

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

SWISS REVIEW

JUNE 2014 / NO. 3



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SWISS CARE

The Swiss people must provide clarity

FOOTBALL FEVER IS CURRENTLY TAKING HOLD AROUND THE WORLD. Millions of people are excitedly looking forward to Brazil where the World Cup Final will be played on 13 July. Ottmar Hitzfeld, the manager of the Swiss national team, will make his final major appearance with his squad at this World Cup. This team, as we have noted, is mainly made up of Swiss abroad: 16 players in the 23-man squad live abroad – the illustration on the cover page indicates in which countries. To mark Hitzfeld's departure, page 22 in the sports section features a profile of the man who still faces doubts and fears despite being one of the most successful coaches in world football.

Great uncertainty and fears currently exist in Switzerland over immigration policy. After the "initiative against mass immigration" was approved in February, it is becoming increasingly clear how the demands for restricting immigration contained in the Swiss People's Party initiative are placing a strain on our relations with the international community. The Federal Council is frantically and resolutely attempting to restructure our relationship with the European Union. However, as Foreign



Minister Didier Burkhalter (FDP The Liberals) explained at the beginning of May, the bilateral agreements with the EU cannot easily be amended. The electorate will therefore have to make a decision at the ballot box very soon as to whether it wants Switzerland to pursue a course of isolationism or to continue along the bilateral path. However, before we reach that stage, we will have to vote on immigration restrictions again, with the Ecopop initiative set to be put to referendum before the end of the year. This popular initiative may be of particular significance to the Swiss abroad. Launched by environmental groups, the initiative calls for annual immigration to be strictly restricted to 0.2 percent of the resident population. That amounts to around 16,000 persons a year based on Switzerland's current population. In practice, this would mean that if this quota were reached, even the Swiss abroad would no longer be able to return home. More about the people behind this popular initiative and the political tug-of-war over immigration can be found in our key focus article on page 8.

Finally, we have to say farewell to our colleague Alain Wey. He has been a member of the "Swiss Review" editorial team for ten years but will now turn his attention to new challenges. With his great interest in the mountains, his affinity with the cultural scene and his exceptional access to the world of sport, he has produced some remarkable articles for "Swiss Review" and made a major contribution to the diversity of its content. We wish to thank Alain Wey most sincerely for his tremendous commitment and wish him every success in his new challenges. We are delighted to welcome Stéphane Herzog, a journalist from Geneva with experience of various media, as a new member of our editorial team.

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Cover image: Illustration by Wieslaw Smetek on the Swiss national football team

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Yes to initiative on mass immigration

Mr Blocher has once again used his wealth to force through an initiative in line with his own agenda. It is high time that the parties had to disclose their accounts just like every employee, employer and association.

ALFRED STEINER,
NEGOMBO, SRI LANKA

Waiting game

I can hardly believe that we as a sovereign state allow ourselves to be told what to do by the EU. We are now waiting for the EU parliamentary elections to finish. There are in fact an increasing number of citizens in the EU who no longer agree

with the policies of the 4th Reich – the EU.

KLAUS WERNER WEGMÜLLER,
CHONBURI, THAILAND

Cringe factor

The arguments put forward by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) prior to the referendum were once again rather far-fetched. There has been a housing crisis in the major cities for decades. We should not forget the large-scale riots during the 1980s when the slogan "W! W! Wohnigsnot!" (H! H! Housing crisis) resounded through the streets of various cities. Commuter trains and access roads to economic centres have rarely been uncongested. The fact that this situation existed without the free movement of

persons and EU treaties is sooner overlooked. What now after this disastrous referendum result? As a Swiss person living abroad, I once again cringe at the ever increasing xenophobia in my native country and hope that the appointed working groups on both sides somehow still find a way to avoid a debacle.

MARLENE LEIMBACH,
GROSS-ZIMMERN, GERMANY

A majority?

Another perspective for once – with a turnout of 55.8% and a 50.3% yes vote, only around 28% of the Swiss people actually approved the mass immigration initiative.

JEAN-JACQUES BAUMANN,
MÈZE, FRANCE

Picasso and the prostitutes of Avignon

I had the pleasure to share the admirable work carried out by Hildy and Ernst Beyeler. In your article entitled "A summer house for modern art", I find the part on Picasso's painting "Les demoiselles d'Avignon" strange. The "rue d'Avignon" in Barcelona was a street heavily frequented by prostitutes in the last century and they provided the inspiration for the young Picasso. The painting has nothing to do with the Vaucluse region as it is just a street in Barcelona that bears the name of this French town.

JEAN DARNI,
PARIS, FRANCE

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Family policy

A very good, relatively objective article. The conclusion is nevertheless questionable. One thing has always held true – a state's survival depends upon a woman! – and a man and children, an income and at least 20 years of care to ensure children survive to adulthood. It is extremely important in a healthy state that the protection of the biological family is promoted. "Working" (today "employed") mothers and fathers need, as they always have done, a safe place for their children if they work "outside the home". A society should therefore make it easier to meet family responsibilities. This is also in the interests of the state as this is the only way in which children develop into decent citizens. That is why we need good crèches which are inexpensive (a maximum of 10 Swiss francs a day), like those in Quebec. Good luck!

KATI LYON-VILLIGER,
OTTAWA, CANADA

Ten billion on air defence

Who are we defending ourselves against? Don't our members of parliament realise that the world is no longer that of the previous generation? Why not use this money to improve edu-

cation or to feed those who are hungry? We have to appreciate that we Swiss, some of the most privileged people of all, are part of the human family. It is a question of conscience.

MARCEL THEVOZ,
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA

Restricted Immigration Initiative

I was surprised to see that the Swiss Abroad were not in favour of restricting immigration. This is probably because they themselves are immigrants in their country of choice. As a third-generation Swiss Abroad, living in South Africa, I want to express in the strongest terms my opposition to unrestricted immigration. If the free movement of people had led to an overall upgrade in quality of life for all, then I would be unequivocally in favour. This is demonstrably not the case, in virtually all regions of the world. Before allowing foreigners into my house I would always vet them very carefully, and I would never make a permanent arrangement. Extending this to nations, it is terminal idiocy to allow unrestricted access.

MICHAEL DES LIGNERIS,
PORT ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA

THE SAYING GOES THAT A PROPHET is without honour in his own country. This is certainly true in the case of Alexandre Yersin (1863-1943). However, Yersin, who was born in Morges in the canton of Vaud, spent most of his life in Paris and then in Southeast Asia. In his novel "Plague and Cholera", the French author Patrick Deville deservedly rekindles the memory of this universal spirit.

Yersin was a pioneer in various fields. The plague bacterium "Yersinia pestis" still bears his name today. He discovered it rather by chance in Hong Kong in 1894, in competition with other researchers, for France and the Louis Pasteur Institute. Yersin himself benefited little from this discovery. By the time his institute colleagues were receiving Nobel Prizes one after the other, Yersin had long since started pursuing other paths. He left the Parisian scene to find a new home in Vietnam, which belonged to France at the time. He found his personal paradise in the fishing village of Nha Trang, where he was able to give free rein to his wide-ranging interests. He created a small universe here in the jungle. The bacteriologist Yersin was also a land surveyor, geographer, meteorologist, farmer, engineer, inventor and architect. Impatient and quickly bored, he was always open to new things. He was a pioneering automotive enthusiast and was the first to drive a car through Hanoi. He made his fortune producing rubber and quinine.

