

On the publication of the book
Der Schweizer Franken – eine Erfolgsgeschichte
*Die Währung der Schweiz im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*¹

Dear Mr Jordan
Dear Professor Baltensperger
Ladies and Gentlemen

On Wednesday, the 18th of January this year, I received an informal e-mail, which read as follows: “I am taking the liberty of sending you the attached manuscript for a book which I recently wrote, entitled *Der Schweizer Franken – eine Erfolgsgeschichte. Währungsgeschichte der Schweiz im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. I would be delighted if the NZZ publishing house were interested in adding the book to its publishing programme.”

A few hours later, I replied to Professor Baltensperger’s mail: “Many thanks for your manuscript. We are indeed very interested in the topic, and I could well envisage adding this to our programme at short notice.”

The following Tuesday, the 24th of January, I wrote to Professor Baltensperger once again: “I am pleased to inform you that NZZ Libro is willing to publish your fascinating manuscript on the history of Switzerland’s currency.”

And that was that! At the publishing house, we were immediately very taken by the text. A brief exchange with a good colleague on the editorial team quickly confirmed that I was holding a most original and top-quality piece of work in my hands, which ought to be published without further ado. On a personal level, I barely knew Mr Baltensperger. We had once met briefly at an event at Avenir Suisse. On a professional level, however, I was very familiar with his work – not only as an academic, but also through contributions to the NZZ. And we considered it as particularly fortuitous that the history of the Swiss franc had been penned not by a historian, but by an economist. An economist who enjoys an excellent reputation in the international arena in the areas of banking, monetary theory and monetary policy.

It was also quite fortuitous that it was the Swiss National Bank which had commissioned Professor Baltensperger to write the history of the Swiss

¹ The Swiss franc – a success story: Switzerland’s currency in the 19th and 20th centuries.

currency. With this constellation, we were able to derive great benefit during the production of the book. Take for instance the expertise in the subject matter or the enrichment of the volume through a comprehensive series of images; both of which would hardly have been possible otherwise. Through this collaboration, we were able to view and obtain first-class illustrative material from the SNB's archives. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to Mr Halbeisen at the SNB and his team for their professional assistance and untiring support in the illustration of this work. I would also like to say a personal word of thanks to Mr Savioz and Mr Wälti, whose assistance on the SNB's behalf in all operational and contractual matters was greatly appreciated.

“A franc shall remain a franc” – this quote from the year 1936 still holds true in today's world, albeit with a slightly different shade of meaning. The franc provides the country with a certain sense of identity. Some time ago, we published a book penned by a renowned historian dedicated to the Swiss collective memory. This compilation of essays covered everything from the Rütli – which is widely accepted as Switzerland's birthplace and quite simply represents the country's most defining moment – to other 'landmarks' of national identity such as Brother Klaus or the practice of voting through a show of hands in provincial communities, and from the Gotthard mountain to banking secrecy. If you ask me, this book could now be expanded to include a chapter on the Swiss franc. The franc also occupies an important place in the country's collective communication and I believe that, particularly in times of change, this stable value is held in the highest regard by a broad swathe of the population. It is therefore entirely justified that its interesting and colourful history be committed to paper. And when this is done in such a comprehensive and precise way as it is in this book by Professor Baltensperger, then you can look forward to a really good read!

Naturally, as the publisher, I hope that the book will be well received and will find a great many readers.

Thank you and enjoy the rest of the event.

Hans-Peter Thür

Publishing director of NZZ Libro

3 October 2012