

SWISS REVIEW

A stylized illustration in shades of blue, red, and green. It depicts four people in business suits (two men and two women) running across a green field, pulling a large red banner. The banner has the word 'SWISS' written on it in large, red, block letters. The background shows blue mountains and a white sky. The overall style is graphic and energetic.

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
August 2015

- The row over the myths and truth of Swiss history
- Survey amongst Swiss banks – what do you offer the Swiss Abroad?
- Vera Michalski – the wealthy heiress with a great love of literature

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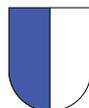
Basel



Geneva



Grisons



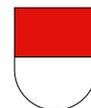
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Concordance and a government in chains

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The election date is drawing nearer and tension is palpably increasing amongst the parties and candidates. The comments are becoming more acerbic, a casual approach is being adopted to the truth and political opponents are being defamed. This type of politics has become increasingly common over recent years. This is not good for the Swiss system of concordance-based democracy because concordance actually means making decisions by reaching a consensus.

The parties making up the Federal Council are also showing less and less desire and willingness to seek workable solutions. This is clearly reflected in the fact that never have so many Federal Council proposals been rejected in Parliament as during this legislative period. On each occasion an “unholy alliance” has been condemned for disrupting political business. However, the fiasco is actually the responsibility of the political parties that are part of the government but nevertheless still act as the opposition when it suits them. That is extremely frustrating for our Federal Councillors who make up the government. In our system they have no opportunity – no matter how good their ideas or proposals – to allow the Swiss people, the much-lauded highest power in the state, to decide upon them directly. Whether we as voters can do anything to change that when we fill out our ballot papers is a question that I dare not answer. There is nevertheless little doubt that those candidates who shout down the others most vociferously are not the best democrats.

Not an actual election campaign issue but an incredibly politically charged by-product of it, the controversy over Swiss history and its myths is the focus topic of this edition. Our reporter vividly outlines (from page 8 on) how prominent political figures and leading historians are crossing swords over history.

BARBARA ENGEL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Cover:
Illustration from Andrea Caprez
of the debates over Swiss history

Immigration and Swiss virtues

There has been much debate about immigration and foreign workers in Switzerland over recent years. It is often easy to forget what a positive impact this can have on those concerned and their countries of origin if they return home. Many Spaniards found work in Switzerland from 1973 to the 1990s. 75 people emigrated to Switzerland in 1973 from the village near our farm in Salamanca alone. One of our current employees, for example, spent 17 years working for Borsary Co. before returning to Spain. He has fond memories of Switzerland, as do most of his neighbours. It is also great to see the influence working there has had on them. In their current jobs they are dependable, punctual and precise, which they attribute to their training in Switzerland.

BRIGITTE SANCHEZ-ARJONA, SPAIN

A symbolic cover photo

I would like to thank you for the cover photo of the June 2015 issue of "Swiss Review". Its symbolism is fantastic. A powerful Swiss Cross moves into the scene from the right with the euro symbol of the European Central Bank (ECB) behind it. A true vision of the future as the power of Switzerland, direct democracy and participation in decision-making by all citizens must increasingly permeate the conscious-

ness of all Europeans in order for Europe to rebuild itself from the bottom up based on the will of its citizens.

EDGAR RUF, DÜSSELDORF

We know it's a factional election campaign

In the June issue, Professor Kohler referred to a "factional election campaign". I do not share his anxiety and concerns. Factional election campaign? That is certainly nothing new in Switzerland. Think back four years or eight years. Was it different then? And what about during the tumultuous period of the youth movement in the 1980s? Or after 1968 at the time of the Vietnam War? Not to mention the prolonged period during the Cold War. This was an era abounding with national traitors and Moscow one-way recommendations.

HEINZ MOLL, CZECH REPUBLIC

A turncoat

I would like to say publicly that Widmer-Schlumpf is a turncoat in my eyes. I personally hold her responsible for the banking fiasco. I am far from being a friend of UBS, but I believe Widmer-Schlumpf has shamelessly betrayed Switzerland and its banking confidentiality as well as the Swiss People's Party (SVP). I do, however, believe we need a non-conservative party. But don't count me in.

DORIS JOHO, BY EMAIL

A 27th Canton for the Swiss Abroad

746 000 Swiss citizens live abroad. If they formed a canton, it would be the fourth largest by population. Does „Fifth Switzerland“ make up the 27th canton of the Swiss Confederation? Do Swiss living abroad need to be represented in the parliament?

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Women are women

Wait a minute! I love watching women football, but I do not try to compare it to men's soccer. However, Claudia Schumacher's article is very clear and honest. I don't think it takes anything away from the game, it just states the realities of the day. Women are women, and we love it that way. Aloha.

PAUL EGCEL, HAWAII

Reinforcing stereotypes

I am a Swiss citizen by marriage, living in the US. When I saw the headline about the Swiss National Women's soccer team I was pleased – after all, the team is playing in the World Cup for the first time. But the article was an example of how biased "journalism" helps to keep women's sports from getting the respect they deserve. While purporting to provide information about why the team doesn't get the funding and recognition to thrive, the writer repeatedly reinforces stereotypes and uses a patronizing tone throughout. She apparently supports the idea that women wear nail polish on the field to make a better impression! I am amazed this article made it through your editorial review. Swiss female athletes deserve our admiration and support, not our condescension.

CONSTANCE DEVANTHERY-LEWIS, CAMBRIDGE, USA

Big attendances at women's football

I am Swiss but live in the USA. In Portland, Oregon, our women's team, Thorns FC, plays in the same stadium as the men and their average attendance is over 13,000 (21,000 for the men). The women's national team is almost as popular as the men's team. A few days ago 27,000 people watched a friendly match played by the women's national team in Los Angeles. I wish the same could happen in other countries.

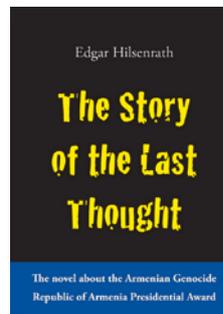
BEAT STAUBER, PORTLAND, USA

Guldimann's intentions

I do hope Tim Guldimann keeps up his good intentions to truly represent the interests of the Swiss Abroad when he enters politics. It was disheartening to have been treated like second class citizens as we were when our banks abandoned us as clients just because we have foreign addresses. Surely, an exception could have been made on our behalf so that we did not all feel like we were being treated like criminals.

JEANNETTE BRUMBAUGH, USA

The Story of the Last Thought, Edgar Hilsenrath



EDGAR HILSEN RATH
 "The Story of the Last Thought"; Edition Barber Press; Euro 18.

"The Story of the Last Thought" by Edgar Hilsenrath has been reissued in French and has received rave reviews in France. And rightly so! The author, a German Jew born in Leipzig in 1926 who experienced deportation, wrote the novel in the form of a fairy tale, an allusion to the fact that most of those who lived through the events of 1915 in Turkey are no longer alive to tell the story. Shortly before his death, the 73-year-old Armenian Thomva Khatisian is visited by Meddah, a storyteller who tells him his own tragic story, which began in that year. Edgar Hilsenrath, who devotes part of his book to evoking memories of the Holocaust, uses humour and the grotesque to recreate the life of the Armenians living in Turkey before the cataclysm of 1915. We are transported to a village in Anatolia and immersed in the life of the Armenian community, with its food and beliefs.

The highlands are controlled by the Kurds, to whom the Armenians pay taxes to prevent the kidnapping of their daughters. They also pay dues to the Turkish authorities. In the towns, the Armenian artisans and merchants are known for their skill. The Turks know who to go to for leather work, who to go to for good products. This is so well known, in fact, that after the massacres, many Turks lament their disappearance. Where is the tailor? Where is the grocer? Like the Jews in Germany, and later across Europe, the Armenians were used as a scapegoat. In towns and villages, the fear of massacres – of "tebk" – ran deep. Edgar Hilsenrath shows the vulnerability of this Christian population that had no right to bear arms. When the Turkish state gave the signal for deportation, the Armenians were entirely at the mercy of the public authorities.

As in his other novels, "The Story of the Last Thought" does not describe a world in black and white. There were Turks who came to the assistance of their Armenian compatriots. The population was also ensnared by a state that exploited their fears – such as the fear of a fifth column of Armenians accused of colluding with the Russians. The novel is violent: pregnant women are driven on endless marches without water towards the deserts of Mesopotamia and die of thirst. But it is also extraordinarily alive in how it lovingly recreates the sensory life of the Armenian community before the cataclysm. "Hayastan? Where the mountains touch the clouds [...]. Where there were fat-tailed ewes, mutton and yoghurt. Do you remember that yoghurt that grandmother called madsoun? [...]." So begins the tale told to Thomva Khatisian just before his death.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Art and idylls from the mountains of Grisons

“High up in the mountains, far from here, there lives a little boy just like you.” The book that begins with this line enjoyed success world-wide. Around two million copies have been published since 1945, and it has been translated into ten languages. The creator of “Schellenursli” (A Bell for Ursli) is the painter and graphic artist Alois Carigiet, while the rhymes to the story were written by Selina Chönz. For generations Swiss parents have told their children and grand-



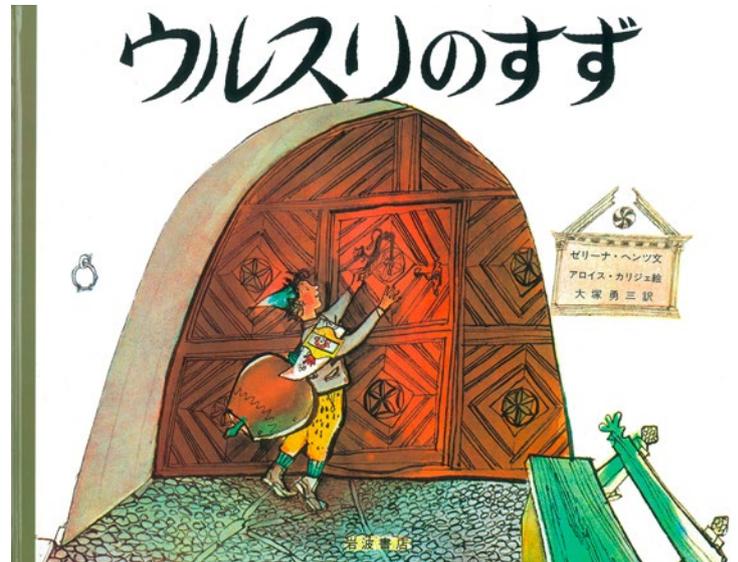
Die Bergbauernfamilie (1965), oil on canvas



From the book “Flurina and the Wild Bird”

children the stories of Schellenursli or Flurina, while abroad the stories have contributed to the cliché of the Swiss mountain idyll.

