

SUMMARY

Humair Cédric (Université de Lausanne)

An alliance for power: the relations between the Union suisse du commerce et de l'industrie (USCI, or Swiss Union of Trade and Industry) and the Union suisse des paysans (USP, the Swiss Farmers Union) (1897-1929)

The contribution analyses how the leaders of the USCI, the Swiss peak association of industry and trade, managed to set up and ensure the continued existence of the Bloc bourgeois (*Bürgerblock*). Concluded at the end of the 19th century with the USP, the agricultural peak association, this alliance permitted them to exert a huge influence within the state field. This case study arrives at the conclusion that the ability of a business interest association to form an alliance in order to increase its political weight was inextricably linked to its internal configuration. Indeed, the economic concessions necessary to the alliance conflicted with a defense of the short-term interests of the member associations, which jeopardized internal cohesion and risked bringing about a secession. Still existing today despite several periods of crisis, the alliance invites us to ponder the reasons for such longevity. Apart from the USCI's power to influence government, which enabled it to discipline member associations and to gain the loyalty of the USP, we should not overlook the informal governance of this collaboration, which gave the leaders of the two organizations great flexibility, and the elaboration of an ideologically antisocialist discourse that cemented the alliance and helped to overcome material antagonisms.