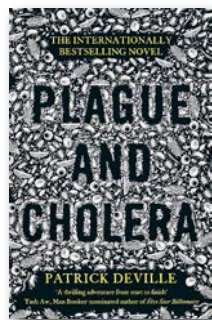
Patrick Deville explores this wealth of inventiveness in his novel for which he was awarded the Prix Fémina in 2012. He gets close to his protagonist by employing a kind of temporal pincer movement with meticulous accuracy and extraordinary clarity. The last years of Yersin's life provide the backdrop. In 1940, just before the Nazis marched in, he visited Paris for one last time before turning his back on Europe for good. He had new plans in Nha Trang: he wanted to study Greek and Latin. In the form of a ghost from the future, Deville accompanies his protagonist through life reawakening memories of the key stages on his journey. What he brings to light is a gigantic micro-story from the perspective of someone who was interested in everything, except politics, and

who, despite his colonial pioneering spirit, was always respectful of the native inhabitants and showed no signs of inventor arrogance. "The agnostic Yersin is a darling of the gods," Deville notes.

"Plague and Cholera" is full of remarkable anecdotes about this mercurial spirit who has probably been forgotten because he cannot be categorised accurately as a scientist. This novel provides readers with

an insight into the realms of both the pathogen and the discoverer. Alexandre Yersin is the travel guide, while Patrick Deville is his companion and discreet driver.

BEAT MAZENAUER



PATRICK DEVILLE: *Plague and Cholera*, Little Brown Book Group, London, 2014. Original French edition: *Peste et Choléra*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 2012.

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Cut-out images

Paper cuts have been rediscovered and reinterpreted by contemporary artists in recent years as a form and medium. Today artists are not just using scissors for their paper cuts but also scalpels and extremely fine cutters. They are also creating three-dimensional images. In an exhibition entitled "Papiers découpés. Scherenschnitte. Silhouette. Paper Cuts" at the Château de Prangins, near Nyon on Lake Geneva, over a hundred "modern" works of art are on display alongside a dozen historical paper cuts.

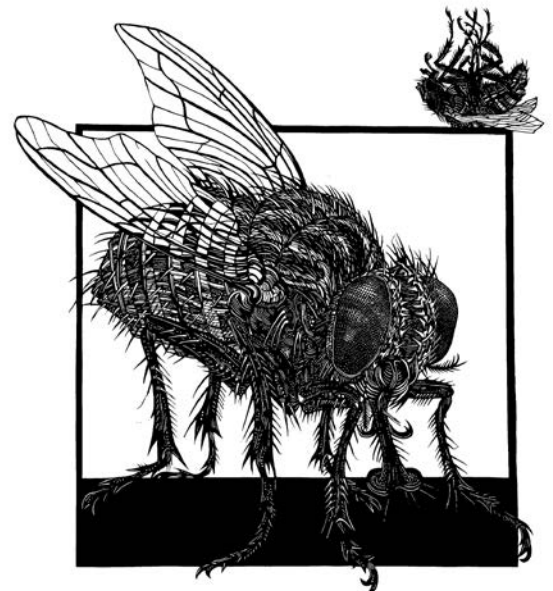
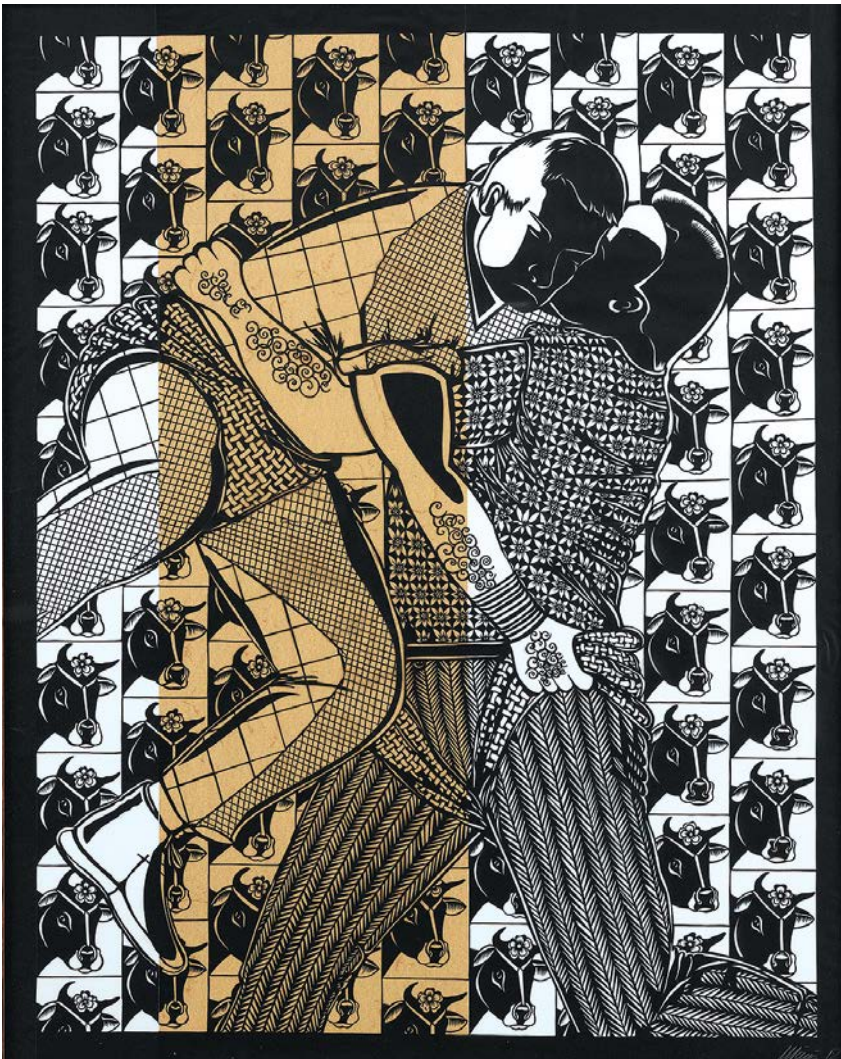
The exhibition at the Château de Prangins runs until 28 September.
www.nationalmuseum.ch > Château de Prangins

