

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 9 (1943-1944)  
**Heft:** 8

**Artikel:** The defence position of Switzerland  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942693>

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

#### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

#### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 16.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND TAX PAYMENTS IN SWITZERLAND.

The Federal statistical department has published some extremely interesting figures showing the extent and present distribution of wealth in Switzerland; these figures are based on data secured by the collection of the capital levy enacted to partly cover the cost of mobilisation (Wehropfer). The total net value of all the property so taxed is 21,645 million francs or 5,071 frs. per head of population. The individual cantons exhibit noticeable variations from the average. Baselstadt leads easily with Frs. 9,573 while the canton Uri is at the bottom of the list with only Frs. 2,073 per head. Above the average are Geneva, Glarus, Zurich, Schaffhausen, Thurgau and the canton Vaud; somewhat remarkable is the fact that Glarus claims more riches than Zurich. The large canton Berne with its vast agriculture is slightly under the average while the "poor" Ticino beats the industrial Solothurn. Appenzell A.Rh. possesses more than twice the wealth of Appenzell I.Rh. Towns with over 100,000 inhabitants average over Frs. 8,300 which is about double the ratio recorded in predominantly rural districts.

The following statement and explanatory notes will give readers an idea how the wealth is divided amongst the population and consequently to what extent this "Defence Sacrifice" (tax towards the cost of mobilisation) is shouldered by the different income groups:

Capital groups S.Frs.	Approximate No. of taxpayers	Total wealth recorded	"Defence Sacrifice" paid
5 - 25,000	232,000	3,2 Milliards	48 millions
25 - 50,000	93,000	3,2 "	48 "
50 -100,000	50,500	3,4 "	50 "
100 -200,000	23,000	3,1 "	53 "
Over 200,000	15,000	8,2 "	290 "

This special capital levy contributed 492 million towards the cost of mobilisation out of a taxable amount of 21,6 milliards francs. 290 million or 60% was paid by only 4% of the taxpayers liable for this tax. These were the people with a capital of over 200,000 s.frs. The same category contains 1563 individuals with a capital of over one million and these 1563 taxpayers alone paid 143 million or nearly 30% of the total collected, whereas their recorded wealth amounts only to about 15% of the total taxable amount of 21,6 milliards.

On the other hand 60% or 232,000 of the taxpayers are in the 5 - 25,000 group and command a recorded wealth of 3,2 milliard of which 48 million tax was paid, that is about 10% of the total "Defence Sacrifice".

Another category are the 93,000 taxpayers in the 25 - 50,000 francs group with a recorded wealth of 3,2 milliards, the same as the 232,000 taxpayers in the 5 - 25,000 group, and they also paid 48 millions or 10% towards the total tax.

The recorded capital of the 50,500 taxpayers in the 50 - 100,000 group is 3,4 milliards, on which they paid 50 million or about 10% of the total tax.

The next group consists of 23,000 taxpayers with a capital of from 100 -200,000 francs totalling 3,1 milliards. This group paid 53 million or again something over 10% of the total capital levy collected.

From this statement it can clearly be seen to what great extend tax payments increase in ratio to capital possessed.

.....

THE DEFENCE POSITION OF SWITZERLAND.

Our Defence Minister, Federal Councillor Karl Kobelt, addressed on January 24th a conference of Civil Defence Instructors at Winterthur; the following are a few translated extracts from the speech cabled by the correspondent of the "Daily Express", January 26th: -

Defence measures will be taken immediately if the necessity arises. These measures will vary, depending on the character of the danger - whether it be a surprise attack, or a long-planned invasion, or whether the Swiss Army will have to bar transit to a foreign army.

Great events are likely to happen at any moment now. There can be no doubt about it. The danger that Switzerland might be closely influenced by these events increases more and more.

The watchfulness and preparedness of the army and people should not be relaxed in any circumstances. We are all ready for being called to arms at any moment.

Our people are prepared to pay the highest price - the lives of our sons - for national independence and freedom.

The fighting strength of the Swiss Army has continually increased. Our frontier and inland fortifications have reached considerable strength - £38,000,000 has been spent on their improvement.

Practically all the fortifications are ready to be manned, and those still building can be turned to immediate use.

Considerable areas have been fortified with trenches, ditches, walls and mines which can be exploded at a moment's notice.

During the first world war Switzerland produced only rifles, revolvers and machine guns, but today it has extended its own production to practically all arms including airplanes.

Switzerland has spent £87,000,000 on improving her arms.

Much attention has been given to the improvement of anti-tank and anti-air weapons.

The motorisation of the Swiss Army has progressed with great strides. Great underground stores have been constructed which are now housing immense quantities of food, fuel and other vital goods to enable the nation to live and fight within "the fortress of Switzerland" should it be besieged.

The Federal Council is continuously and carefully following external developments, and the extent of Swiss mobilisation will always be gauged to the events around us.

\* \* \* \* \*

SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

On March 16th, shortly after noon, two more waves of foreign aircrafts came across our territory. Swiss fighter squadrons took to the air and forced three American bombers to land at Dubendorf. A Liberator made a forced landing near Diepoldsau in the St.Gall Rhine Valley. A second Liberator fell into the Lake of Zug. One man of the crew was killed. Lastly, two four engine-bombers of the Americans crashed to the ground, one at Diessenhofen (Ct. of Thurgovie) and the other in the upper Toggenburg, Canton of St.Gall, near Wildhaus. All the members of the crews were safe and sound and have been interned.

Again on March 18, 13 American bombers made forced landings in Switzerland, while three others crashed to the ground. Most of the crews of the last three bailed out safely. All the planes were seized and the crews interned.

The development of the war in the air is followed with great attention by our authorities who have reinforced our precautionary measures. Thus the Federal Council issued on March 14th a new decree relative to protection against air raids. Landlords whose houses stand one against the other, must cut a passage through their basement party wall so that people caught in one air-shelter can more easily get into the other. The Confederation, the cantons and the local communities will grant subsidies for this. Moreover, anti-fire measures have been made more vigorous.