

Transcript of the Conversation between Ron Paul and Claudio Grass at the Liberty Report

Dr. Ron Paul: I've always been fascinated with Switzerland: it just has such a great history, I love the political system and the decentralization. Of course, Switzerland comes and goes too on their defense of liberty, and sometimes they are the champion of the gold standard.

One question I want to ask you about libertarianism, since you are a libertarian, you are from Switzerland – it sounds like there must be a few more, but if I were a Swiss citizen and I was running for office, and all I wanted to do was aim the goal of getting a maximum amount of vote, would it be more popular for me to say "I am a socialist, and this is what I want", or would it be better to say "I am a libertarian, and this is what I don't want to do"? Which one would get the most votes?

Claudio Grass: Well, definitely not the socialist. When you look back into the history of Switzerland, we had four different languages. We consist of 26 states. As you said, we've always had decentralization. Also, we are the last remaining direct democracy on this planet, meaning that the sovereign are the Swiss people.

Of course, because the Swiss people are the sovereign and whatever the politicians bring up, we are used to debate what's going on. When the people are used to debate, they also have a kind of higher status in terms of enlightenment. They don't fall into the trap of just taking over opinions which have been sold on the mass media.

They really "think", which is the problem nowadays. People are not allowed to think independently any longer. But the Swiss are used to think, this is part of the historical genes of Switzerland.

Dr. Ron Paul: I've always been fascinated by your executive branch of government. It was meant at our founding that the executive branch wouldn't be the most powerful branch. It was to be the congress and more democratic and that people would be in charge. But today, of course, our executive branch is the biggest.

I think the Swiss executive branch is the kind of executive branch if I were to design a country I would want a very weak executive branch, and evidently, you've had that for a long time. But we've lost it. Our constitution was well-intended, but the people in charge of it over these hundreds of years have just neglected it.

I served in the US Congress for a good many years, but it was always rejection of the responsibility to restrain the executive branch. When it comes to war issues and monetary issues, the executive branch hasn't done well. I think it's fascinating that your president is not a person of great authoritarianism. I've

always been amazed that most people aren't even familiar with the name of your current president. Well, that's a good idea.

Claudio Grass: We don't have a president. We basically have seven of them. Everyone has a department which he's responsible for, and that's the executive branch. When it comes to the one we can call the congress, they are the legislative responsible to make up the laws and so on, and then of course, at the end of the day, the sovereign are the Swiss people. We can say "yes" or "no" if we don't like what the politicians decide. We can gather 100'000 signatories and we can hand in our initiative, or if the government comes up with a certain proposal to change the constitution and so on, then we can gather 30,000 signatories, and then it needs to be brought in front of the people, and the people then can decide if they want to accept it or not.

Dr. Ron Paul: Since many of us are predicting the collapse of central banking around the world just because they are inept and it's going to fail, I am always hoping that maybe there will be a day once again that the Swiss will lead us back again to reintroduce the notion of a real gold standard, and maybe the world will follow, and hopefully, we'll have enough organization in this country to do the same thing.

Just recently, I had a program on talking about the Swiss Referendum a couple years ago. We're having a lot of talk now about minimum wages, and some of the cities are pushing the minimum wage up to \$15 an hour, but the principle of legislating minimum wage, of course, is anathema to libertarians and markets. The market should dictate wages.

But this had to do with a referendum a couple years ago. The Swiss voted on a minimum wage of \$25 an hour, and I think this'll fit your argument that the Swiss aren't exactly attracted toward socialism, because they rejected this wholeheartedly – this whole idea, even the people who might have benefited by a higher minimum wage. They said they didn't want any part of it.

Claudio Grass: Absolutely. That's a good example. We also had a few years ago a few people who wanted to give six weeks of vacation. Paid leave. Even there, the Swiss resisted. They said "no". It doesn't make sense. We don't want to have that the government is interfering when it comes to the economy and to the working contracts and so on. Therefore we don't have strong unions, so we still have a labor market which is not regulated extremely - let's call it that way. You can hire people. You can fire people. That's why we also have a low unemployment rate.

The Swiss, they understand that first of all, we have to save, and then we can invest. It's not possible that you can spend and consume. That's also part. It's part of that gene. It's really the cultural heritage of the Swiss people.

Dr. Ron Paul: One of the arguments made for voting down this increase in minimum wage was the Swiss had pretty good wages. Matter of fact, a lot of

them were making that much anyway, and they said "Well, the minimum wage did that." But you don't even have a minimum wage. Then they were still doing very well.

When I did that program, I did get some criticism. They said "Ah, you missed it, Ron. That wasn't it. It's their unions. Their unions got those wages up, and they gave all the credit to the union", and therefore I was misleading people there. But would you say that the unions had a lot to do with everybody making a good wage, or were the market factors the reason why people make good wages in Switzerland?

Claudio Grass: The unions definitely did have nothing to do with the minimum wages. It's really the market that is in competition with each other. That's why we have this salary structure.