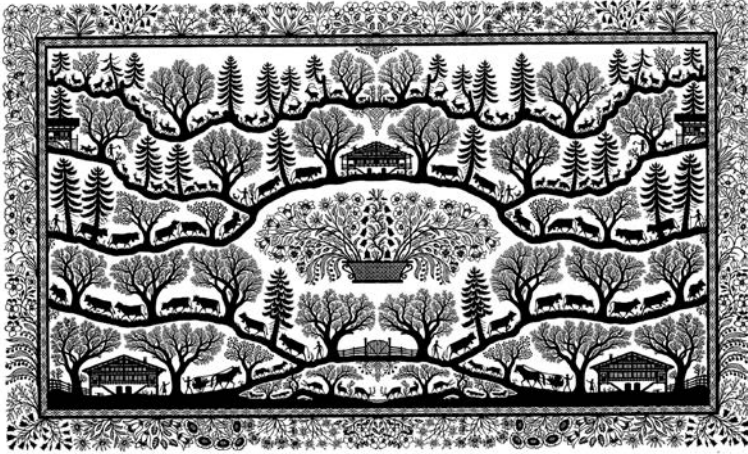


"Stier Tobi" (Bull Tobi), produced by Monika Flüttsch in 2012, shows two wrestlers in action (bottom left)

"Blumenstrauss" (Bouquet of flowers), produced by Louis David Saugy in 1946 (above)

"Löwenzahn" (Dandelion), produced by Annemarie Grischott in 2012, and "Die Fliege" (The fly), produced by Werner Gunterwiler in 2012 (below)





"Alaufzug" (Alpine cattle drive), produced by Ueli Hauswirth in 2012, features a traditional subject



"Kopfschmuck" (Headdress), produced by Angela Christen in 2012 (below)

"Angekommen" (Arrived), produced by Edith Müller-Crapp in 2012



"It is always others who are surplus"

The referendum with probably the most far-reaching consequences of the past two decades is currently keeping Swiss politicians very busy – the Yes vote to the initiative on mass immigration is jeopardising the minimum consensus that currently exists in domestic politics regarding policy towards Europe. And an even more radical initiative on immigration is already casting its shadow.

By Jürg Müller

"The bear cannot be washed without getting its fur wet." Adrian Amstutz, the Swiss People's Party (SVP) parliamentary group leader, quoted this old proverb in March 2014 during the National Council debate on the implementation of the initiative on mass immigration. With these words, Amstutz neatly summed up the current situation and indirectly conceded that Switzerland now faces enormous challenges in domestic politics and over policy on Europe since the adoption of the new constitutional provision on 9 February. At stake is nothing less than Switzerland's relationship with the European Union as a whole, irrespective of the specific structure of Switzerland's future immigration policy.

The minimum consensus over the bilateral approach that has existed to date between practically all political parties in Switzerland is crumbling. The bilateral approach has been regarded as the ideal solution for Swiss policy on Europe since the electorate rejected the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1992. Even the Swiss People's Party (SVP), which has traditionally viewed any further integration of Switzerland into the EU with great scepticism, essentially supported this policy. It did not question the principle of the bilateral agreements even during the referendum campaign on the mass immigration initiative, and officially it has not changed its position. SVP General Secretary Martin Baltisser says: "We have to govern relations with the EU bilaterally, but it is the specific content of the agreements that matters."

A pincer attack on the bilateral agreements

It is nevertheless obvious that the SVP no longer sees the bilateral approach as a top priority. Those on the right are seeking to seize the moment and steer the course of policy on Europe according to their own agenda. They are more than willing to accept further damage in relations with the EU. SVP parliamentary group leader Amstutz made this perfectly clear during the

National Council debate in March: "If I could choose between the continuation of the excessive immigration which is destroying this country and the bilateral agreements, I would choose the protection of the nation, full stop."

According to a Vox Analysis scientific study on the referendum, most of those who supported the SVP initiative were well aware that the adoption of the popular initiative might jeopardise the bilateral agreements. The Yes voters therefore attached greater importance to autonomous control of immigration than to good relations with the EU. This suggests that the bilateral approach, which was supported in all previous referenda, is no longer an undisputed issue among the Swiss people either.

The Campaign for an Independent and Neutral Switzerland (AUNS) group is lining up for a frontal attack. It is seeking to rescind the bilateral agreements and to simply govern relations with the EU by means of free trade agreements: "Both packages, 'bilaterals 1' and 'bilaterals 2', need to be replaced by an improved free trade agreement. We do not want any further bilateral agreements that are not in our nation's interests. And we

must terminate the detrimental elements of the bilateral agreements 1 and 2 – that is, the free movement of persons and Schengen/Dublin in particular – as they are 'EU accession accelerants', or even 'fire accelerants', and are damaging not just direct democracy but also our economy." This is the message from AUNS President and SVP National Councillor Pirmin Schwander on his organisation's homepage. Werner Gartenmann (SVP), the organisation's executive director, confirmed that it was working on the launch of a popular initiative for a purely free trade agreement; the exact wording is currently being tweaked. Gartenmann firmly believes that 9 February marked the definitive start of a fundamental debate over the EU. This is also the view of the parties at the other end of the political spectrum, the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP) and the Greens. Both are more committed than ever before to closer relations with the EU and no longer rule out the possibility of EU accession.

Centrifugal forces are becoming stronger

The Social Democrats wrote in their 2010 manifesto that they sought "the rapid introduction of accession negotiations with the

A word cloud from titles of popular initiatives



A spanner in the works of the political system

In no other state do citizens have more co-determination rights than in Switzerland. Direct democracy is a successful model. The change in the purpose and importance of popular initiatives nevertheless shows that Switzerland's political system is working less effectively than in the past.

Popular initiatives are a "growth market" in politics, and business is very brisk at the moment. The figures speak for themselves: 423 initiatives have been launched since the introduction of the popular initiative system in 1891. Signatures are currently being collected for 9 initiatives, and 20 are either being considered by the Federal Council and Parliament or are waiting to be put to the vote at referendum. 189 bills have made it to the referendum stage since 1891, but only 21 have been adopted by the people. And here are the most interesting figures: Only 9 initiatives secured a majority of Yes votes in the first 100 years between 1891 and 1990, whereas 13 have been approved since 1990.

Popular initiatives have therefore had a significantly better chance of being supported by the people over the past 25 years than before that time. There is no clear, undisputed explanation for this. Silja Häusermann, a professor of political science at the University of Zurich, points out that until the early 1990s popular initiatives were mainly an instrument of the left used to take a position as a minority against the then practically closed conservative alliance. This tool was usually not enough to secure majority support but it was a means of introducing new ideas into politics. Even unsuccessful initiatives triggered debates in many cases and sometimes also reform processes that achieved their objective after several attempts.

Initiatives are today no longer just used by the left and Greens but also by conservative and right-wing parties and institutions – in particular by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and the organisations associated with it. Initiatives are also often clearly used as a marketing instrument for election campaigns and as a vehicle to generate public outrage or to assert vested interests.

A paradox of the system

Popular initiatives are also often difficult to implement, especially when they are incompatible with other constitutional principles or international law. This then causes indignation among the initiators: The SVP, in particular, exerts pressure using enforcement initiatives – it is also threatening to use this tool in the case of the "initiative on mass immigration". The insistence on literal implementation destroys the proven political culture of equilibrium and compromise of which Switzerland is so proud.