Now to mark the 30th anniversary of the death of Alois Carigiet (1902 – 1985) and the 70th birthday of “Schellenursli”, the Swiss National Museum in Zurich is paying tribute to the work of Carigiet. The title of the exhibition “Alois Carigiet. Art, Graphic Art & Schellen-Ursli” underlines that the painter from Grisons deserves just as much acclaim for his work as a graphic artist, set designer and painter as for his illustrated books. In tandem with the exhibition a book entitled “Alois



“Schellen-Ursli” (A Bell for Ursli) has also been translated into Japanese



From “Schellen-Ursli”

Carigiet – Art, Grafik, Schellen-Ursli” has also been published, featuring numerous articles about Carigiet’s life. BARBARA ENGEL

Exhibition at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich until 3 January 2016

Book: “Alois Carigiet – Kunst, Grafik, Schellen-Ursli” by Hans ten Doornkaat (Hrsg); Verlag Orell Füssli, Zurich; CHF 19.80
www.nationalmuseum.ch



Alois Carigiet



Poster for 1939 national exhibition in Zurich



Poster for PKZ (1935)



Schellen-Ursli on the way to the alpine hut

An election campaign fuelled by history

2015 – a highly significant anniversary year for Switzerland – once again highlights that history causes emotions to run high and is closely entwined with politics.

JÜRIG MÜLLER (TEXT)

ANDREA CAPREZ (ILLUSTRATIONS)

Every last seat was taken in the Salon Rouge of the Bellevue-Palace state-owned hotel in Berne half an hour before the start of the event. The tabloid newspaper “Blick” was “on tour”, as its own publicity put it. It heralded the top-of-the-bill fight, a battle of words between the political star and former Swiss People’s Party (SVP) Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher and the eminent historian and professor of history Thomas Maissen. The date was 21 April 2015 but the debate focused on events that took place way back in 1315, 1515 and 1815. In addition to supporters from both camps, a remarkable number of prominent figures turned up, including Otto Lampe, the German ambassador to Switzerland, and several members of parliament. The next day “Blick” used sporting parlance to sum up the “duel over Swiss myths” – “4:3 to Maissen”.

Even though no sport is involved, Swiss public interest in the historical debates, staged extremely effectively, is currently almost as great as in football. Not just “Blick” but also “Weltwoche”, the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” (NZZ) and radio and television channels have organised similar debating sessions over recent months. The main protagonists have always been the same in varying line-ups. In addition to Blocher and Maissen, Christoph Mörgeli, the sharp-tongued SVP National Councillor and medical historian, Roger Köppel, “Weltwoche”

editor and SVP National Council candidate, Markus Somme, editor-in-chief of the “Basler-Zeitung” who has close links with the SVP, André Holenstein, the Bernese historian, and Georg Kreis, the Basel historian, have also featured.

Plenty of battle noise on the podium

It has not been the case that the politicians have gone into battle with cudgels while the academics have used rapiers in distinguished fashion. In his latest book “Schweizer Heldengeschichten – und was dahintersteckt” (Swiss Heroic Stories and What Lies Behind Them), Thomas

“Swiss public interest in the historical debates, staged extremely effectively, is currently almost as great as in football.”

Maissen adopts a remarkably confrontational approach for an historian and university professor. The individual chapters are introduced with a quotation from Christoph Blocher or SVP Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer only for

the dictum to be picked apart with relish. The book is a reaction to “the highly skilful and successful politics of memory of the Swiss national conservatives over the past 25 years”, wrote Maissen in the foreword. According to “Blick”, Blocher reproaches the historian for wanting to break up Switzerland so that it can be taken into the EU: “If you don’t take Switzerland seriously, demystify it, distort its history and say that Switzerland is not actually up to much, you are seeking to wipe away the nation.”



The battle noise on the podiums and in publications is loud, in fact so loud that Alain Berset, the Minister of Home Affairs, called upon those involved in the bickering to show some moderation during a Council of States debate. The nature of the row over the right view of history has divided the nation and its people, according to the SP Federal Councillor: “Please consider that all of these stories are part of an overall common history – our history.”

The fact that history is currently causing emotions to run so high in Switzerland is primarily explained by the concentration of commemorative years: the Battle of Morgarten (1315), the conquest of Aargau by the confederates (1415), the Battle of Marignano (1515), the Congress of Vienna and the new cantons of Geneva, Neuchâtel and Valais (1815). All of this means that



countless celebrations and events of all kinds are being held over the course of the year. The media are also providing extensive coverage. The NZZ has even launched a new magazine on the market entitled “NZZ-Geschichte”, which is published quarterly. The cover story of the first edition is “Napoleon – the founder of modern Switzerland” and its author is Thomas Maissen.

From 1315 to 1815

But what exactly is being disputed? The debate is on various levels. It primarily concerns the relationship between national myths plus the national commemorative culture and academic historical research. Secondly, it involves the differing evaluation of the significance of historical events and thirdly, and most impor-

tantly, it is about politics. The obvious reason for the debate is the round commemorative years. Here are the main lines of conflict over the individual events in very concise form:

- 1315: The Battle of Morgarten occupies a prominent position in Swiss commemorative culture. The brave Swiss saw off the heavily armed Habsburgs on Lake Ägeri with rolling stones and tree trunks, or so legend has it. The only thing that has actually been established is that the event did take place in some form. The exact location is disputed, as is the nature of the conflict and what it was about. Sources are very thin on the ground. Most experts do not consider the event to be very significant.

- 1415: The importance of the conquest of Aargau by the confederates is

generally underestimated. This was a punitive expedition against the Habsburgs carried out by the Swiss on behalf of King Sigismund of the House of Luxembourg. The first subject territories were thus established. “Without this joint mission, without the conquest of Aargau, the often strained Swiss confederation would have had as little chance of staying together as the (German) Hanseatic League,” writes Maissen in the NZZ.

- 1515: The Battle of Marignano also features prominently in the commemorative culture. The defeat of the confederates is depicted as a major watershed moment in Swiss history because it heralded the end of the active expansion policy. The foundation of the policy of neutrality later pursued also lay here. This interpretation overlooks the fact that

the expansion policy unquestionably continued. Two decades later, Berne conquered Vaud and temporarily even parts of Savoy south of Lake Geneva. The confederation also primarily committed itself to France through mercenary agreements. The criticism of most experts points out that the policy of neutrality only emerged much later.

■ 1815: The Congress of Vienna, which shaped post-Napoleonic Europe, resulted, amongst other things, in the recognition of Switzerland's permanent neutrality. However, this was essentially in European interests because Switzerland represented a buffer zone on France's eastern border. This required a diktat from the victorious powers. Switzerland, which appeared extremely divided in Vienna, had to accept the internal and external borders established for it as a penalty and had to integrate the new French-speaking cantons of Geneva, Valais and Neuchâtel.

View of history as a political message

Those who solely see these events from a national historical perspective interpret them as targeted, deliberate acts of self-determination, the fight for independence and military defence against foreign rule. This perception of history is used as background music for a highly political message – those who wish to preserve independence won at great sacrifice must vote SVP. The SVP has prepared this debate “well in advance”, according to Hermann Strittmatter, the doyen of the Swiss advertising industry in an interview with the “NZZ am Sonntag”. “In contrast to other political movements, the national conservatives plan such campaigns long-term,” he says. The campaign is “professional and intelligently orchestrated in terms of communication”. The advertising expert

therefore warns against “belittling this Marignano debate”.

The supposed historical debate is in actual fact a proxy war for cultural hegemony and the power of interpretation. It offers a means of identification to a profoundly uncertain nation – one which is torn between economic globalisation and greater integration in terms of European policy, on the one hand, and a cultural inclination to look backwards, re-nationalisation and a tendency towards isolation on the other. Thomas Maissen remarks that it is legitimate to use “outdated research” in the battle for power and share of the vote: “However, it is equally legitimate and sometimes necessary for academics to compare the political and popular interpretation of history with the current status of research by experts.”

Interdependence and delimitation

The perception of history is not just an issue for Thomas Maissen but also for his no less eminent colleague, the historian André Holenstein, a professor in Berne. At the end of 2014 he published a much discussed book entitled “Mitten in Europa: Verflechtung und Abgrenzung in der Schweizer Geschichte” (In the Middle of Europe - Interdependence and Delimitation in Swiss History). “The Swiss People's Party (SVP) owes its rise since the 1990s to become one of the best supported parties to a political strategy which addresses the fears of the Swiss people of cultural alienation in their own country,” writes Holenstein in the introduction. The current vexations of national sensitivities are the reason but not the underlying motivation for this book. This has much more to do with the observation of “how ambivalent, contradictory and sometimes downright schizophrenic the behaviour of the small state of Switzerland seems having always been existentially en-



