

Harten and Linden: a quarrel over rents

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The tensions built into the system of pensions erupted in the eighteenth century in two conflicts known as the Harten- und Lindenhandel, the quarrel between the "hard" and the "soft" parties.¹ The Linden, the "soft" party, were the established families allied with France. Their opponents were the Harten, the "hard" party, who demanded a fairer distribution of the pensions and a curb on the privileges of the elite.

The first conflict broke out in 1728, when the communes of the outer Amt demanded a redistribution of the French pensions. At the centre of the dispute stood Fidel Zurlauben and his family, who, besides controlling the distribution of the pensions, held the monopoly of the salt trade. In 1729, Fidel Zurlauben was convicted of the unlawful appropriation of the salt trade, banished and ordered to repay his gains. His principal opponent, Josef Anton Schumacher, a councillor and salt merchant, was elected Ammann in 1731, after which the Harten suppressed the opposition. In 1733, Zug terminated its alliance with France. The victory of the Harten did not last. In 1735 Schumacher was removed from office and sentenced to service on the galleys for crimes against peace and order. In 1736 Zug rejoined the French alliance, whose pensions were thereafter distributed more equitably.² The fall of Fidel Zurlauben in 1729 marked the end of his family's political dominance.³

The second conflict, between 1764 and 1768, arose from new military regulations imposed by the French minister of war, Étienne François de Choiseul, which altered the arrangements on which the officer families depended. The leaders of the Harten, Franz Fidel Landtwing and Karl Kaspar Kolin, challenged the established order once more. The dispute over salt and pensions ended in 1768 with an amnesty and the principle of equal distribution.⁴ The same quarrel shook the neighbouring canton of Schwyz in the 1760s and 1770s, where the Linden leader, General Josef

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Nazar Reding, was fined and the French expelled all Schwyz officers from their service before a new agreement was signed in 1777.⁵

The Harten- und Lindenhandel is instructive for the modern reader. It was a conflict over the distribution of rents that flowed into a small community from abroad, over the privileges of those who controlled the flow and over the question whether the community should accept the conditions that the foreign payer imposed. The Harten, who terminated the French alliance in 1733, learnt within three years, when the alliance was restored, that the community could not do without the foreign income. The community settled on a compromise that preserved the income and distributed it more widely. A canton whose budget depends on the taxes paid by international companies faces similar choices whenever an international standard, such as the global minimum tax discussed in Part K, changes the terms on which that income flows.

1 Notes

1. HLS, "Harten- und Lindenhandel", version of 14 October 2009. ↩
2. HLS, "Harten- und Lindenhandel": in 1728 the outer districts demanded redistribution of the pensions; in 1729 Fidel Zurlauben convicted of unlawful appropriation of the salt trade, banished and ordered to repay; in 1731 Josef Anton Schumacher elected Ammann; in 1733 Zug terminated the French alliance; in 1735 Schumacher removed and sentenced to the galleys; in 1736 Zug rejoined the alliance and the pensions were distributed equitably. ↩
3. Wikipedia (German), "Zurlauben": the family's political influence peaked around 1700 and collapsed in 1729 with the fall of Fidel Zurlauben (1675–1731). ↩
4. HLS, "Harten- und Lindenhandel", section on the second conflict in Zug (1764–1768): new military regulations of the French war minister Étienne François de Choiseul; Harten leaders Franz Fidel Landtwing and Karl Kaspar Kolin; settlement in 1768 through amnesty and equal distribution. ↩
5. HLS, "Harten- und Lindenhandel", section on Schwyz (1763–1777). ↩

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