"It is a kind of paradox," explains Silja Häusermann: "The increasingly frequent use of the instruments of direct democracy is an indication that Switzerland's political system is working less effectively." Swiss democracy is after all geared towards consensus. The rights of the people were initially intended to have a "preventative effect": The political players were to reach viable compromises so that referenda and initiatives did not have to be deployed. There is now a "spanner in the works" of this fragile mechanism, says Häusermann. She sees this as the "consequence of polarisation and the much more intense competition between the political parties".

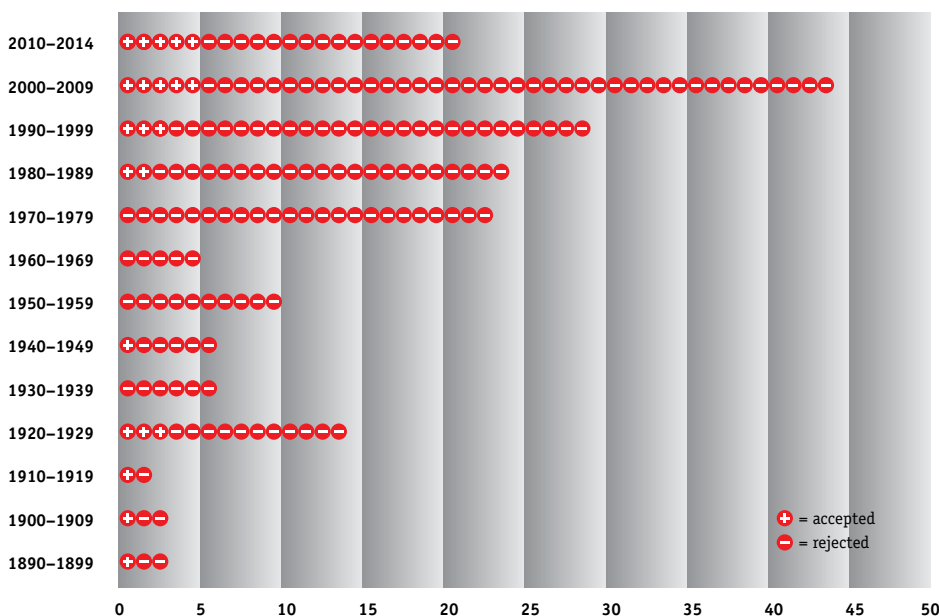
JÜRIG MÜLLER

EU". But they never really pursued this objective forcefully, not least in light of the sceptical mood among the Swiss people. This is how SP parliamentary group leader Andy Tschümperlin expressed the position of the party leadership: the primary objective must be to implement the initiative on mass immigration without jeopardising the existing bilateral agreements and their further development. If this cannot be achieved, "the Swiss people must be given the opportunity to vote on the future of relations with Europe". The SP is demanding that "all options on policy on Europe be examined". Tschümperlin is calling for the Federal Council to outline "the possible consequences of EU accession and the continuation of bilateralism with or without a new institutional solution" in a comparative analysis.

The centrifugal forces within the governing parties have therefore become much stronger. The SVP is distancing itself from the EU more clearly than in the past and the SP is no longer ruling out EU accession, while most of the other parties are attempting to fly the tattered flag of bilateralism. This represents a highly uncomfortable starting position for the government. The new



Popular initiatives which have been put to referendum (as at June 2014)



constitutional text obliges the Federal Council and Parliament to introduce a new admission system for all foreigners within three years, which will restrict immigration through maximum limits and quotas.

The question is how, if at all, this can be reconciled with the agreement with the EU on the free movement of persons. The Federal Council is planning to present an implementation concept by the end of June, and by the end of the year the proposals are to be formulated as articles of law which will then enter the consultation process. The art will lie in introducing quotas without at the same time infringing upon the principle of free movement of persons. Discussions with the European Union will take place in parallel to the domestic political process.

Now comes Ecopop

But it is not just the implementation of the initiative that is causing a headache for the politicians. The SVP has already threatened an enforcement initiative if the adopted popular initiative is not implemented in the way it believes it should be. And another initiative is already heading for the ballot box, the Ecopop initiative entitled “Stop overpopulation – safeguard our natural environment”. This is likely to be put to the vote as early as November 2014.

In specific terms, the initiative is calling for “the permanent resident population not to rise by more than 0.2 percent a year as a result of immigration on a three-year average”. That would currently equate to net

immigration of just 16,000 people instead of around 80,000 today. The initiative clearly stipulates, in the transitional provisions, that international agreements which contradict these objectives will have to be either amended or terminated. In other words, the Ecopop initiative is much more radical than the adopted SVP initiative. It would lay down specific figures in the constitution and leave even less leeway for negotiations with the EU. The free movement of persons would no longer have even the slightest chance.

Ecopop, the term being a combination of ECOlogy and POPulation, is a prismatic organisation which appeals to a wide range of groups, including critics of growth as well as xenophobic factions. Ecopop perceives itself as a politically independent environmental organisation which focuses on population issues. Its homepage states: “Our goal is to preserve the natural environment and the quality of life in Switzerland and worldwide for future generations. Ecopop has been committed to opposing the overburdening of nature by an increasingly higher human population for over 40 years.” A clear political categorisation of the organisation is not possible. It was founded at the time of the excessive immigration initiatives put forward by James Schwarzenbach, but Ecopop rejected the initiatives of his National Action (NA) movement in the 1970s and 1980s. In the early days, NA President Valentin Oehen and Bernese SP city councillor and femi-



nist Anne-Marie Rey were equally involved in Ecopop.

The modern organisation is very well aware that the direction of its agenda also appeals to groups which it would prefer to have nothing to do with. This is probably why the homepage stresses the following: “Ecopop distances itself from all misanthropic or xenophobic positions and wishes to contribute towards helping all people lead a dignified life irrespective of their nationality.”

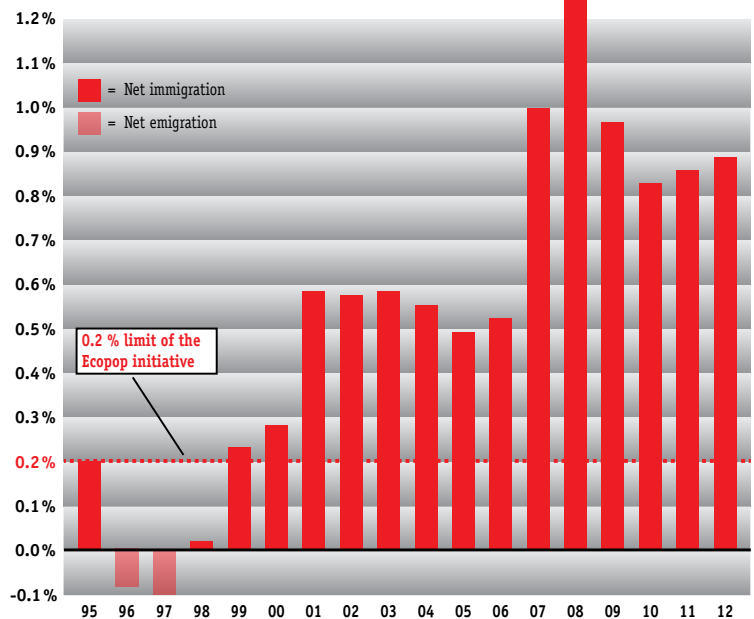
Ecopop – “sinister ecologists”?

