

Mediation and restoration

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

The Helvetic Republic collapsed under its internal divisions between unitarists and federalists and under the weight of the war. On 19 February 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte, as First Consul of France, imposed the Act of Mediation, which restored the cantons as sovereign members of a confederation.¹ Zug became an independent canton once more and has remained one ever since.²

The constitution of 1803 restored substantial parts of the institutions of the old regime. The Landsgemeinde, the assembly of all adult male citizens, received legislative powers. The joint council of the town and the Amt was re-established, with 54 members.³ In the town, the municipal organisation of the period before the revolution was restored.⁴ The former subject territories retained their freedom and became communes with equal rights. The canton now consisted of the town and nine rural communes, which, with the separation of Neuheim from Menzingen in 1848, form the eleven municipalities of the present canton.⁵ After the fall of Napoleon, the canton adopted a new constitution in 1814, which established a system of three councils, the "dreifacher Landrat".⁶ The restoration period was one of conservative government, in which the old families regained much of their influence. Mercenary service revived for a time under new capitulations with France, Naples, the Netherlands and other states, before it was prohibited by federal law in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁷ The economy of foreign pensions, however, did not recover its old importance. The canton had to find new sources of income, which it found, slowly, in industry.

1 Notes

1. HLS, "Helvetische Republik": the Act of Mediation of 19 February 1803 ended the Helvetic Republic and restored cantonal autonomy; end of the Republic on 10 March 1803. ↩

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2. Wikipedia (English), "Canton of Zug", section on history: independent since 1803 following the Act of Mediation. ↩
3. HLS, "Zug (Kanton)": the Mediation constitution of 1803 restored substantial ancien régime structures while granting the Landsgemeinde legislative powers; joint council of "Stadt und Amt" with 54 members after 1803. ↩
4. HLS, "Zug (Gemeinde)": the Mediation constitution of 1803 restored the pre-revolutionary municipal organisation. ↩
5. HLS, "Zug (Kanton)", version of 24 April 2019, hls-dhs-dss.ch: after 1803 the former subject communes Cham, Hünenberg, Steinhausen, Risch and Walchwil held equal rights alongside the town and the old communes of Baar, Ägeri and Menzingen; in 1848 Neuheim separated from Menzingen and became an independent commune; Renato Morosoli, "Unterägeri", HLS, version of 28 January 2013: the lower part of Ägeri became politically independent in 1798. The count of nine rural communes after 1803 (Baar, Menzingen, Oberägeri, Unterägeri and the five former subject communes) is derived from these entries. ↩
6. HLS, "Zug (Kanton)": the 1814 constitution established a triple Landrat system. ↩
7. Federal Constitution of 12 September 1848, Art. 11 ("Es dürfen keine Militärkapitulationen abgeschlossen werden"), text at verfassungen.ch/verf48.htm; Wikipedia (German), "Reisläufer", accessed September 2026: after 1815 the cantons concluded new capitulations with France, the Netherlands, Prussia, the Holy See and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies; the Federal Act of 30 July 1859 prohibited recruitment and the entry of Swiss citizens into foreign service. ↩

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