

Growth and prosperity before 1914

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The industrialisation of the canton translated into population growth and rising incomes. The town of Zug grew from 5,120 inhabitants in 1888 to 6,508 in 1900 and 8,096 in 1910.¹ In 1905, 58 per cent of its working population were employed in industry and trade.² Between 1890 and 1910, the per capita income of the canton rose by 40 per cent to 1,288 francs, above the Swiss average of 1,162 francs, which had risen by 44 per cent over the same period.³

On the eve of the First World War, therefore, Zug was already a prosperous canton by Swiss standards. Its prosperity rested on industry: cotton spinning in Baar and Ägeri, paper in Cham, condensed milk in Cham, metal goods and electrical instruments in the town. Its enterprises served national and international markets, one of them having merged into what would become the largest food company in the world. The canton had a cantonal bank, modern utilities, railway connections to Zurich, Lucerne and the Gotthard, and a workforce that included many workers from other cantons and from Italy. The foundations of the later business location were in place, but its defining feature, the low-tax policy, was not yet.

1 Notes

1. HLS, "Zug (Gemeinde)": population 5,120 in 1888, 6,508 in 1900 and 8,096 in 1910. The HLS chronology also lists 6,508 for 1897 and 8,096 for 1905; the census figures for 1900 and 1910 are used here. ↩
2. HLS, "Zug (Gemeinde)": in 1905, 58 per cent of the working population employed in the industrial and commercial sector. ↩

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3. Zug in der Welt, "Zugs zweite Industrialisierung 1880–1913": Swiss per capita income grew by 44 per cent between 1890 and 1910 to 1,162 francs; Zug's per capita income rose by 40 per cent to 1,288 francs over the same period. ↩

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