This clear-cut distancing from the political right does not quite work in practice. Ecopop was able to place an appeal for support for its initiative in the editorial section of Schweizerzeit, the mouthpiece of the former far-right SVP National Councillor Ulrich Schlüer. The initiative organisers were also able to count on the support of the right-leaning AUNS during the collection of signatures. This organisation distributed signature forms among its members. Ecopop also received official support with the collection of signatures from the Swiss Democrats (SD), a far-right party and the successor organisation to the NA. The party had launched its own initiative on excessive immigration in 2011. As the collection of signatures was not going well, the SD Executive Committee decided in summer 2012 to abandon its own popular initiative and to actively support the “more promising” Ecopop initiative.



"How many people can the Earth sustain?" is the question that was posed by the Ecopop group on their poster when they submitted the signatures for the initiative in Berne on 12 November 2012

Switzerland's immigration and emigration as percentages



The combination of nature conservation issues and immigration is not a new phenomenon. A reactionary ecological ideology has existed since as far back as the 1930s. Balthasar Glättli, a Green Party National Councillor in Zurich, is currently carrying out research for a book with the working title "Unheimliche Ökologen" (Sinister Ecologists) and has discovered "sinister roots": links between conservationists, politicians preoccupied with population issues and eugenicists, the representatives of a science which believes that the population of people whose genetic make-up is desirable or deemed positive should increase while the rise in the population of people whose genetic make-up is categorised as negative is undesirable and should be prevented.

In this respect, the passage in the Ecopop initiative about birth control in the Third World is particularly contentious. In a second development policy section, the initiative calls for Switzerland to use 10% of development cooperation funds on "measures aimed at promoting voluntary family planning". Urs Schwaller, a Council of States member for the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP), calls this a "colonial view of family planning in developing countries". Development policy organisations have also voiced severe criticism of this demand. They believe that Ecopop is ignoring the structural causes of population growth. It is generally recognised today that high birth rates are primarily related to poverty. An abundance of children is seen as a means

of guaranteeing survival. Therefore, in order to reduce family size and population growth, the primary focus must be on promoting the education of women and girls. In an interview with the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", Shalini Randeria, a professor of anthropology and developmental sociology in Geneva, clearly outlines the attitude that leads to demands such as those made by Ecopop: "It is always other people who are surplus: the poor, the foreigners. (...) It is never just a question of figures but always a matter of who is allowed to reproduce and who is not." The issue of population is inseparable from that of resource consumption, points out the professor, as "the inhabitants of New York City consume more energy in one day than the entire continent of Africa".

Immigration and conservation were also an issue in the 1979 Schwarzenbach initiative. Even back then there was condemnation of Switzerland's urban development. The SVP, which has made immigration its priority issue, initially based its arguments on abuse of the social security system and criminality, but then discovered ecology during the final push in the referendum campaign and displayed images of urban sprawl on its posters.

Challenge for the Greens and for the SVP

There are major challenges facing the Greens, in particular, whose leadership is firmly opposed to the Ecopop initiative

and is seeking to play a key role in the referendum campaign. Regula Rytz, Co-President of the Greens, constantly reiterates that the party has no problem with the number of people but rather a per-capita problem. The key factor is the ecological footprint not the number of people. However, the view of the Green Party's grass roots is not yet clear. Representatives of the Greens are also actively involved in Ecopop: Andreas Thommen, former party leader in Aargau, is a member of both the executive committee and the initiative committee.

The position of the political parties is clear. Only the SVP is still tight-lipped, while all the others are opposed to the initiative. In the Council of States, which rejected the proposal in March, the SVP abstained from voting. There are problematic aspects to the initiative, says SVP General Secretary Martin Baltisser, "after all, it does come from the left and green factions as well". He was nevertheless unable to foresee what view the party base will take when it comes to drawing up the position statement. The party is clearly faced with a dilemma: The initiative is far too radical for business groups but it may well receive support from the party's grass roots, like any calls to restrict immigration.

Gripen fighter jets suffer crash landing

The Swiss air force will have to fly into the future without new fighter jets as the Swiss people rejected the acquisition of 22 Swedish Gripen aircraft.

By Jürg Müller

The arms deal of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) was hit by turbulence from the outset. The Gripen ran into further difficulties during the referendum campaign owing to various blunders and poor communication. In the end, the purchase of these Swedish fighter jets – as a replacement for 54 Tiger jets – was rejected at the referendum held on 18 May 2014 with 53.4 percent opposing the proposal.

Supporters had argued that the new aircraft, together with the existing 32 F/A-18s, were the absolute minimum requirement to ensure the security of the airspace. The Ukraine crisis was also brought into play towards the end of the referendum campaign and was supposed to provide evidence of the insecure world in which we live. The opposition – the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Group for a Switzerland without an Army (GSoA), who had called the referendum against the bill – argued that there were billion-franc shortfalls for urgent federal government initiatives, such as education, transport and the old-age and survivors' in-

surance scheme. It was also contended that the Swiss Air Force was already too big and that the F/A-18s were sufficient for policing the airspace.

Change in trend over military policy?

There had never been a No outcome at a referendum over military issues. The traditional loyalty towards the army failed to materialise on this occasion. This is explained by various factors, including some that go back years. For example, doubt was cast over the selection procedure after the decision in favour of the Gripen model. Many conservative politicians also questioned the quality of the aircraft, which led to major delays in the parliamentary procedure.

The conservatives nevertheless managed to close ranks to some degree. However, a conservative committee opposing the Gripen was set up, mainly supported by Green Liberals. This saw the No camp extend far beyond army-sceptical groups and left-wing parties. Financial policy concerns were combined with issues such as whether

national defence should focus more systematically on more realistic threats like cyber-attacks, terrorism, major environmental disasters and organised crime, etc., instead of traditional warfare.

Federal Councillor Maurer acted foolishly

Defence Minister Ueli Maurer also came under fire after the referendum. Both supporters and opponents of the Gripen jets believed he had led an inept referendum campaign. It emerged that Maurer had taken advice from Sweden over his strategy. He made sexist jokes, was abusive towards the media and portrayed the Gripen referendum as a moment of destiny for the army, which even provoked anger among supporters of the bill.

It remains to be seen what will now happen. One thing is for certain: the rejection of a new fighter jet does not represent a rejection of the army but it does have a lot to do with the issue of the future orientation of Swiss national defence.

JÜRIG MÜLLER is an editor with the "Swiss Review"

FURTHER REFERENDA HELD ON 18 MAY 2014

Minimum wage had no chance

The trade unions suffered a major setback as their minimum wage initiative was overwhelmingly quashed with 76.3 percent voting against it. The proposal had sought to set the statutory minimum wage at 22 Swiss francs an hour or around 4,000 francs a month. The trade unions did not even succeed in fully mobilising potential left-wing voters as the initiative was rejected even more emphatically than the Young Socialists' 1:12 initiative against top salaries last November. The majority of Swiss people are clearly opposed to state intervention in salary policy.