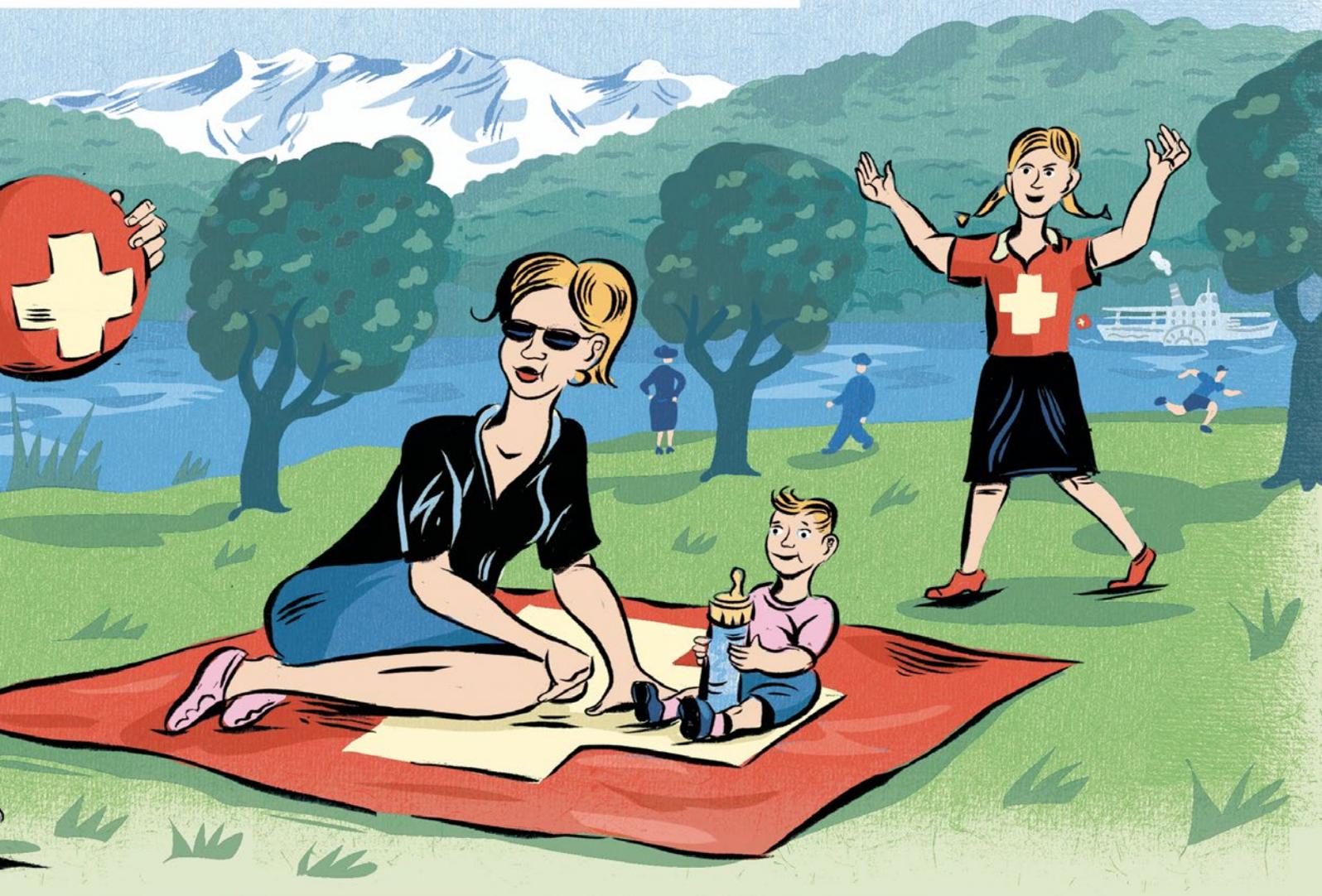
No interest in Marignano

The historical debate over Marignano and its truth and myths holds little appeal in French-speaking Switzerland.

BARBARA ENGEL

The French-speaking Swiss, who are usually keen debaters, are only involved peripherally in the discussions over the significance of the historical events being celebrated in Switzerland this year. The reason for this is simple - Marignano in 1515 is not a significant date in French-speaking Switzerland as the battle never played an important role in the history of that part of Switzerland. The traditional narrative of German-speaking Switzerland is of little interest to the French-speaking Swiss because they were

Ils sont fous, les Suisses toto...



not involved at that time, either in the heroic founding years of the confederation, during the expansion to eight-canton Switzerland during the 14th century or in the subsequent period of expansion with the conquest of Aargau and Thurgau. Switzerland's rise to become a power in Europe also took place before the French-speaking Swiss became confederates.

The eight-canton confederation of 1388 was an entirely German-speaking entity. The expansion of the Swiss confederation into what is now Romandy first began with the Burgundian Wars (1476 to 1481), which ended with the accession of Solothurn and Fribourg to the confederation. Bilingual Fribourg was the first French-speaking part of the confederation. However, strictly speaking, a French-speaking Switzerland was first established in 1798 with the Helvetic Republic. It was not until 1848, with the foundation of the federal state, that the people of Geneva, Vaud,

Neuchâtel, French-speaking Fribourg, French-speaking Valais and the Jura also became citizens of a single state. 1848 could therefore also be declared the year when Romandy was founded.

In the 19th century, Romandy was nevertheless still clearly divided into two parts. There were the regions with a liberal and reformed tradition – Geneva, Vaud, Neuchâtel and the southern part of the Bernese Jura – and those which were predominantly Catholic and conservative – Fribourg, Valais and the northern Jura. The ideological and religious differences were much more important than the binding element of language.

The situation changed at the beginning of the 20th century. The growing enmity between Germany and France was also reflected in tensions between Switzerland's

linguistic groups. The French-speaking Swiss were suddenly no longer just citizens of Geneva, Vaud or Neuchâtel but defined themselves as belonging to a linguistic region. The term "Romandie" also emerged for the first time during that period as an alternative to the customary names of "Suisse romande" or "Welschland". The new linguistic term expressed a new sense of togetherness but it has a "rather poor reputation" in French-speaking Switzerland to the present day,

writes Christoph Büchi, Lausanne-based culture correspondent for the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung". It only appears officially in the name of the "Tour de Romandie" cycle race.

"Switzerland's rise to become a power in Europe also took place before the French-speaking Swiss became confederates."

BARBARA ENGEL IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF WITH THE "SWISS REVIEW"

twined with Europe and the world while at the same time delimiting itself from them intellectually and psychologically”.

Holenstein does not primarily bring new facts into play but instead systematically writes the history of Switzerland from the perspective of interdependence and delimitation. Since the late Middle Ages, when the Swiss confederation began to establish its identity, the following pairs of opposites determined its strategies for existence and survival in varying degrees of accentuation – participation and isolation, involvement and shutting out, and integration and withdrawal. Holenstein does not judge and even sees something fruitful in this correlation which ultimately explains “why Switzerland survived the watershed moments of the past and indeed exists at all in the early 21st century”.

Little chance of success for left-wing countermeasures

The national-conservative forces are presenting their position so dominantly in election year that the other parties are being completely overshadowed. The other conservative parties have barely entered the historical-political debate. The left, above all the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP), is attempting to call to mind other historical points of reference – but without generating much response. To commemorate the end of the Second World War 70 years ago in May, the SP suggested planting peace linden trees based on the widespread, spontaneous initiatives that took place in 1945. A few towns and villages took up the idea but it was largely met with apathy. In the April issue of the SP magazine “Links”, the historian Peter Hug accused the

Swiss authorities of “criminal neglect” of the commemoration on 8 May 1945. There is a close relationship between the lack of commemorative culture “and the prevailing mood in Switzerland that Europe is essentially hostile towards us”, according to Hug.

It is a good sign of a vibrant democracy if various references to the nation’s past are established and different commemorative cultures fostered. But this must be measured against academically researched

facts. There is a “veto right of the sources”. This means that while history is not an exact science, a professional historian cannot claim something that is not supported by the sources or which has been falsified. The task of academia is to conduct the debate on the

interpretation of facts based on the current level of knowledge. It becomes problematic when the interpretation of the past is coupled with a clear political message for the future. Federal Councillor Alain Berset couched this warning at the end of his speech on the opening of the Marignano exhibition at the National Museum in the following terms: “We have more than one possible view of the past – and also more than one possible future. As Winston Churchill said: ‘If we open a quarrel between past and present, we shall find that we have lost the future.’”

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR
WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

Cited literature:

Thomas Maissen: “Schweizer Heldengeschichten – und was dahintersteckt”. Verlag Hier und Jetzt, Baden 2015. 234 pages.

André Holenstein: “Mitten in Europa. Verflechtung und Abgrenzung in der Schweizer Geschichte”. Verlag Hier und Jetzt, Baden 2014, 285 pages.

A marriage of convenience

STÉPHANE HERZOG

The extended reissue of the book “Mariage de raison.” (Marriage of Convenience) by Christophe Büchi, correspondent for the NZZ in French-speaking Switzerland from 2001 to 2014, comes at just the right time. In this time of debate about the teaching of French in German-speaking primary schools, it is worth reflecting on the links that Switzerland has built and therefore on the rifts that could open up between the regions. And in particular on the rift created following the referendum on joining the European Economic Area in 1992, which “led to a profound division in the country”, according to the author.

“Mariage de raison.” is an erudite work, written in an effective and sometimes witty language. It is teeming with ideas and imparts intelligence to the reader through the snippets of Swiss history that Büchi brings together to talk about the state of the country today. The author is not a nationalist, but the account of battles won by the Waldstätten (which later became the Confederacy) against the great European powers – such as Morgarten (1315) and Sempach (1388) – do generate a certain emotional response. The stubbornness, the yearning for independence and the courage of our forebears demand respect.

Aside from the historical background and the political analysis, which includes the decision of the National Bank to abandon the exchange rate floor on 15 January, this work by the German-speaking journalist is a tribute to the virtues of multilingualism. It explains why Swiss-German speakers chose German for writing (it was a legacy of the Reformation) while preserving their dialect, whereas French speakers abandoned Franco-Provençal in favour of langue d’oil, the language of the kings of France. This language, with the inherited prestige of France, made up for, and should still make up for, the minority position of French speakers in the country, according to Büchi. That is, provided German speakers continue to learn French and are prepared to use “Hochdeutsch”, the bearer of a thousand-year-old Germanic culture. French speakers who have learnt it – a least to an extent – expect their Swiss-German-speaking cousins to use it in conversation with them. “Multilingualism is a Swiss idea par excellence,” concludes the journalist.

MARIAGE DE RAISON. ROMANDS ET ALÉMANIQUES. Une histoire suisse. Christophe Büchi. Editions Zoé, 2015, 455 pages.

Shadow war and interpreting the present times

Georg Kohler, a professor emeritus of political philosophy at the University of Zurich, is conducting political observation and analysis of the election campaign in Switzerland throughout 2015 on behalf of the Swiss Abroad.

GEORG KOHLER

The row, currently at boiling point, over the significance of Swiss history is essentially about the future. It concerns the question of whether and how Switzerland should adapt to the transformed European situation. The past shows us what we are, and we have become what makes us distinctive because of it. This is the theory advocated by those who believe the spiritual essence of Switzerland is in jeopardy. This essence has nevertheless only ever been clearly defined during times of major crisis. It therefore loses its clear form when, as at present, we find ourselves in times of peaceful reorientation. That Switzerland has needed a rethink since the radical upheaval of 1989 is an objective reality, it is just that people refuse to accept it. It has now diffusely penetrated into the consciousness of the majority.

It comes as little surprise that a reorientation is difficult to find. A nation like Switzerland, situated in the middle of Europe, but which ever since 1914 has essentially defined its own political identity by how it is different finds itself in trouble when the nature of its variance appears to be at stake.

The opportunity for Switzerland to claim the special-case status that it has always asserted is very limited in present-day Europe for various reasons. Perpetual, armed neutrality, the small size of the nation and institutions geared towards direct participation by citizens are (or were) the fundamental elements of Swiss self-perception. They shaped the nation's highly successful period from the start of last century until close to its end. Their radical revision unfortunately has to be considered today.