We also have very weak unions. The unions are focusing maybe on the real estate market, where you have people working on the construction side, . They have the union, in a way. Basically because over the last decades, , we had a lot of people coming from abroad, and they wanted to work in Switzerland. That's why there you have some unions coming up trying to "protect" the labor market and to "protect" the people working there, because they don't understand what competition means, and that if we can compete with each other, that we would be all better off again.

Dr. Ron Paul: In the news in Europe and the European Union, one of the major issues in this country now is immigration. How strong should the borders be, how much freedom should we have to move about? Switzerland of course is not in the European Union, but I can't imagine you in Switzerland escaping the whole issue of migration, because it's a serious problem. Some of our foreign policy of intervention in the Middle East and bad economic policies in Africa and different things, it's a big deal. Millions of people migrating, and then it looks like the European Union has invited problems for themselves. I'm sure that Switzerland can't ignore this. Is it being discussed? Are there people worried about what's happening? How's it being handled? Have there already been immigrants coming into Switzerland? What's the status of the migration dilemma that Europe is facing?

Claudio Grass: When we look back into the last 24 months we had a lot of refugee streams coming into Europe, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, sent out an invitation basically saying "everyone is welcome. We even pay a fee. You'll get 2000 euros." They were really enforcing the migrations streams into Europe. Fortunately, those migration streams went through the Balkan area.

Everyone wants to go to Europe. To Germany in particular. We didn't have a lot of refugee streams coming into Switzerland. But now, of course, the Balkan route has been closed down, so we expect this summer that more people will come through Italy and then might go through Switzerland.

So we also had a discussion in Switzerland and what do we do? The government now decided that we're going to place 2,000 soldiers at the Southern borders of Switzerland to protect the borders and to avoid that we have masses of refugees coming into Switzerland.

At the same time, Swiss people got feared when they see how the politicians in the Eurozone are handling this migration crisis. They see that this is a cultural suicide. Of course, Europe is not overrun by millions of refugees. Sometimes when you see the media, you could get that kind of impression. That's not the case.

But of course, when you have a million people coming in every year, it has an impact in the mid- and long-term, especially because of the wars in the Middle East. Especially since the Soviet Union crashed, we have been conditioned that the new enemy is the Arab world through Hollywood, the media, and 9-11 was definitely the peak of that development.

People are afraid. They realize, hey, we bombed these people, and now the politicians are saying "Please come." This is going to create a lot of troubles. A lot of people are standing up. That's why we also see this movement like AfD in Germany, a new party which is extremely successful. Their main message is to protect the cultural heritage and we don't want to have millions of refugees coming in. They basically received 14-40% votes depending on the area.

Dr. Ron Paul: If somebody comes into Switzerland, and they're coming in, they're passing through or they've gotten on Swiss land, and they're not technically legal – what we refer to as an illegal immigrant – do they qualify for any of the welfare benefits that the country provides, or would they be excluded from being able to get any benefits?

Claudio Grass: We had last year also a few refugees coming in, I think roughly 70,000. Most of them came from Eritrea in Africa, because most people, they want to go to Germany. They don't want to come to Switzerland, fortunately.

They are now sitting in a refugee camp. They have shelter. They get some food. But of course, there is not future for them. Our social welfare system at the moment is still shut down for those kinds of people. But of course, if it stays, if you cannot send these people back, then it will have an impact.

Dr. Ron Paul: But they don't come with the idea that they're going to get a lot of freebies.

Claudio Grass: I lived two years in the Middle East. Don't get me wrong. I lived in Israel. I also lived in Damascus. I very much adore the culture down there. I really had a great time, and I met great people. But the problem is that these people, they always had in mind "As long as we can migrate into Europe, we will also get the house, and we get a car." They saw that on TV.

For them, Europe was really the Promised Land, because they were captured in

their own country and allowed to travel. Now, basically, with that invitation, that's their dream. They believe that when they come to Europe, everything will be fine. I think these kind of dreams are going to be crushed.

Dr. Ron Paul: I have one more question. I wanted to get you to make a couple comments about Cultural Marxism. That is something that exists I guess worldwide. You're aware of this being a problem or at least a discussion in Switzerland?

Claudio Grass: It's starting. I also had no clue about Cultural Marxism until six months ago. I was now studying especially the Frankfurt School which has been founded back in 1930 in Germany and they were all Marxists. Their dogma was to destroy western civilization. Their battle cry has also been "the long march through the institutions".

When we look at the 68th generation when we had the student unrest and so on, that's basically the product of this Frankfurt School. Even when you look at politicians such as Angela Merkel, Ursula von der Leyen or Joschka Fischer the former defense minister, these are the 68^{ers}.

Now, they are sitting in those political positions. Because it doesn't make sense in an economical environment which is slowing down tremendously to add millions of people into a social welfare system coming from different cultures; this is going to lead to clashes. It doesn't make sense at all.

But if you understand what Cultural Marxism is all about and that it's really up to destroy all the values of the Western world, especially also the family, which has been considered the core element of fascism. The way to achieve this is by using political correctness. You have to control the language that you can shape the mindset of the people. I think that's what it's all about. If the people understand that and do their own research, they will also better understand what's going on at the moment.

Dr. Ron Paul: Claudio, I want to thank you very much for being with us today. Very fascinating conversation.