In favour of GPs and against paedophiles

On the other hand, the new constitutional article which obliges federal gov-

ernment and the cantons to ensure the provision of basic medical care by promoting general practitioners was overwhelmingly adopted with 88 percent of votes cast for it. The issue had initially been raised by an initiative put forward by the medical profession which was later withdrawn in favour of a Federal Council counterproposal.

The paedophile initiative also addressed an issue of widespread concern. It was approved by 63.5 percent of voters. Anyone convicted under the law of sexual offences against children or dependents will automatically be prohibited from working with children for life in future. Those opposed to the proposal, who contested that it was disproportionate, failed to convince the electorate with their arguments.

Nuclear power station can continue to operate

The issue of nuclear power appeared on the referendum agenda for the first time since the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, albeit only in the canton of Berne. A popular initiative had sought to immediately decommission the 40-year-old Mühleberg nuclear power plant near the city of Berne which constantly faces criticism over sometimes serious safety deficiencies. The proposal was nevertheless rejected by 63.3 percent of voters. Bernische Kraftwerke (BKW) had already decided before the referendum to close down the reactor in 2019. In the wake of Fukushima the Federal Council resolved to withdraw from nuclear power in principle, but the new energy policy is only at the draft stage. (JM)

The panther

Federal Councillor Alain Berset of the Social Democratic Party (SP) has set himself an ambitious goal – he is planning to reform the old-age pension system as this is the only way of securing its long-term future. His two liberal predecessors at the Federal Department of Home Affairs, Pascal Couchepin and Didier Burkhalter, failed miserably with reform bills. Alain Berset's strategy is to wait, sneak up and pounce at the right moment, writes Matthias Daum in his profile of the politician.



Federal Councillor Alain Berset observes both allies and opponents scrupulously and with great tactical nous

Alain Berset remains tight-lipped. He does not give interviews. He did admittedly make himself available to discuss the new vaccination law voted on last year, just as he did for the Sbrinz cheese matured over a 24-month period because Berset is the patron of the autumn Tasting Week. However, the SP Federal Councillor is keeping his counsel on his major project, the comprehensive reform of the old-age pension system. His media spokesperson has been effusive in putting off all interview requests for months.

A tactical and strategic approach

“Alain Berset is lying in wait like a panther up a tree, ready to strike when the right moment comes along.” This is the view of a high-ranking official in the federal capital of Berne, who is full of respect for him. The scene is a Wednesday in November at three o'clock in the afternoon. Berne is set for a snowfall. Alain Berset enters the large room at the media centre of the Federal Palace and takes his place on the podium. His posture betrays the fact that he was once an elite athlete. He holds a five-centimetre-thick bundle of A4 sheets in the air. He smiles and says: “What we have to tackle here is far from straightforward.”

The old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) fund will have a shortfall of 8.6 billion Swiss francs in 2030. The financial investments of the pension funds are today already generating increasingly lower returns, and these need to cover the payment of ever

longer pensions. Experts estimate that there will be a discrepancy of up to 110 billion Swiss francs by 2030.

It is the greatest Swiss pension reform since 1985, when occupational pensions (BVG) became mandatory. Switzerland has since struggled to restructure its old-age pension system. The last AHV revision was approved almost 20 years ago. It gradually increased the pension age for women from 62 to 64 years of age. All other attempts at amendments have failed. Most recently, the Swiss people rejected a pension age of 65 for women in 2004, and six years later they also voted against a reduction in the occupational pension conversion rate. Parliament then opposed a leaner version of the 11th AHV reform in the same year.

The minister responsible for social affairs is now venturing a major gamble. He intends to reform the AHV and BVG systems together. Berset announced his plans a year ago. He presented the details in November. The pension age for women is to be increased from 64 to 65 within six years. The conversion rate of the occupational pension scheme is to be reduced from 6.8% to 6% over a four-year period. It will not be possible to draw a pension from the pension fund until the age of 62. The same contribution rates will apply for both the self-employed and employees. The following principle will apply to the AHV fund: if its level falls below 70% of annual payouts, the contribution

rate will automatically be increased and pensions will no longer be adjusted fully for inflation. And, in view of the fact that a shortfall of 7.2 billion Swiss francs will still exist in the AHV system from 2030 onwards, VAT is set to rise by up to two percent.

The electorate as allies

“Berset is attempting to create an exciting new chapter,” says the political scientist Claude Longchamp. “He has placed a large hat in the centre of the circle and everyone now has to put something in it.” The previous reforms failed because there were always clear winners and losers. Sometimes it was women, sometimes the elderly and sometimes the young. Strange alliances were formed, for example when 80% of the conservative Swiss People's Party (SVP) voters were opposed to a reduction in the occupational pension conversion rate despite the fact that the trade unions had called the referendum. Now everyone is set to lose, and there will only be one winner – common sense.

“This may be asking too much of some politicians,” remarks Berset. “But the voters know how to deal with complex issues – they have proven this time and time again.” Everyone concerned is aware that the old-age pension system has to be adapted to demographic change. All the scenarios indicate that from 2020 onwards the profits generated by AHV funds will no longer be sufficient to finance the pensions. But can a so-



Alain Berset does not have a plan B because previous reforms failed for precisely that reason

cialist Federal Councillor successfully implement such an enormous project in a fundamentally conservative country? If you ask around in political circles in Berne, the opposite question is posed: Who is going to pull it off if not Berset? Admiration of the strategist is so great that journalists even interpret his defeats as victories.

Well acquainted with how politics works

Alain Berset's career has progressed smoothly at great strides. He was a member of the Fribourg Constitutional Council aged 27, a Council of States member at 31 and a Federal Councillor at 39. This native of Fribourg belongs to a new generation of Swiss politicians. He is a professional, not a part-timer. After graduating in economics at the University of Neuchâtel, he worked at the Hamburg Institute of International Economics and then for the public authorities in Neuchâtel before founding his own consultancy firm. "A Federal Councillor has to know exactly how our political institutions work," said Berset before his election to government. He possesses an advantage thanks to experience and networks and all

at the tender age for a Federal Councillor of just 41.

The newcomer on the left seized his opportunity when the conservative Didier Burkhalter, as he said himself, no longer wanted to fight about "highly complex issues using extremely technical statutory articles" at the Federal Department of Home Affairs. A politician who pins his faith on the state, Berset gave his first major speech on the national Employers' Day. It was written by a former advisor to the previous CEO of Novartis, Daniel Vasella. It was brilliant. "There is such a thing as society," he said, countering Margaret Thatcher's neoliberal maxim and appealing to the conscience of the business leaders.

Berset opened his game of chess with a move against his own grass roots on the left. Increasing the pension age, reducing the conversion rate and the automatic adjustment of pensions if the level of the AHV fund declines – these are concessions to the conservatives. It is just that they failed to recognise it. The employers' federation voiced its criticism, arguing that the reform was not viable for the economy and that the threatened VAT increases should only be used as a last

resort. The trade and crafts association (Gewerbeverband) condemned the measures as "a provocation". It instead wants to make the pension age dependent on the level of the AHV fund. Pensioners would in this case only know the point from when they could draw a full pension two years in advance.