We are surrounded by friends, which makes it hard to justify the rationality of a neutrality status that perceives "others" as bellicose power states. In Switzerland too everyone was aware that "armed neutrality" could only prosper under the aegis of NATO. The notion of the "small state" dominating the debate also appears ambiguous. It does not concur with the fact that it is home to one of the world's largest financial centres and is a medium-sized political and economic power as an exporter of capital. It was not



without reason that Switzerland sought a passenger's seat, so to speak, in the G20 club. At least the nation's diplomatic functional elite has always understood that Switzerland is inextricably entwined in the constraints of the system and legal structure that determine the present day. The ingloriously lost battle over banking confidentiality is the most salient paradigm of this. It is also evidence of the power of global political flows which directly counteract the central stratagem of

our democracy, namely the notion of being able to separate the political from the economic.

The globalised economy nevertheless requires the organisation of politics and law which results in the transnational bundling of interests and supranational regulations. This model is diametrically opposed to the existing modus operandi of Swiss global orientation consisting of market globalism in addition to political isolation from foreign influence. It cannot be denied that the unrestricted autonomy of the directly democratic sovereign is also a victim of this trend.

To sum up from a social theory perspective rather than that of historical legend, the idea of power political neutrality has become less important because the epoch-specific factors are no longer the possibility of war but instead the requirements of organised trade.

The national state democracy is therefore no longer in the position to guarantee the solid ground for a system and development that is militarily secure and internationally accepted as legitimate by itself and without taking account of transnational interests. Not the lack of appreciation for the old lessons of history but instead the new reality of the issues of international civilisation are therefore responsible for the nation's current identity problems. Considered objectively this reality presents the issues that the Swiss identity debate has to tackle.

Instead, we are witnessing a shadow war: the defenders of the Swiss founding myths against the historiographical academics who are critical of both the factual accuracy of the traditional narrative and its relevance to the actual situation. It is a battle over the shadows of history in which the present cannot be forgotten.



ELECTIONS
2015

Swiss banks and the Swiss Abroad

Since 2008, Swiss nationals living abroad have been experiencing difficulties opening and maintaining bank accounts in Switzerland. Some have even been shown the door by banks with whom they have always had a business relationship. A number of institutions allow banking relationships to exist, but impose different fees for

those living in Switzerland from those living abroad. Some require a minimum account balance. To get an overview of all the policies applied by financial institutions with regard to customers living outside Switzerland, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) carried out a survey.

Bank services and conditions

BANKS	ACCOUNTS FOR RESIDENTS ABROAD	MORTGAGES FOR PROPERTIES IN SWITZERLAND	MINIMUM BALANCE	FEES PER MONTH
Aargauische Kantonalbank	Yes, in neighbouring countries and some other countries (not specified)	Yes	No	Between CHF 0 and 60, depending on residency/balance/product
Appenzeller Kantonalbank	Only for residents of Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein	Yes	No	CHF 20, except Liechtenstein
Berner Kantonalbank	Yes. Customers living in some countries not accepted (countries not specified)	Yes	No	Depends on product
Banque cantonale du Jura	Yes, except countries subject to embargo	Yes	No	CHF 5
Luzerner Kantonalbank	Yes (list of countries of residence accepted by Luzerner Kantonalbank not published)	Yes	CHF 250,000	Fees published on the bank's website
Banque cantonale neuchâtelaise	Yes, except US residents or nationals	No information	No if in the EU CHF 10,000 if outside the EU	Special fees
Nidwalder Kantonalbank	Yes for residents of EU/EFTA countries, Australia and New Zealand	Yes	To open an account: CHF 250,000 To maintain an account: CHF 50,000	CHF 25
Obwalder Kantonalbank	Yes, except the United States and Great Britain	Yes	To open an account: CHF 250,000 To maintain an account: depends on the customer's situation	No information
Schaffhauser Kantonalbank	Yes	Yes	No	Special fees
Banca dello Stato del cantone Ticino	Yes except high-risk countries	No	No	No special fees
Thurgauer Kantonalbank	Yes for residents of Germany and Austria (restrictions may apply for other countries)	Yes	No	CHF 30 No fees for balances over CHF 50,000
Urner Kantonalbank	No. With some possible exceptions, a link with Uri and profitability threshold are required	-	-	-

These indications reflect the situation at the time of the survey and may be subject to change by the institutions surveyed. The institutions surveyed stated that their policies are not related to the nationality of their customers but to where they are resident. They all require that customers present them-

selves in person to open an account in Switzerland, with the exception of Swissquote, which instead requires various documents to be presented. A declaration of tax compliance, possibly including proof that the funds in question have been declared, is generally required by all institutions. There are some-

times additional requirements for opening an account such as links or regular stays within the bank's area of operations. A table showing more detailed results is available on the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad's website.

www.aso.ch > Consultation > Living abroad > banks

BANKS	ACCOUNTS FOR RESIDENTS ABROAD	MORTGAGES FOR PROPERTIES IN SWITZERLAND	MINIMUM BALANCE	FEES PER MONTH
Banque Cantonale du Valais	Yes	Not specified	No	Not specified
Banque Cantonale Vaudoise	Yes, except the United States, Iran, Syria, North Korea and countries with exchange controls	Yes	No	No special fees
Zuger Kantonalbank	No (except for temporary stays abroad)	-	No	-
Valiant Bank	Yes, except countries under embargo	Yes	No	Special fees
Migros Bank	Yes (distinction between 3 country groups: 1. resident in the US; 2. resident in the EU; 3. resident in the rest of the world)	Yes	CHF 250,000 for customers in "the rest of the world"	CHF 5 for residents of OECD countries CHF 10 for residents of non-OECD countries
Raiffeisen	Yes, except for example Argentina, Kazakhstan, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, India Russia, South Africa, USA.	Yes	CHF 50,000	Special fees
Swissquote	Yes, except the United States and potentially Canada and other countries	No	No, exceptions possible	No special fees
Banque WIR	Yes for neighbouring countries, EU/EFTA countries and some countries that have a low corruption rating according to the Corruption Perceptions Index.	Yes	No	No special fees
PostFinance	Yes, except countries subject to embargo	No	No	CHF 15
Neue Helvetische Bank	Yes. Every request is checked individually	-	No	special fees

A total of 37 banks were contacted, 15 did not respond: Julius Bär, UBS, Credit Suisse, Banque Sarasin, Banque Coop, bank zweiplus, Basellandschaftliche Kantonalbank, Basler Kantonalbank, Glarner Kantonalbank, St. Galler Kantonalbank, Schwyzer Kantonalbank, Graubündner Kantonalbank, Banque Cantonale de Genève, Banque Cantonale de Fribourg, Bank Vontobel.

Wealthy heirs no longer need to worry, but the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG) has cause for concern

The Swiss people voted yes twice and no twice on 14 June 2015. Proposals concerning a general fee for radio and television and a constitutional amendment concerning pre-implantation diagnostics (PID) were approved. The electorate rejected initiatives on inheritance tax and a federal solution for grants.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

The result regarding the radio and television fee proposal was extremely tight with 50.1% voting in favour – 3,696 votes tipped the balance. This was despite the fact that the partial amendment of the Radio and Television Act only involved changing the financing system. Instead of the previous licence fees for device owners, a general fee is now being introduced for all households. The simple reason for this is that anyone can receive programmes today on computers, tablets and smartphones, even without owning a radio or television set. What sounds rather technical and was not a very contentious proposal initially nonetheless resulted in an epic media debate during the referendum campaign over the purpose and scope of public service provision by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG) which is governed by public law. Opponents of the proposal branded the general fee a “media tax”. That clearly had the desired effect as new taxes are always unpopular. The debate over the SRG and public service media now undoubtedly looks set to continue. Whether this will be based on objective arguments or will carry on as venomously as during the past few weeks remains to be seen.

No hope for inheritance tax proposal

An initiative concerning social justice and redistribution of wealth once again stood no chance of succeeding. Coming shortly after the minimum wage and 1:12 initiative and the proposal on the abolition of flat-rate taxation, the left-green inheritance tax initiative was also heavily defeated on 14 June with 71% voting against it. The initiative’s objective was to make inheritances subject to a 20% tax in future whereby a tax-exempt allowance of two million Swiss francs would have applied. Two thirds of revenues generated by the new tax would have gone to the old-age and survivors’ insurance (AHV) scheme, while the cantons would have received one third.

PID – part two to come

Delicate ethical issues were discussed with the constitutional bill on pre-implantation diagnostics (PID), which was approved by 61.9% of voters. This concerns couples using artificial insemination being able to undergo PID. They can have the embryos tested for hereditary diseases and genetic defects before implantation into the woman in order to ensure that only embryos not affected by such diseases are used in the reproductive procedure. However, the debate is not yet over as Parliament adopted the implementing law at the same time as the constitutional amendment. The Evangelical People’s Party (EVP) is to call a referendum against the law. It announced its intention during the referendum campaign.

Grants – cantons responsible

The Grants Act, which was little discussed during the referendum campaign, stood no chance with 72.5% opposed to the proposal. The initiative sought to harmonise the awarding of grants and thereby transfer legal competence from the cantons to federal government. Allowances during education and training also aimed to guarantee a minimum standard of living.

Candidate in the Canton of Zurich,
resident in Berlin

**TIM
GULDIMANN**
The Internationalrat.

**FOR ALL
NOT JUST
A FEW**

National elections
of October 18th, 2015

www.spschweiz.ch/international

SP

IMPRINT:
“Swiss Review”, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 41st year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 400,000, including 165,000 electronic copies. Regional news appears four times a year. The ordering parties

are fully responsible for the content of advertisements and promotional inserts. This content does not necessarily represent the opinion of either the editorial office or the publisher.
EDITORS: Barbara Engel (BE), Editor-in-Chief; Stéphane Herzog (SH); Marc Lettau (MUL); Jürg Müller (JM); Peter Zimmerli (PZ), responsible for

“news.admin.ch”, Relations with the Swiss Abroad, FDFA, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
TRANSLATION: CLS Communication AG
LAYOUT: Herzog Design, Zürich
PRINT: Vogt-Schild Druck AG, 4552 Derendingen.
POSTAL ADDRESS: Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the

Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, Tel.: +41313566110, Fax: +41313566101, Postal account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. Email: revue@aso.ch

COPY DEADLINE for this edition: 15.6.2015

All Swiss Abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation receive the magazine free of charge. Anyone else can subscribe to the magazine for an annual fee (Switzerland: CHF 30 / abroad: CHF 50). Subscribers are sent the magazine direct from Berne. www.revue.ch

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please advise your local embassy or consulate. Do not write to the editorial office in Berne.



Had Heidi really lived ...

