known as the Grisons.

Shortly afterwards a process of division in the domain began under the house of Montfort. While the region of the present Grisons was thus being parcelled, Walsers of the Davos group began to settle on

the mountain slopes above Triesen and gave their huddles of houses the name Triesenberg. The Triesen-bergers have retained the Walser idiom to this day.

A deed of partition between two comital families at Sargans and Vaduz dated 1342 created the nucleus of the present small state. The division was based upon old cooperative and judicial forms of organization which presumably originated in the structure of the Rhaetian state. The last count of the house of Montfort in Vaduz was Count Hartmann IV, bishop of Chur, a territorial lord who spent more of his time on the battlefield than in the cathedral.

After the death of the Vaduz bishop in 1416, his step-brothers took over; they were of the house of the Bernese barons of Brandis, whose family seat was the castle of Lützel-flüh in the Emmental. In the Swabian War of 1499 the family with its free imperial territory was caught between the fronts of the imperial and the federal troops and crushed. The Brandis died out in 1507. A mortuary shield in the parish church of Vaduz proclaims the end of the line.

The succession of the barons of Brandis fell to the counts of Sulz, who held the county of Klettgau and discharged the office of justiciar of Rottweil. The century or so during which the Sulz family held sway may be regarded as a relatively peaceful phase in the historical development of Liechtenstein. However, in 1613, mismanagement and debts in the Klettgau compelled the family to sell the county of Vaduz and the lordship of Schellenberg: Count Karl Ludwig von Sulz sold the lands of the present principality to his future son-in-law, Count Kaspar von Hohenems.

The counts of Hohenems, an illustrious family, took over the government of our region and led it into almost unimaginable depths of maladministration and misery. A

member of the Hohenems family was related by marriage to Pope Pius IV; the nephew of the former, Jakob Hannibal von Hohenems, officiated as governor of the papal states and married the sister of San Carlo Borromeo; Mark Sittich von Hohenems, a brother of the new prince, built the Cathedral of Salzburg and Hellbrunn. Meanwhile the disturbances in the Grisons had already cast their shadow over the valley of the Alpine Rhine, and our region became a mustering area for Austrian troops. To add to the troubles there were several waves of plague and then, to fill the cup of misery to the brim, came the great witch craze. In Vaduz more than 300 witches were burned. The amoral descendants of the great Hohenems family had to sell the regions of Vaduz and Schellenberg, which were immediate fiefs of the Holy Roman Empire.

Besides many other nobles and monastic institutions (St. Gall and Weingarten) which were interested in purchasing these lands, the princely dynasty of Liechtenstein also made a bid.

The family of Liechtenstein is a

noble lineage which can be traced back to the 12th century and whose influence increased in Vienna particularly in the 16th and 17th centuries. In spite of the family's extensive possessions there were no territories which were immediate fiefs of the Emperor such as were necessary for obtaining a seat and a vote in the Council of the Princes of the Empire. Hence Hans Adam Andreas von Liechtenstein, the great baroque patron of the arts and brilliant economist, acquired in 1699 the lordship of Schellenberg, which was immediate to the Emperor, and in 1712 the county of Vaduz. In 1719 Emperor Charles VI raised both territories to the status of an immediate imperial principality with the name of Liechtenstein (343rd member of the Holy Roman Empire). In its domestic affairs there followed a tightening of the administration in the spirit of an absolutist, authoritarian polity of grace ordained by God. The old landamman constitution was undermined, but the elected representative of the people was left with the empty shell of ceremony during court sessions. The French Revolu-

The church at Triesenberg (Photo Wachter)



tion and Napoleon were to destroy the last remnants of traditional popular rights.

When the old Confederation fell into the hands of the French in 1799, Liechtenstein became a field of operations for the French armies under Masséna against the Austrians. The French suffered a heavy defeat at Feldkirch on our northern frontier. In 1801 the Peace of Lunéville was signed.