The common sense on which Berset is relying is holed up in political trenches. The minister responsible for social affairs still lacks the allies for his project. Even the trade unions and his own party are distancing themselves from him.

Time nevertheless favours the left-winger. The closer the year comes when the AHV system actually finds itself in financial difficulty, the more voters will be affected by possible measures and the more difficult it will become to put forward cost-saving proposals. Berset knows he is holding this trump card in his hand. When a journalist asked him whether he had a plan B, the Federal Councillor replied: "The previous reforms failed because there was always a plan B in the background." In short, there is no alternative to this huge project.

Haste is dangerous

If it should nevertheless fail, the country would be left in a real mess and Alain Berset would face the same fate as many of his predecessors at the Federal Department of Home Affairs: big plans but no results. That prospect does not appear to unnerve him. After the press conference, the panther makes a few more statements in front of the microphones before withdrawing to his tree.

"Anyone who attempts to make rapid political headway in Switzerland will soon be thwarted. Greater progress is made by adopting a slower approach," said Berset in one speech. But he also remarked: "Apprehensive citizens are distrustful of any reform." A public debate is required on this issue, he added. It is hard to debate with a Federal Councillor who lurks up trees. It will soon become clear whether he will climb down now that the consultation process on his reform project has been completed.

MATTHIAS DAUM is an editor with the "Die Zeit" newspaper. His article was also published in "Die Zeit" no. 50/2013.

Lessons in democracy

Political education in Switzerland could be better. To mark its centenary, the New Helvetic Society is now launching a campaign and wants to set up a national centre of expertise for the promotion of political education.

By Reto Wissmann

“Nobody is born a democrat. Democracy is a social idea, not a natural occurrence, and citizens therefore have to learn about it.” That is the view of Professor Rolf Gollob, and he knows what he is talking about. Gollob is the national coordinator of the Council of Europe’s Education for democratic citizenship programme and works at the Zurich University of Teacher Education specialising in political education. He also knows that a wide range of programmes and initiatives already exist in relation to the topic. For example, the website www.politischebildung.ch contains a long list of institutions and official bodies in Switzerland and abroad that focus on it. There is nevertheless a lack of coordination and interconnectedness. “When it comes to political education, the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing,” remarks Rolf Gollob. Far too much energy is wasted.

The New Helvetic Society is now seeking to rectify the situation. To mark its 100th anniversary, the highly esteemed association is launching a campaign entitled “100 times political education”. “The importance of the issue is not in dispute,” remarks Hans Stöckli, President of the New Helvetic Society and a Council of States member for the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP). “What is lacking is the political will to implement the promises made on the soapbox.” There

is insufficient support for projects, he says, and Switzerland urgently needs a national centre of expertise for political education.

It is hoped that this focal issue, which looks to the future, will secure the New Helvetic Society’s own survival, as Hans Stöckli openly concedes (see interview). The society is fighting to change its image as an old gentlemen’s club and to counter a declining membership. It is now embarking upon a fresh start and has set itself ambitious targets.

Various initiatives concerning political education are to take place in the eight local groups. The New Helvetic Society is seeking to support, coordinate and raise the profile of projects of other organisations. It is planning to give young people the opportunity to attend national and cantonal votes and elections as electoral observers at key locations. “This will enable them to discover how democracy works at first hand,” explains Hans Stöckli. This part of the “100 times political education” programme is supported by the Swiss Cantonal Secretaries’ Conference.

Private funding required

The main element of the “100 times political education” programme is nevertheless the establishment of a national centre of expertise.

CUSTODIAN OF NATIONAL UNITY

The New Helvetic Society – a Meeting Place for Switzerland celebrated its centenary in Biel in February. However, the origins of the organisation go back much further. Back in 1762, proponents of different faiths came together to form the Helvetic Society in Schinznach Bad. Their goal was to turn Switzerland into a modern federal state.

Educated men from the middle classes and aristocracy worked on federal cooperation, religious tolerance and the development of a national identity in the most important pan-Switzerland association of the day. Its founders included the Basel town clerk Isaak Iselin, the Zurich doctor Hans Caspar Hirzel, the Lucerne councillor Joseph Anton Felix von Balthasar and the Bernese professor of law Daniel von Fellenberg. Ten years after it had achieved its objective with the signing of the federal constitution of 1848, the Helvetic Society was dissolved.

In February 1914, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, literary fig-

ures, journalists and academics from French-speaking Switzerland as well as politicians and entrepreneurs from the German-speaking part drew upon the principles of the Helvetic Society and founded the New Helvetic Society in Berne. The driving forces included the Fribourg author and controversial admirer of authoritarian regimes Gonzague de Reynold as well as the Bernese writer Carl Albert Loosli.

The primary reason for its foundation was the threat to internal unity posed by the global political crisis. The organisation became well-known nationwide thanks to the “Unser Schweizer Standpunkt” (Our Swiss Standpoint) speech by Carl Spitteler, the poet and Nobel laureate for literature. Local groups soon emerged in various cities of Switzerland as well as in Paris, Berlin and London. Across party-political boundaries, the New Helvetic Society advocated multilingualism as well as the conservation of national heritage and of the unique characteristics of the respective parts of the country. The Organisation of

the Swiss Abroad (OSA) was founded in 1916 thanks to the New Helvetic Society.

The society later supported Switzerland’s accession to the League of Nations, backed an initiative to preserve the Rhine Falls and contributed to the creation of the cultural foundation Pro Helvetia, the Stapferhaus museum at Lenzburg Castle and the ch Foundation for Federal Cooperation. Ideologically, the New Helvetic Society’s stance has fluctuated throughout the years mainly between a national conservative outlook and a policy of openness to the world.

The New Helvetic Society had 2,540 members at its peak in 1920, while today there are still 850 in eight active local groups. In 2007, it merged with Rencontre Suisse, another civic association from French-speaking Switzerland. Its official title has since been the “New Helvetic Society – a Meeting Place for Switzerland”. www.politischebildung.ch

Source: Historical Dictionary of Switzerland



Young people at the anniversary of the New Helvetic Society practising the art of political argument

“We will go from door to door to raise private funding for this,” says Hans Stöckli, “and we will canvas all the political parties for support and set up a cross-party lobby group for the project.” This should result in the creation of a national centre for political education with a broad-based trustee structure and a federal government mandate.

The need for this is highlighted by international comparative studies on the political knowledge and understanding of 15-year-olds. In 2003, Switzerland only finished in 19th position among 28 participating countries. The Swiss evaluation published at the time was entitled “Adolescents without politics”. The study organiser, Fritz Oser, complains of “political illiteracy” in schools, which he says is surprising in a “model democracy”. Three years later, a survey was conducted in Switzerland among 1,500 school pupils in Year 9. The results were sobering – virtually nobody was able to name the three powers at federal level correctly. And almost 70% thought that the Federal Council decided whether a referendum is accepted.