With “Maja” and “Rosmarin”, Ina Jens created an authentic literary tribute to the Domleschg valley from far-away Chile.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

The example of Ina Jens, the authoress from Grisons, wonderfully illustrates how the perspective from another country, and indeed another continent, can lead someone to turn the homeland they have left behind into literature in an extremely intense, nostalgia-inspired way. Born on 22 October 1880 in Thusis, Claudia Cadisch completed teacher training in Chur and, after an internship in Wattwil, found her first position at the German school abroad in the Bulgarian city of Ruse. Here she married her German teaching colleague Carl G. Werkmeister and in 1907 was sent with him to the German school in Concepción, Chile. In 1916, the couple moved to Viña del Mar near Valparaíso where her husband was head of the German school until 1923 after which Claudia Werkmeister-Cadisch herself held the position for a period of 22 years.

Here, in the fashionable city on the Pacific, she felt nostalgia for Grisons and wrote a book inspired by memories of her childhood in Domleschg under the pseudonym of Ina Jens. She sent the manuscript to the Reinhardt-Verlag in Basel, which published her first novel in 1926.

Not a book for young people

The novel was immediately categorised as literature for adolescents despite the fact it only really reveals its full charm to adult readers receptive to nostalgic sentiment. Under the simple title of “Maja”, the childhood of an eponymous girl from Grisons who grew up in the remote Domleschg valley in the years when Johanna Spyri’s Heidi books were written, was portrayed through memorable images and experiences. However, all the sentimentality and romantic embellishment in the world of Heidi finds its counterpart here in a soberly portrayed and rather pro-

saic atmosphere with believable, psychologically insightful characterisation and a relaxed and natural approach to the images and motifs of the popular alpine narrative. While the Heidi novels were written by a romanticising city dweller, “Maja” seemed genuine and authentic as a testament to personal experience and memories.

The book became a highly acclaimed success and just two years later Ina Jens continued the story of Maja’s childhood with “Rosmarin” which was on a par from a literary perspective. Then, between 1935 and 1941, she switched her attention to material from her adopted home in South America providing young European readers with an insight into it with works such as “Mirasol”, “Manuelitos Glücksfall”, “Unter chilenischem Himmel” and “Hannelores Urwaldwinkel”. Although she produced the occasional gem, these Chilean novels did not generally match the gravity and credibility of the Domleschg novels. While the Chilean setting is very exotic, the writing lacks the intimacy and intensity which she used to create the sense of nostalgia in the story of the young girl Maja.

Her spirit broken by the death of her only son, Ina Jens died on 17 January 1945 aged 65 completely alone in Valparaíso without ever having returned to her native country.

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH



“Grandmother smiled, touched the rosemary again, took in its tangy scent from her hands and said: ‘That’s something special. Everyone’s soul needs a special fragrance to bring the past to life and mine is rosemary. When you are older you will also experience and understand that.’”

(From: “Rosmarin”, Basel 1928, out of print)



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The songs of Lenin, Trotsky, Grimm and co. and the tranquil setting of Zimmerwald

Leading socialist revolutionaries from across Europe gathered for a secret conference in Zimmerwald in 1915. The villagers were outraged when they belatedly discovered what was going on.

MARC LETTAU

In autumn 1915 the terrible sound of gunfire was heard in many parts of Europe. However, in the peaks of Längenberg, near to Berne, the First World War was a long way off. The twitter of birds was the backdrop to everyday life here. The ornithologists from all over the world who set off from Berne on 5 September 1915 on four horse-drawn carts, crossing the meadow landscape of Längenberg to arrive in Zimmerwald in the evening blended in well with the local setting. Their declared objective was to hold an ornithological conference in Zimmerwald's Hotel Beau Séjour and in the adjacent guest house. There was a lack of hotel beds because while Zimmerwald wanted to become a tourist destination it was not one really. Some of the guests were put up by the vet and the village postman.

The rest of the story is quickly told. The thirty-odd guests were not bird-watchers at all. It was in fact the socialist elite from 12 countries who gathered here – at the invitation of Swiss social democrat Robert Grimm – to ponder how Europe's working class could be mobilised to oppose the war machine. Much time was spent honing a wake-up call – the “Zimmerwald Manifesto”: “Proletarians! Since the outbreak of war you have put your efforts, courage and endurance at the disposal of the ruling classes. Now it is time to take a stand [...] for the deliverance of the down-trodden classes.” The Zimmerwald Conference incidentally also became the founding moment of the Soviet Union. In any event it was here that the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, alias Lenin, outlined



how he intended to bring about upheaval in his homeland.

Revelling socialists

So, from the perspective of the time, highly subversive figures had gathered in Zimmerwald. The conference nevertheless escaped the attention of the law enforcement agencies. County constable Meier did show up and fine the landlord. But he was not punished for the revolutionary plans hatched in the hotel. What was not acceptable as far as the police were concerned was that the drinking, dancing and singing at the Beau Séjour had been allowed to go on for too long.

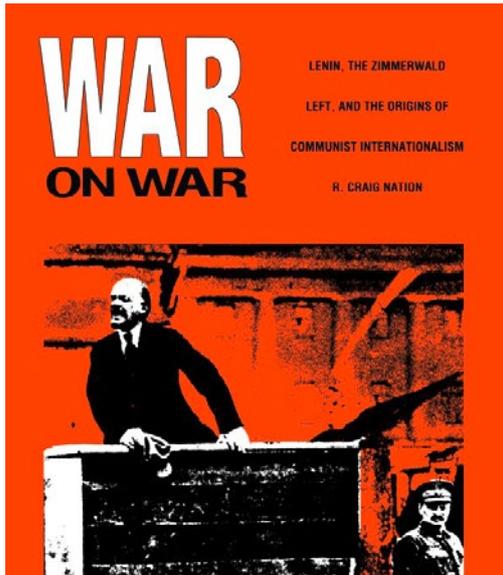
The actual drama began belatedly for the villagers. When they became aware how the “red menace” had infiltrated them undetected, there was outrage. There was also a sense of shame as the consequences of the

conference became evident. In 1917, the world was dumbstruck by the October Revolution initiated by Lenin. In 1918, the national strike brought Switzerland to the verge of collapse. Workers' leader and conference organiser Robert Grimm was at the forefront of the strike action.

Zimmerwald exuded an appeal without wishing to. It became world famous, at least in socialist circles. Even in the Putzger historical atlas, an innocuous German standard reference work, only one single Swiss location of historical significance appeared on the maps relating to the period of the First World War – Zimmerwald.

“The name Zimmerwald took on legendary status,” confirmed Julia Richers, professor of history at the University of Berne. Fears grew in Zimmerwald about becoming a pilgrimage destination for communists. Letters in fact arrived addressed to

The socialists posing as ornithologists met here



Vladimir Ilyich Lenin

Grimm and Lenin in Zimmerwald

World history was written in the small farming village of Zimmerwald from 5 to 9 September 1915 with the secret socialist conference. Representatives from 12 countries – including Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Grigory Zinoviev, Karl Radek and the Swiss social democrat Robert Grimm – drew up a manifesto here against the backdrop of the bloody chaos of war in which they called upon the international labour force to oppose the rationale of war. In the view of those gathered in Zimmerwald, the conduct of those social democrats and socialists in Europe who supported the war efforts of their governments because of nationalist considerations and thereby abandoned their pacifist and class war demands was unacceptable. Grimm, in particular, sought to realign the socialist forces of Europe in opposition to war. Translated into the rhetoric of the Zimmerwald Conference, this meant: “The international labour force was reminded of its duty of irreconcilable, proletarian class war.” The rationale was that only the reawakening of class war would enable comprehensive peace initiatives to be introduced.

Zimmerwald nevertheless also represents to a certain extent the division of the workers’ movement into social democrats and communists. Lenin made clear in Zimmerwald that he hoped for more than just Grimm’s anti-war politics. As the representative of a radical, revolutionary minority, the “Zimmerwald leftists”, Lenin said that complete upheaval had to be brought about through the armed uprising of the workers. Because he outlined these views, which ultimately led to the Bolshevik Revolution and the foundation of the Soviet Union, in Zimmerwald, the farming village acquired the involuntary status of the legendary cradle of the USSR. (mu)



Leon Trotsky



Robert Grimm

the “Director of the Lenin Museum”. School classes from the Soviet Union sent postcards. The communal authority usually answered queries very matter-of-factly but sometimes even impolitely. Mail from Leningrad to “Lenin village” marred Zimmerwald’s rustic self-perception.

Ban on memorials

Zimmerwald finally even undertook a legal battle to enable the event to be forgotten. In 1962, memorial sites and plaques of any kind were banned. To spoil the pilgrimage mood of left-wing revolutionaries marking the 50th anniversary of the conference, dyed-in-the-wool opponents of communism organised a counter-conference in 1965. In 1971, Zimmerwald went one step further and had the guest house where Lenin had stayed demolished.

But in 1975 an incredible event occurred – an Apollo spacecraft and a Soyuz space capsule coupled up in outer space. The two major opposing

superpowers, the USA and USSR, circumnavigated Earth together. The people of the world marvelled at this technological, pacifist propaganda mission. The event shifted perceptions of the world. A few months later Zimmerwald also capitulated. The memorial ban was lifted in the same year.

A Lenin at the village festival

When the village celebrated its 700-year anniversary in 1996, fears subsided further. Dozens of decorated vehicles paraded through the village illustrating rural life and its Celtic pre-history – the procession included a gentleman sporting a goatee beard dressed as Lenin. The village realised that it could not rid itself of the episode. What is more, at that very festival, the jazz band “Hot Lenin”, an ensemble of musicians from the village who wanted to spice up Zimmerwald’s folksy music scene with bossa nova, swing, Latin and funk, was formed.



The report in the local newspaper of the Social Democratic Party



The current head of the communal authority Fritz Brönnimann adopts a very pragmatic approach to the Zimmerwald Conference. He sees it as an “historic fact” which does not need to be celebrated but does not need to be suppressed either as the village did not play an active role: “We were just the site of the event.” Is everyone as relaxed about it today? “Hot Lenin” drummer Konrad Burri says that the conference is still not “an issue for village gossip”. But the past is not a problem either. So would they be able to play the “Internationale” at their next gig? Burri flinches: “Are you serious?” That would be somewhat contentious and unlikely. The band is much more comfortable with innocuous classic tracks like “Fly me to the moon”.

5 September 2015 will be the 100th anniversary of the Zimmerwald Conference. The commune, which fought against any memorial for decades, is now organising circumspect commemorations itself. The head of the communal authority and a team have been involved for months in prepara-

tions for the memorial event. The region’s museum is focussing entirely on the socialist peace conference. That is also a positive step according to its curator Urs Rohrbach: “The exhibition does not celebrate socialism. But we look at the momentous history of the event.” Rohrbach does not see anything wrong with the growing interest: “Anyone who takes a closer look will realise that Zimmerwald was not simply Lenin’s thing but above all the work of Grimm.”

