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SWISS SIGNALS PART 1.

By J. Jesson.

The S.B.B. is today almost (but not quite) completely signalled using colour lights, where different shapes and sizes can present a bewildering variety of aspects. In addition to the Main (Haupt) and Advance (Vor) signals, there are block, combined, subsidiary, directing, slow running signals and any number of fixed indicators.

It is not intended in this series to give a fully comprehensive text on Swiss signals, but to explain most of the aspects which may be encountered, and the meaning of a number of lineside signs and paraphernalia. My sources have been the S.B.B. 'Signalbuch der Schweizerischen Bundesbahnen', the Orell Füssli 'Signale der Schweizer Bahnen' by R.W.Butz, the Collins German/English Dictionary, the UIC 'Lexique Général des Termes Ferroviaires', and a reasonable knowledge of German Federal Railway signalling, which is similar in many respects to the signalling of Switzerland.

Any comments, criticisms, amplifications, corrections or requests would be gratefully received, both by the Editor and myself. With a bit of luck, some healthy correspondence may be generated. Throughout the series I intend to use the German language description of the signals, with an initial translation.

Hauptsignal (Main or Home)/Vorsignal (Advance or Distant).

Hauptsignals can show a STOP aspect and up to five different PROCEED aspects, one of which was altered in 1967, plus one other which is no longer used. The size and shape of the signal head used in a particular location is determined by the Fahrbegriff (Proceed Category) aspects requiring to be displayed, and hence the number of lights needed. The Vorsignal similarly has a different light display dependant upon the aspect being displayed by the Hauptsignal which it precedes, although in this case the signal head used is the same irrespective of the number of aspects required.

Colour Codes:-



RED



GREEN

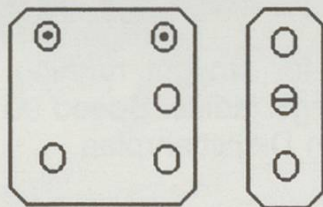


AMBER

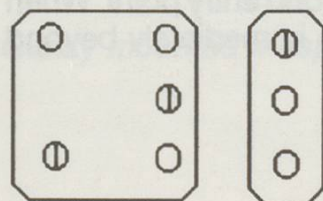


UNLIT

Vorsignal. Hauptsignal Fahrbegriff Details.

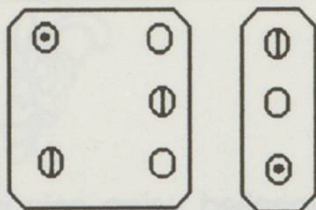


Hauptsignal = STOP.
Vorsignal = Stop at Hauptsignal.



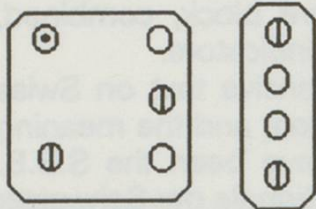
1

Proceed. Points set for straight running, or, point free section. Max line speed.



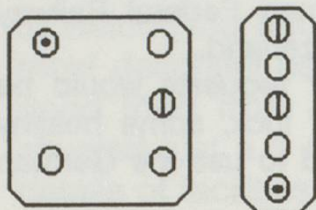
2

Proceed. Diverging points of normal radius. Speed 40 km/h. (Less if working timetable [Dienstfahrplan] instructs.



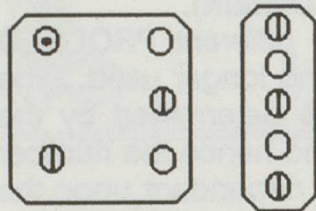
3

Proceed. Diverging points of large radius. Speed between 50 and 85 km/h permitted, or as laid down in Dienstfahrplan.



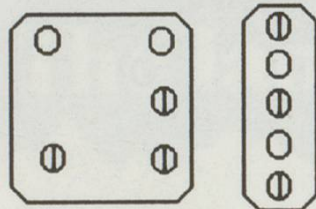
4
(Not used)

Proceed. Nearer points set for straight running, further points diverging, normal radius. Speed up to 40 km/h or less as laid down in Dienstfahrplan or other working notices.



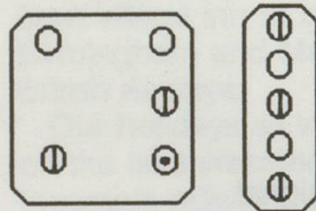
5

Believed never used, but valid to 31/10/67.



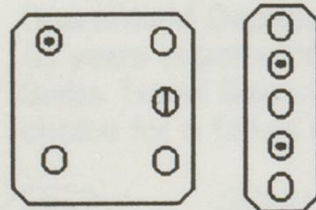
5

Valid 1/11/67 to 31/1/75.



5

Valid from 1/2/75
Proceed. Near points set for straight running, further points, diverging, large radius. Speed 90 or 95 km/h, as laid down in Dienstfahrplan.



6

Proceed. Next Hauptsignal shows Stop. When at an entry signal: 40km/h beyond entry point. When at a section signal: 40km/h immediately beyond signal.

Notes.

- a. The Dienstfahrplan is much more than its British equivalent, the working timetable, as it contains considerable information about the line or route. It is rather like a combination Working Timetable and Sectional Appendix.
- b. An Entry Signal (EINFAHR SIGNAL) is the signal protecting entry into a station. A Section Signal (GELEISEABSCHNITTSIGNAL) protects the next section of track on open line.
- c. The number of block aspects between the lit lamps of a Hauptsignal is irrelevant, and is dependent on the particular signal head used.

NEXT ISSUE. Haupt & Vorsignal on the same post, Block & Combined Signals.



Gantry mounted 4 aspect signals, the Gotthard Tunnel at Göschenen.

Photo: Editor.