From 1805 onwards Prince John I was the leader of the small country and the destinies of the lineage. This legendary commander, whom Metternich described as being born for the profession of arms, survived more than one hundred battles and skirmishes, and his name is associated with almost all the campaigns against Napoleon. His opposition to Napoleon earned him the latter's respect. When on 12th July 1806 the Confederation of the Rhine was formed – an area roughly the size of the modern Federal Republic of Germany – Liechtenstein was also named a sovereign member of the Confederation. Napoleon himself asserted that he held no prince of the Confederation in higher esteem than the Prince of Liechtenstein. After a history of 1000 years the old Empire came to an end. By virtue of the great influence wielded by its prince, Liechtenstein survived the waves of mediatisation which simplified the chequered maps of Central Europe. In the sovereign principality, however, the last democratic rights at the national level were abolished. New, effective laws came into force (Austrian Civil Code, land register, first school law, etc.). The little country was reoriented throughout. Immediately after Napoleon had quit the world scene and the Confederation of the Rhine had been dissolved (1813), the prince paved the way to the Congress of Vienna and to membership of the German Confederation. The German Confederation saw itself as a union of sovereign princes and cities of



Liechtenstein is a country with great variety in scenery ... (Photo Wachter)

Germany. Liechtenstein was also a member of the Holy Alliance. The Act of the German Confederation committed its members to the creation of a provincial constitution, and this was actually done in Liechtenstein in 1818: the paper cap of a parliamentary constitution was placed as a disguise over a monarchic absolutism in its final phase. The parliament was virtually useless; the people called the representatives «glassblowers», and ten years of their work culminated in a proposal for a tax on dogs. On the other hand the development of the judicial system may be regarded as true progress. The events of 1848 also instigated discussions in Liechtenstein on the improvement of democratic institutions. However, in 1852 conditions were restored to their pre-March status and the «democratic dirt» was removed. In the same year a customs union, which had been negotiated in great secrecy, came into being between Austria and Liechtenstein. The background to these negotiations was formed by the disputes between Austria and Prussia over customs policy in

Central Europe, during which Austria manifested, by the example of Liechtenstein, her understanding for the position of small countries. The customs treaty with Austria was repeatedly renewed and remained in force until the end of World War I. It was possible to prevent the economic isolation of the principality. The foreign policy of the small country, however, became increasingly restricted to the bilateral relationship with the other party to the customs treaty, particularly when the German Confederation broke asunder as a result of Austro-Prussian antagonism. After the Austro-Prussian War (a Liechtenstein contingent of 80 men on the Austrian side kept watch on the Stilfser-Joch against Italian guerrillas) the prince dissolved the contingent because it «did not make military sense». With the new constitution of 1862 came the breakthrough to a constitutional monarchy. The government was mainly answerable to the prince and not parliament; only with regard to the state budget did

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the government appointed by the prince have to render an account to parliament. The constitution of 1862 and the customs treaty with Austria ushered in a phase of consolidation in the second half of the 19th century.

In spite of the link with the Habsburg monarchy Liechtenstein remained neutral during World War I. However, when Austria collapsed, the depreciation of the currency and the economic ruin weighed heavily upon the little country. The economic progress of half a century and the fruits of an incipient industrial phase crumbled to nothing. The time had come for a new political outlook.

The constitution of 1921, which is still in force today, did much to resolve the crisis of identity in which the principality found itself after World War I. The principality became a constitutional hereditary monarchy on a democratic and parliamentary basis. The supreme power is vested in the prince and the people. Prince and people are committed to the constitution. As the supreme authority of the state the prince is answerable to nobody but is obligated to adhere to the constitution and the laws. The prince appoints the government on the motion of the *Landtag* and also the courts and the highest government officials. Enactments require the sanction of the prince. In emergencies he can rule by emergency decrees. – The people exercise their prerogative by electing representatives to the *Landtag* and also have an opportunity to participate directly in political decisions by means of the right of referendum and initiative. The *Landtag* comprises 15 members, who are elected every four years on a proportional basis. It has all the rights and duties of a democratic parliament (legislation, budget, taxation, loans, etc.). The government, comprising a prime minister and



...and rich artwork (Photo Wachter)

four councillors, is appointed by the prince on the motion of the *Landtag*. Laws sanctioned by the prince require countersignature by the prime minister. – Jurisdiction is exercised on behalf of the prince by judge delegates. The seat of the courts is Vaduz. In the light of this division of authority the Swiss Federal Council, in its message to the Swiss Federal Parliament on the conclusion of the customs treaty with Liechtenstein, said that Liechtenstein was vested with democratic rights «such as are possessed probably by no other monarchy or even by many republics». Just as the constitution of 1921 contributed to the consolidation of internal conditions in the principality, so the customs treaty with the Swiss Confederation of 1923 furnished the basis for a sound economic development of Liechtenstein and a friendly relationship with Switzerland which extended far beyond the bounds of economics and gave rise to a situation transcending the interpretation of the treaty. The treaty was signed in spite of vigorous opposition to its conclusion by an initiative committee in Switzerland whose chairman did not wish to expose the Swiss customs officials to the «moral swamp fever» such as prevailed (he said) in Liechtenstein. The economic frontier of the Confederation was pushed to the Austro-Liechtenstein frontier, and Swiss customs legislation also became legally valid in Liechtenstein. The treaty is con-

cluded for a period of five years and can be terminated one year before its expiry, otherwise it continues to remain in force.