Teacher without a definitive answer

The teacher Caspar Bieler, who lives in Zimmerwald and plays the violin with “Hot Lenin” in his spare time, holds a similar view. Despite teaching history, he is unable to pinpoint exactly what Zimmerwald can learn from the whole episode: “I don’t have any highly intelligent answer to that question.” Research into the historical event has nevertheless revealed that the “Zimmerwald Conference was ultimately intended as a peace

conference”. It is good that a hundred years on the emphasis is being placed on the search for peace at that time. And it does not do any harm to point out that the conference was “also attended by men who fought a long battle for the eight-hour day and female suffrage”.

The new relaxed mood has its limits. For the forthcoming commemorative event “Hot Lenin” initially received an invitation only for it then to be withdrawn. A communications consultant advised the organisers to refrain from involving the band who have such a casual attitude towards the name Lenin. The story draws a neat line here. County constable Meier also deemed it important to temper the noisy goings-on in Zimmerwald in 1915.

Zimmerwald in the centre of Switzerland: from the German historical atlas of the time

Exhibition

The exhibition at the Schwarzwasser regional museum in Schwarzenburg runs until 22 November on Sundays and public holidays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Special guided tours can be arranged upon request. www.regionalmuseum.com

MARC LETTAU IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

“The density of the culture in Switzerland is unique”

She has led a nomadic life, but she still has Swiss values at heart. The publisher and patron Vera Michalski met “Swiss Review” in Lausanne to talk about her country, which is literature.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Publisher, patron (as heiress to and shareholder in Roche), woman of culture, speaker of four languages, Polish, Swiss, member of various cultural circles: Vera Michalski seems to lead several different lives. Her life stretches to the four corners of the globe, but when she meets us, her personality radiates calm: a polished calm that, like a sheet of ice on a lake, allows the light to pass through, while separating the water from the sky. In other words, she is modest, in a literary kind of way. The home-country of the Director of the publishing group Libella is, without a doubt, world literature. But this intellectual, cosmopolitan position in no way prevents her from feeling Swiss and from taking on the qualities of a country that in the beginning was foreign to her. “I left Switzerland for the Camargue when I was three weeks old and I lived there until I was 17,” says the great-granddaughter of Fritz Hoffmann-La Roche, founder of the eponymous pharmaceutical business.

During her childhood years, life at Tour du Valat, the ornithological centre in the Camargue run by her father, Luc Hoffmann, co-founder of WWF, was somewhat isolated from the rest of the world. But there were visitors aplenty, bringing the family news from around the world. Did Vera feel Swiss? “I was made to feel that I wasn’t French,” she says without bitterness. “We had values that linked us to Switzerland.” Such as? The founder of the Jan Michalski Foundation, named after her late Polish husband, who died in 2002, is not sure if she knows. She talks more

about a general atmosphere. Christmas celebrations were divided between two days: the first in the Camargue and the second at the family home in Basel. In winter, the children would go off to Lenzerheide in Graubünden. On 1 August, the residents of the centre would make a bonfire, “in case there were any Swiss there”. Today, when Vera Michalski meets booksellers from Paris to present new books that she is publishing, she always insists on saying she is Swiss “because that is part of the history of the Libella Group” (see below).

The aunt and the language of Goethe

Between horse riding and reading, the teenage Vera was fascinated by political discussion and discovered

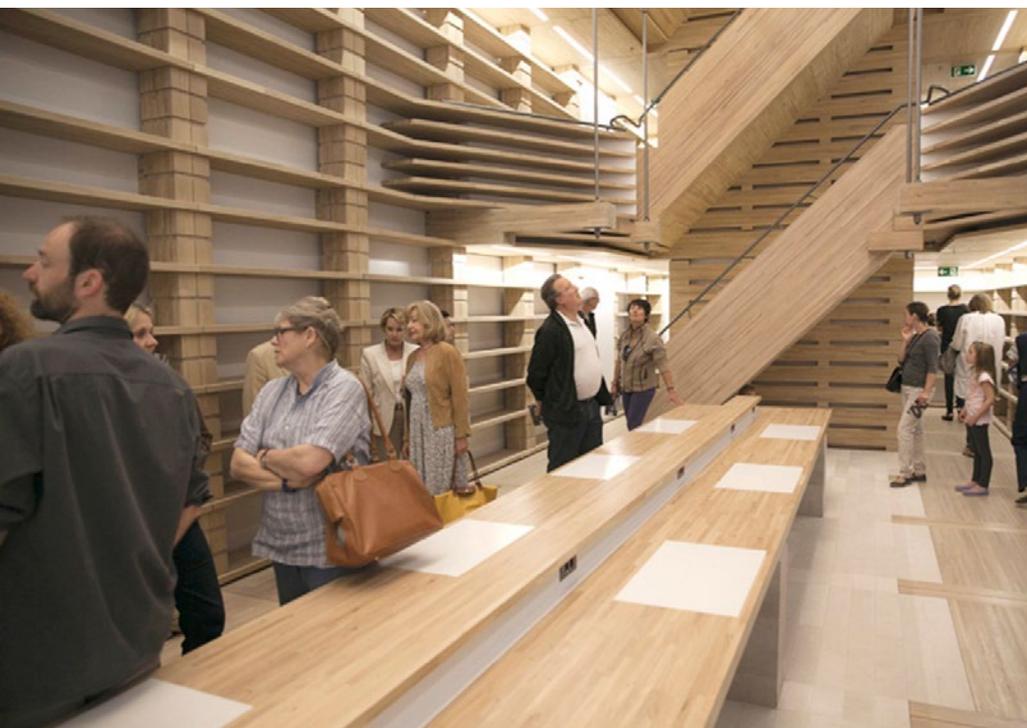
the Gallic art of debate. “I find it strange that, in contrast, people in Switzerland don’t really argue,” she laughs. Back then, the postal vote did not exist and books arrived by post “and not by email in sets of ten, like they do in publishing these days”, she sighs. An Austrian aunt on her mother’s side sent her books in the language of Goethe, the language that Vera’s mother used to speak to her children.

Moving from one language to another, from one country to another: that was just life for Vera Michalski. She sits astride Switzerland, Poland and France. She publishes in Warsaw and Krakow. She also works in Paris and Arles, the town where she has a pied-à-terre and where one of her two sisters works. She has a base in Lausanne and finally in Montricher



Vera Michalski at the Jan Michalski foundation in Montricher

Inside the “Maison de l’écriture”



An association for writers

“Stopping the erosion of reading”: such is the mission of the director of the Jan Michalski Foundation. This objective is expressed most notably through the creation of a writers’ association, located in Montricher, a village at the foot of the Jura mountains overlooking Lake Geneva. This project, which is still being developed, brings together a collection of places open to the public and dedicated to literature: a library that will eventually house 80,000 works of world literature, a 100-seat auditorium that will host art and literature events, an exhibition room and, finally writers’ “cabins” designed by various architects.

These places, which are open to nature and hanging like the gardens of Babylon will be ready to receive authors in 2018, according to the patron. Her foundation supports numerous projects, such as an edition of Franz Kafka’s manuscripts, published by Stroemfeld. “Books that would otherwise never see the light of day,” she says.

in the Canton of Vaud, where Vera has created a writers association at the foot of the Jura Mountains (see text-box).

Cartoons

When asked to talk about what she likes in Switzerland, she mentions daily newspapers, theatres, cinemas, museums and foundations. “The cultural density of this country is unique,” she says. But she laments the way the press has run out of steam: “The number of titles has withered, they have become more and more alike and they have fewer cultural pages.” Switzerland has also given the world great artists and writers, the publisher stresses. She mentions in particular Paul Klee, Blaise Cendrars and Nicolas Bouvier, but also the Val-

ais writer Noëlle Revaz, the Neuchâtel singer Olivia Pedrolì, and the photographers Christian Lutz and Augustin Rebetez.

Vera Michalski cannot stop reading – she even fulminates against menus with spelling mistakes. But her work as a publisher has taken her beyond words and into the world of cartoons. As a teenager, she loved the exuberant and sometimes lewd cartoons of the French creator Gotlib. Within Libella, cartoons have a special place. The French cartoonist and writer Frédéric Pajak heads the “Cahiers Dessinés” collection, which publishes, among others, the Zurich cartoonist Anna Sommer. He himself received the Prix Médicis essai for non-fiction in 2014 for the third volume of his “Manifeste incertain”.

Pioneer in Poland

We mention the conservative initiatives that have marked Switzerland’s recent history: the initiatives to ban minarets and against mass immigration, for example. Vera Michalski is firmly against “turning in on oneself”. This trend strikes her as both “against [her] values and disastrous from a practical point of view”. The metaphor of Switzerland as an island is one that she is not opposed to when it is used to talk about preserving its landscapes, which she believes to be unique. “But this kind of thought is only possible in relation to the rest of world because we cannot rely only on ourselves,” she clarifies.

Her marriage to Jan Michalski, whom she met in Geneva while studying at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Stud-

ies, led the couple to look towards the East. At that time, the wall was still up. Their idea? To build bridges across this iron curtain by opening a publishing house first in Switzerland, then in Poland (L'Oficyna Literacka Noir sur Blanc). Today, the iron curtain has fallen, but the need for cultural diplomacy between East and West remains. Vera Michalski is above all delighted to have given Poland the first translations of Charles Bukowski, Henry Miller and Nicolas Bouvier. Noir sur Blanc Poland also published Umberto Eco, whom she has had the honour of meeting several times.

The war in Ukraine and the election at the end of May of an ultraconservative president in Poland make the existence of bridges more imperative than ever according to Vera Michalski.

Literature as cultural diplomacy: this is Vera Michalski's weapon. She made a huge effort, for example, at the last Geneva Book Fair to welcome Russian writers snubbed by the Russian cultural organiser, Read Russia. "In the end, they were able to sit down and talk to each other," she says, delighted.

The Roche wealth (the Hoffman and Oeri families are worth between CHF 26 and 27 billion according to a valuation by "Bilan" published in 2014) is used by Vera Michalski to benefit others, in particular through her foundation. But is the money tainted with guilt? And is the pharmaceutical industry morally beyond reproach? The Roche heiress and shareholder gives a relatively conventional response to these points. Receiving dividends?

She says she is grateful: "It is marvellous to have these resources available to make all these activities possible and to benefit others to the greatest extent possible." There is certainly a debt to the family "because you have either created or you have inherited". But there is no need "to be embarrassed by this wealth because Roche has always been at the forefront of ethics and social responsibility", fires off Vera Michalski-Hoffmann. The shareholder – she does not sit on Roche's Board of Directors as her brother André and father Luc do – is also keen to point out that "to make generics, you first have to develop the drug molecule". She is quick to stress that "pharma is an industry and not the Salvation Army". It is this that puts an end to the discussion about money, showing that under the fine layer of ice beats a heart not without strength and passion.

STÉPHANE HERZOG IS AN EDITOR
WITH THE "SWISS REVIEW"

Libella: books that cross borders

Vera Michalski is at the head of a publishing group that publishes some 360 books a year, half of which are in French and the rest in Polish. The venture began in Switzerland in 1986 when she and Jan Michalski set up the group itself and the publishing house Éditions Noir Sur Blanc, which was established in Poland in 1991. The company recently published "Adieu aux illusions" ("Parting With Illusions") by the Russian-American journalist Vladimir Pozner. "He is the only person to have an entirely free TV programme in Russia," the publisher points out.

Libella has also made acquisitions, such as the Parisian publishing house Buchet/Chastel, founded in 1929. The group's holding includes Libretto (paperbacks), Le Temps Approuvé (dedicated to creative hobbies), and Librairie Polonaise de Paris, located on the Boulevard Saint-Germain. Vera Michalski also owns Editions Photosynthèses in Arles, which publishes essays on photography and the visual arts.

**The Jan Michalski
foundation at the foot
of the Vaud Jura**

www.libella.fr
www.fondation-janmichalski.com/de



New head at educationsuisse

Barbara Sulzer Smith took up her position as head of the educationsuisse business office on 1 June. Sulzer Smith studied at the University of St. Gallen (HSG), was head of the Swiss school in Barcelona from 2010 to 2014 and also spent two years on the board of educationsuisse. She is head of both departments at educationsuisse: Swiss Schools and Education in Switzerland.

Four questions for Barbara Sulzer Smith

“Swiss Review”: What motivated you to take the position at educationsuisse?

Barbara Sulzer Smith: The Swiss schools abroad are very close to my heart and I see great development potential for them. I left the Swiss

Why in your view is Switzerland such an attractive country in terms of education?
I believe the holistic approach to education, the linguistic didactics and the conveying of (Swiss) values are the cornerstones of the Swiss education system and the stand-out features of our schools abroad compared with other international schools. I regard vocational training as another attractive element of Swiss national education. This aspect has not been exported sufficiently to date and definitely offers potential for the future.

Are pupils leaving the Swiss schools abroad sufficiently equipped for study in Switzerland?

Yes, generally. However, the top Swiss universities, such as the Federal Institutes of Technology, represent a huge challenge even for students from Switzerland. Often, however, pupils leaving the Swiss schools and their families only know these top universities and want to study there at all costs despite another educational establishment or perhaps even a different educational path being more suitable.



■ Information about education in Switzerland and the Swiss schools is provided at www.educationsuisse.ch

The contact details of educationsuisse’s two departments are as follows:

Swiss Schools Abroad
Tel. +41 (0)31 356 61 20
office@educationsuisse.ch

Education in Switzerland
Tel. +41 (0)31 356 61 04
info@educationsuisse.ch



school in Barcelona in summer 2014 for family reasons and am now very much looking forward to continuing to work for the Swiss schools and being involved in their development over the coming years.

Why are the Swiss schools abroad important?

They have a great image in the host countries and ideally support federal government with the implementation of its foreign policy objectives. On the one hand, our education system, a successful Swiss product, is exported through the schools and, on the other, the schools have outstanding networks through pupils, parents, teachers and local institutions. This fosters relations between the host country and Switzerland.

Alfred Weber has passed away

Alfred Weber, who was President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad between 1976 and 1981, died on 26 March aged 91. The FDP politician from the canton of Uri was a member of the National Council from 1963 to 1979 and President of the National Council in 1970–71. Weber held various political offices. He represented the commune of Altdorf in the Cantonal Parliament from 1952 to 1958, while at the same time sitting on the Communal Parliament, and was a member of the Uri Cantonal Council from 1958. He was also elected President of the Uri Cantonal Council on two occasions.

Free participation in young people's ski camp!

600 children aged between 13 and 14 will enjoy a winter sports week free of charge from 2 to 9 January 2016 in Lenk in the Bernese Oberland – for the 75th time. The 600 draw winners will also include 75 Swiss Abroad in the anniversary year.

The ski camp for young people is taking place once again. 600 girls and boys aged 13 and 14 from all over Switzerland will travel to Lenk in Simmental by special train on 2 January 2016. For the 75th time, Swiss-Ski (the Swiss skiing association) and its partners are sending out invitations to Switzerland's biggest winter sports camp. As representatives of Switzerland's diaspora, Swiss children abroad can again



take part in the young people's ski camp this year. To mark the 75th anniversary, 75 instead of the usual 25 places will be awarded to Swiss children abroad in the prize draw. Anyone born in 2001 or 2002 can register for the draw by completing the form below. The registration deadline is 15 September 2015.

Anyone wishing to take part in the ski camp for young people (Juskila) should at least be able to speak German, French or Italian. The draw prize is participation in the camp including winter sports lessons, food and accommodation. Parents are responsible for organising and funding the outbound and return journeys. The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) has set up a fund to provide financial assistance with travel costs for Swiss families abroad put off registering for financial reasons.

The winners of the 75 places for the Swiss Abroad will be announced at the end of September.



Form for the prize draw for the young people's ski camp in Lenk (2 to 9 January 2016)

Please complete in clearly legible block letters.

First name:	Surname:	Street:
Postcode, place:	Country:	Date of birth:
Name of parent / legal guardian:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Girl	<input type="checkbox"/> Boy	
Commune of origin in Switzerland (see passport/ID):		
Email address of parents:	Tel. no. of parents:	
Type of sport:	<input type="checkbox"/> Alpine skiing	<input type="checkbox"/> Cross-country skiing <input type="checkbox"/> Snowboarding
Only tick one! The type of sport cannot be changed once the draw has taken place.		
Language of child:	<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> Italian
Signature of the parent/legal guardian:		
Signature of the child:		

Send the form and a copy of the Swiss passport of one parent or the child by 15 September 2015 (date of receipt) to: Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA), Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND

Information: Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA), Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND

Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, fax +41 31 356 61 01, email: info@sjas.ch, www.sjas.ch



The goal is a youth parliament for the Swiss Abroad

OSA's Youth Service is organising a seminar at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Geneva.

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA).

As part of the seminar, participants will learn how a political debate works, that is, they will learn how to obtain information about a particular issue and how to present their views. This workshop will be led by the "Dialog" foundation which launched the annual competition "Jugend debattiert" (Young People Debate).

The knowledge and skills acquired will then be put to the test on the stage at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad.

Anyone interested in making a contribution internationally and on behalf of young Swiss people abroad is invited to register on our website www.swisscommunity.org.

Last-minute booking

Last opportunity to register for the 93rd Congress of the Swiss Abroad from 14 to 16 August 2015 in Geneva.

Congress programme

Friday 14 August

Assembly of delegates of the Council of the Swiss Abroad
Election debate with representatives of the major Swiss parties

Official opening of the congress focussing on the international city of Geneva with welcome aperitif afterwards.

Saturday 15 August

Theme of the day: "Educating citizens – a guarantee of a vibrant democracy"

Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, Manon Schick, Director General of Amnesty International Switzerland, and Arthur Honegger, SRF's current foreign affairs correspondent, will express their views on a vibrant democracy and answer questions on this topic.

Final evening at the Domaine du Château de Penthes

Sunday 16 August

A choice of two excursions

Theme, programme, registration and accommodation

www.aso-kongress.ch

"Educating citizens: a guarantee of a vibrant democracy" is the theme of this year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad. We are addressing this topic at a Youth Service seminar and will consider the following question: "How can we promote the political participation of young Swiss people abroad in a targeted way?" The participants will have the opportunity to contribute to the foundation of the first youth parliament of the Swiss Abroad. Together with the umbrella organisation Swiss Youth Parliaments, we will establish this parliament and jointly draw up a plan of action on the "Vision 2036" of the



Services provided by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and partner institutions

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), a foundation governed by private law, is a centre of expertise for safeguarding the interests of Swiss citizens living abroad. Besides the publication of "Swiss Review", it provides various services for Swiss citizens abroad in collaboration with its partner organisations.

■ **Legal advice.** Free advice on emigrating abroad and returning to Switzerland.

www.aso.ch – "Consultation" section

■ **Network.** The website SwissCommunity.org provides the opportunity to network with Swiss citizens all over the world.

www.swisscommunity.org

■ **Offers for children and young people.** Organisation of holiday camps and language courses, etc. for young

Swiss Abroad seeking a better understanding of their native country.

www.aso.ch > Offers

■ **Advice on education and training in Switzerland.** Young Swiss Abroad wishing to train or study in Switzerland receive support and guidance in selecting training and educational opportunities and making grant applications.

www.educationsuisse.ch



Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA),
Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne,
SWITZERLAND,
Tel. +41 31 356 61 00,
info@aso.ch

Electronic voting – the long road to the digitalisation of political rights

Federal government and the cantons have been driving forward the introduction of electronic voting for over 10 years. Significant milestones have been achieved – there is nevertheless a long way to go on the road to the complete digitalisation of political rights, and various challenges have to be faced. These can only be overcome in dialogue with all parties concerned.

The project to introduce electronic voting reached a new key stage at the federal ballot on 8 March 2015. Second-generation systems were deployed for the first time. First-generation systems were upgraded to ensure individual verifiability. This allows eligible voters to check that their vote has been sent correctly, which, in turn, enables voters to identify any manipulation carried out on their device or on the internet.

The use of the new systems for the first time was not the only novelty at the ballot in March. The canton of Glarus provided its eligible Swiss citizens abroad with the opportunity to vote electronically for the first time. The canton of Zurich resumed trials with electronic voting after their suspension in 2011.

Thanks to the introduction of electronic voting in the two cantons, around 100,000 of the 142,000 eligible Swiss voters abroad registered Switzerland-wide can now take advantage of the new voting channel. Federal government and the cantons have therefore achieved the goal set in 2011 of providing the majority of eligible Swiss voters abroad with the opportunity to vote electronically by the 2015 elections.

Using new technologies with caution

The new technologies are being used carefully in the field of political rights. Security represents the major challenge for federal government and the cantons with regard to the digitalisation of political rights. The introduction of electronic voting is therefore being driven forward based on an ethos of security over speed.

In Switzerland, the authorities responsible for elections and referenda have the trust of the Swiss people. However, this positive environment cannot simply be taken for granted. The new technologies aim to make the instruments of direct democracy fit for the

future. The requirements of an increasingly mobile society need to be taken into account. At the same time, the new technologies should not be allowed to undermine the credibility of the institutions and the effectiveness of democracy.