Prior to the conclusion of the customs treaty Switzerland agreed in 1919 to represent Liechtenstein abroad; there is also a postal treaty dated 1921 under the terms of which the Swiss postal authorities provide services in the postal sector while Liechtenstein issues its own postage stamps (an agreement which in 1950 served as a model for the UNO and the USA). By the act of 1924 the Swiss franc also became the Liechtenstein currency.

The years of National Socialist rule in Germany and Austria confronted Liechtenstein with many difficulties. After World War II there was rapid economic growth and the country expanded in every field. Thus in 1959 the principality established its relationship with EFTA in a separate protocol in which it is agreed that the terms of the convention of Stockholm should also apply to Liechtenstein for the duration of the customs treaty with Switzerland. In 1972 a formal trilateral agreement was signed between the Common Market, Switzerland and Liechtenstein which does not alter the bilateral agreement between Switzerland and the Community. Liechtenstein can safeguard its interests through the Swiss delegations on the mixed commission. Liechtenstein had enjoyed observer status on the Council of Europe in Strasbourg since 1975, and on 23 November 1978 Liechtenstein became a full member of the European Council.

Although not a member of the UNO, Liechtenstein is active in a number of the special organizations of the UNO such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, and ECE; Liechtenstein is a member of the International Court of Justice, the Universal Postal Union, the International Telecommunication Union, the Atomic Energy Agency, and the International Organization for Intellectual Property. This small



Liechtenstein Art Collections in Vaduz.

(Photo: Pressebildbüro, H. Finke)

country has signed more than fifty multilateral international agreements. Liechtenstein is a member of the Olympic Committee. As a member of the Red Cross Societies in Geneva Liechtenstein is committed to humanitarian work.

In the country itself there has been a marked shift in the pattern of employment during the past thirty years: today only 4,3% work in agriculture and forestry (1941: 33,3%), 56,3% in the processing industry (1941: 41,3%) and 39,4% (1941: 25,5%) in the service sectors. In spite of the small proportion of the working population it employs, agriculture can supply 70% of the milk and dairy products required. Metal processing accounts for the bulk of Liechtenstein industry (high-vacuum engineering, mounting and fastening technology, heating engineering, precision tools, chemicopharmaceutical products, the production of artificial teeth, textiles). Almost the entire volume of goods produced is exported (aprox. 95%). Goods worth some 600 million francs are exported every year. Small-scale crafts vary greatly in pattern.

The balance-sheet values of the three banks operating in Liechtenstein amount to some 2.5 billion francs. In Liechtenstein (as in many other countries) holding companies enjoy special privileges. The special treatment of holding companies and firms registered merely to establish legal domicile goes back to the difficult economic times after World War I and is at present under revision. Whatever the outcome, the state is dependent on income from this sector.

Liechtenstein levies most of the usual kinds of tax even though the rates are often lower than those of neighbouring countries. In recent times the country has succeeded in balancing its budget, which stands at 200 million francs. I have given an outline of the history of Liechtenstein. I feel that this history is not an amorphous mass of events but has a formative power, which is greater than we think. The present is not a prolongation of the past; but the past narrows the possibilities down to chains of cause and effect. Thus the first beginnings of historical development are of great importance. One root of the puzz-

ling miniature structure of Liechtenstein lies no doubt in the period of Rhaetian prehistory. The Lex Romana Curiensis – a synthesis of Roman law and old Rhaetian juridical feeling – was the basis of law in the valley of the Alpine Rhine in late Antiquity and the earliest years of the Middle Ages. This law divided the alpine valley into districts or «patria», i.e. areas which can be taken in at a glance by the surveying eye and traversed in a day's march. Liechtenstein is the size of such a «patria».

It does not know the problem of the masses with all its implications and is unfamiliar with boundless distance. There is an aura of home about it. Everything is oriented towards quality rather than quantity. And this brings us back to the wisdom of Lao-Tse: «Neighbouring countries should be viewed one against the other and the voices of cocks and dogs should be heard one against the other.»

Georg Malin

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