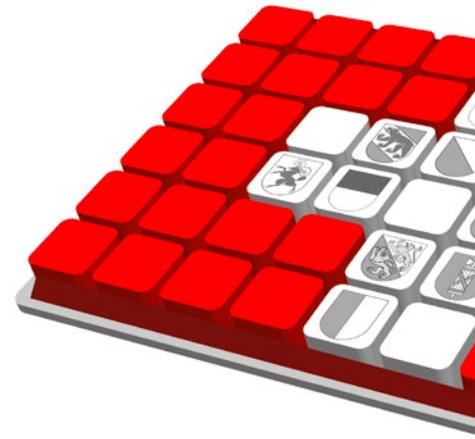
It is in light of this situation that the Federal Council defined its strategy for the expansion of electronic voting in 2013. Only once the cantons have implemented the new, even more rigorous security requirements can they make an application to the Federal Council to increase the existing limits regarding the domestic electorate.

The introduction remains controversial

Significant milestones have been reached in the introduction of the third complementary method of voting over recent years. Opinion on these developments is nevertheless deeply divided. While some believe that the electronic voting project should be driven forward even more rapidly, others contend that democracy is being jeopardised and are calling for the immediate abandonment of the project.

The debate over electronic voting is not just being conducted in the public sphere and in the media. Politicians are also addressing the issue. Three procedural requests on electronic voting were submitted during the 2015 spring session of the Federal Assembly alone. Questions were asked by Maximilian Reimann (SVP) and Carlo Sommaruga (SP), while Lukas Reimann (SVP) submitted a parliamentary initiative. Christophe Darbellay (CVP) put forward a motion during the special session in mid-May and Christian Levrat (SP) an interpellation during the summer session.

The debate shows that the project to digitalise political rights touches upon key aspects of our co-existence – democracy and the structure of its underlying instruments. Concerns and fears should be taken seriously and dialogue with sceptics and critics should be encouraged. Only open and constructive cooperation with all groups can establish the trust required in order to drive forward the digi-



HELPLINE FDFA

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Phone from abroad: +41 800 24-7-365
E-Mail: helpline@eda.admin.ch
Skype: helpline-eda

Travel advice

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Helpline FDFA: +41 (0)800 24-7-365
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itineris

Online registration for Swiss citizens travelling abroad
www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris



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alisation of political rights and strengthen the tools of democracy over the long term. Federal government and the cantons are working towards this goal.

Facts and figures about the use of electronic voting

Fourteen cantons currently offer electronic voting. In total, around 194,000 eligible voters can vote electronically. The cantons of Geneva and Neuchâtel are including eligible voters living in the canton in their electronic voting trials as well as their Swiss citizens abroad. The other 12 cantons (Zurich, Berne, Lucerne, Glarus, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel-Stadt, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Grisons, Aargau and Thurgau) restrict themselves to their Swiss Abroad.

A wide range of information about the project can be found on the Federal Chancellery's website (www.bk.admin.ch > Topics > Political rights > E-Voting). This includes the conditions for using electronic voting and the figures on turnout at ballots using the electronic voting system.

National Council elections with electronic voting

Thirteen cantons intend to offer electronic voting at the National Council elections on 18 October 2015. The use of electronic voting at the 2015 National Council elections has to be approved by the Federal Council. A decision is expected in summer 2015. Full information on the elections and the use of the new voting system can be found on the election website of the Federal Chancellery and Parliamentary Services www.ch.ch/wahlen2015.

NADJA OBRESCHKOW AND GEO TAGLIONI, FEDERAL CHANCELLERY

New Federal Chancellery brochure on electronic voting

The Federal Chancellery has published a new brochure on the electronic voting project. The new publication focuses on the Federal Council's strategy for introducing and extending the electronic voting system. The 2006 to 2012 trial period is evaluated and the new security requirements explained. The project is also briefly detailed and the status of implementation in the individual cantons outlined. Objectives and key milestones are also set out. The Federal Chancellery's new brochure on the electronic voting project is available in German, French and Italian and can be downloaded from the Federal Chancellery's website.



Important notice

Please notify your Swiss representation of your email address(es) and mobile telephone number(s) and/or any changes to these and register at www.swissabroad.ch to ensure you do not miss any communications ("Swiss Review", newsletter from your representation, etc.).

The latest issue of "Swiss Review" and previous issues can be read and/or printed out at any time at www.revue.ch. "Swiss Review" (or "Gazzetta Svizzera" in Italy) is sent free of charge to all households of Swiss Abroad who are registered with an embassy or consulate general, either in printed format or electronically (via email or as an iPad/Android app).

Popular initiatives

The following new federal popular initiatives had been launched at the time of going to press (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- "Zersiedelung stoppen – für eine nachhaltige Siedlungsentwicklung (Zersiedelungsinitiative)" – (Stop urban sprawl – for sustainable residential development (urban sprawl initiative)) – (21.10.2016)
- "Für verantwortungsvolle Unternehmen – zum Schutz von Mensch und Umwelt" – (For corporate responsibility – for the protection of people and the environment) – (21.10.2016)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at www.bk.admin.ch under Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

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www.swissworld.org

Your Gateway to Switzerland



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Poets and bookworms

Solothurn's narrow streets are packed with throngs of visitors from near and far in mid-May. The Literature Days are a meeting point for authors, avid readers, journalists, the culturally minded and politicians. They come from Switzerland and abroad. At many events, which often ran in parallel, over 70 authors presented their latest books this year. They also included guests from abroad. The audience was enthralled by



German novelist Ralf Rothmann and the Icelandic author and musician Sjón. In addition to readings and discussion sessions, authors, publishers and the audience also meet very informally in the bars of the old town. Even Federal Councillor and Culture Min-

National anthem sought

They are beautiful and deeply moving, the celebratory occasions when, on 1 August or at sporting events, the Swiss national anthem is played. Quite often such celebratory moments are also a little embarrassing as the Swiss anthem is difficult and grandiose and most Swiss people do not know the words beyond the third line. That is now set to change – a competition to find a new anthem is underway where everyone can contribute towards deciding which text set to which tune should raise Swiss hearts in future. A total of 208 entries were received in the first round

of the competition, three of which have now reached the final stage. They can be heard online where they are wonderfully interpreted by the Swiss youth choir. The online vote, in which the Swiss Abroad can also take part, runs until 6 September. The final will then take place on 12 September at the folk music festival in Aarau. (BE)

Voting is taking place at: www.chymne.ch



ister Alain Berset took part in a discussion session this year – on his feet and with a beer.

The website of the Solothurn Literature Days contains brief portraits of all the authors (in several languages). Its archive can be explored and vouchers obtained for the next festival. This is an addictive site for book lovers. The festival takes place from 6 to 8 May in 2016.

(RG)

www.literatur.ch



Federal Councillor Alain Berset in discussion with the author Lukas Bärfuss

Quiz app on politics and the elections

Those who enjoy improving their knowledge in a fun way will really enjoy the “politbox” app. Based on the notion that “politics covers everything and you are the expert”, the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) has created an app which is of course free of charge and available for both android and iOS. Topics include sport, geography, languages, the environment, politics, restless youth, Europe and political scandals. Each topic can be played at four different levels. Under political scandals, one question at level one, for example, is the name of Switzerland's first female Federal Councillor. You

have to work your way up in each topic area as those with better knowledge cannot start immediately at level 4. In addition to the test of knowledge, questions are also asked about views on current issues. Those behind the app say this survey format enables opinion to be gauged amongst those interested and their concerns to be identified. The app is available in the four national languages and English. (BE)

www.politbox.ch



More immigrants

Immigration to Switzerland has increased. According to the State Secretariat for Migration, there were 22,942 more foreigners living in Switzerland at the end of March than at the end of 2014. In total, there were 1,967,844 people without a Swiss passport – 3.4 % more than a year earlier. Over two thirds of them come from EU/EFTA states. The vast majority of immigrants come to Switzerland for work or as family dependants. The proportion of recognised refugees (4.8 %) and foreigners without gainful employment (4.5 %) is relatively small.

More money for the promotion of culture

Parliament supported the Federal Council's culture policy during the summer session. The National Council and Council of States approved the dispatch on culture for the period 2016 to 2020. Various motions proposing cuts failed miserably and 3.4 % more is to go to culture over the coming years. In total, the Federal Council plans to spend 1.12 billion Swiss francs on the promotion of culture during the period 2016 to 2020.

No change to tax for cross-border commuters

The canton of Jura will not tax cross-border commuters itself in future. An initiative put forward by the SVP for taxation at source was rejected by over two thirds of the electorate. A counterproposal by the government and parliament was approved by 63 %. Under this proposal the canton will receive reimbursement of 4.5 % of the gross salary from neighbouring states.

Protest over exhibition

An exhibition by the Israeli organisation *Breaking the Silence* has sparked uproar in Zurich. *Breaking the Silence*, which was set up by an Israeli officer in 2004, shows reports by members of the army on their deployment, particularly in the Palestinian territories. The soldiers tell of brutal treatment, arbitrary killings, violations of human rights and the impact on morale in the armed forces. The Israeli embassy in Berne protested through diplomatic channels against the exhibition, which has also received financial support from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

Ueli Maurer

Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer left the National Council chamber on 18 June without a word. Parliament had just thrown out his army reform. The next day, the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" wrote that Ueli Maurer's party, the Swiss People's Party (SVP), had played the main role in the National Council "game of poker" over the future development of the army. The SVP was in fact calling for a much larger army and far more money – an extra 400 million Swiss francs – than the preliminary consultation committee had proposed.

"Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies."

Groucho Marx (1890 – 1977), US comedian

"We have gone through four difficult years with a centre-left government and a centre-left parliament."

Toni Brunner, SVP President

"These claims of a centre-left government are astonishing. I do a recount every Wednesday before the Federal Council meeting – it's not true."

Federal Councillor Alain Berset

"To name things wrongly is to add to the misfortune of the world."

Albert Camus (1913 – 1960), French writer

"Football can make better people of those drawn to it."

Sepp Blatter, FIFA President

"Switzerland is not FIFA."

Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter

"We reach 1.6 billion people. FIFA is more influential than all other countries or religions in the world."

Sepp Blatter again



"A bore is a person who opens his mouth and puts his feats in it."

Henry Ford (1863 – 1947), founder of the Ford Motor Company

Grand Tour of Switzerland.



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Airolo, Tremola, Ticino

From glaciers to palms, from buzzing cities to enchanted hideaways: explore Switzerland's breathtaking variety along one inspiring route. [MySwitzerland.com/grandtour](https://www.myswitzerland.com/grandtour)