Lowering the voting age

The turnout among young adults at elections and referenda is also unsatisfactory: only just over 30% of 18 to 24-year-olds took part in the last national elections. The average turnout stood at just under 50%. “We must generate interest in politics among young people,” declared Federal Chancellor Corina Casanova at the New Helvetic Society anniversary event in Biel at the beginning of February. A political culture must be created where young people are included more.

The Federal Chancellor sees a lowering of the voting age from 18 to 16 as a means of achieving this. This measure has already been introduced in Austria and several German federal states. “This would make it possible to close the gap between theory at school and practice at the ballot box,” explained Corina Casanova. A great deal of scepticism nevertheless exists in Switzerland. The canton of Glarus already has a voting age of 16, and the idea has been voted on in 18 cantons but rejected in all of them.

“Our country needs this cohesive force”

Four questions for Hans Stöckli, President of the New Helvetic Society and the Bernese Council of States member for the Social Democratic Party (SP).

SWISS REVIEW: *What has been the New Helvetic Society's greatest achievement over the past 100 years?*

HANS STÖCKLI: The greatest, biggest and most permanent project of the New Helvetic Society was the foundation of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad. It has also played a significant role in the establishment of various institutions for federal cooperation. However, the New Helvetic Society has always been a major factor in Switzerland's unity. It has advocated solidarity between rich and poor, Swiss and foreign citizens, young and old, urban and rural areas, employers and employees, as well as productive cooperation between the political parties and, in particular, the various linguistic groups.

The New Helvetic Society enjoyed its heyday at the time of the two world wars. What is its purpose today?

The society has far fewer members today than in the past. Like all other civic societies, we also had to question our *raison d'être* and concluded that there was still a need for the society. The preservation and strengthening of Switzerland, the nation forged by the will of the people, is something we have to fight for every day. These days, we primarily focus our activities on the political education of the young generation and of newly naturalised Swiss citizens. We aim to help ensure that people who acquire new political rights and obligations in our direct democracy are well equipped to exercise them as responsible citizens.

The society's commemorative publication says that it has become a “bourgeois association for dignitaries and senior citizens”. How do you intend to move away from that?

We want to and need to extend our membership and circle of influence. This is another reason why we wish to address issues that concern young people and to stimulate their interest in successful coexistence in Switzerland. The baton should be passed on to the next generation.

Why are you personally committed to this society?

As a young SP town councillor and court president in Biel, I was asked by the then head of human resources at Omega and a Free Democrat, Roger Anker, whether I was interested in joining a local group of the New Helvetic Society that was driven by critical patriotism. I have always had a strong interest in national policy issues and the New Helvetic Society is, in my view, a cohesive force that our country most definitely needs. As a former president of the town of Biel, Switzerland's largest bilingual town, I understand the vital importance of the coexistence of different linguistic groups, and this makes my task as President of the New Helvetic Society easier.

Hans Stöckli, Council of States member and President of the New Helvetic Society



World full of verve

What were the years 1900 to 1914 like? And is it possible to imagine this epoch of excitement about technology and progress as though the First World War never happened? The National Museum Zurich is dedicating an exhibition to these years.

By Daniel Di Falco

“As if he had anticipated the terrible fate that awaited him, the hapless inventor hesitated at length before plunging from a great height.” The film informs the viewer of this, in block capitals, because this, like all productions of the day, is a silent movie. The audience does not hear the impact which ended the Franz Reichelt show, as well as his life, on the grass lawns in front of the Eiffel Tower early on the morning of 4 February 1912.

But we do see the protracted hesitation by the Austrian on the tower’s viewing platform. He is standing on the railings in a parachute suit which he designed himself. He looks down, sways back and forth, clouds of breath in front of his moustache in the winter air, back and forth again and again. Perhaps he is reconsidering the idea of demonstrating the viability of his invention to the invited reporters, and then he disappears through the bottom edge of the screen. The unchecked fall from a height of 57 metres lasts four seconds. Another camera films him from a distance – it looks as though a stone is travelling to earth with a fluttering ribbon trailing behind it. Then we see the gendarmes, who quickly carry a lifeless body through the crowds before using a yardstick to measure the hole that Franz Reichelt has left behind in the frozen ground. It is ten, perhaps fifteen, centimetres deep.

Reichelt can be seen as a new Icarus, but also as a child of his time. In the period from 1900, people went into raptures over speed and danger, turned pilots into heroes as, even in machines that were more sophisticated than Reichelt’s suit, every flight was an adventure that could end in fatality.

Towards the back of the exhibition at the National Museum Zurich hangs a broken propeller. It belonged to the monoplane of the Solothurn aviation pioneer Theodor Borrer who attempted a nosedive manoeuvre that cost him his life on 22 March 1914 at an air show in Basel. He had been warned,



Franz Reichelt in his flying suit – he plunged to his death from the Eiffel Tower on 4 February 1912

exactly like Franz Reichelt, who jumped hesitantly but with his eyes open.

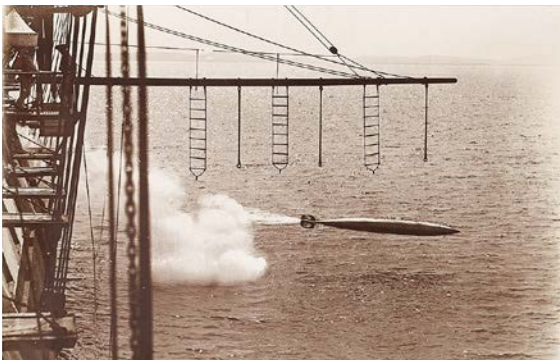
The symbolism is easy to see in Reichelt’s jump. Was not the world at that time somewhat like Reichelt? Was it not also inspired by faith in the power of progress which could no longer be stopped? Did it not, defying apprehension and thirsty for adventure, plunge tragically to its own demise in summer 1914 with the First World War and its twenty million deaths?

Without the long shadows

“1900–1914: Foray into Happiness” is the title of the exhibition which focuses on a world on the move. Psychiatrists were discovering the unconscious mind, and natural scientists the invisible. Artists were liberating themselves from aesthetic

restraints, and women from gender roles. Flourishing consumerism turned department stores into a paradise, pictures learned how to move, communication became wireless, life moved at a faster pace, and the world became more global. The fact that the rapid change also had its downsides and produced misgivings and chaos is illustrated by the countertrends – vegetarians, nudists, anthroposophists and other lifestyle reformers settled into their isolated worlds.

There is an exercise in forgetting in order to see more clearly: “Imagine you could see the years from 1900 to 1914, without the long shadow cast by their future, as vital moments in all of their complexity and contradiction,” says Philipp Blom. Six years ago, the historian and author wrote the much ac-



40–60 HP Aerodinamica, Alfa Romeo from 1914 (above) and the firing of a torpedo, probably in 1900



A typical work of art from the period: the "Tänzerin" (Dancer) by Ferdinand Hodler

claimed book "Der taumelnde Kontinent" (The Vertigo Years), which is a vivid and opulent cultural history of the period prior to the First World War. It provided the model for the exhibition in Zurich. Anyone who has not read the book can now step into it, so to speak. And anyone unable to travel to Zurich can enjoy the same experience as a reader - an unconventional, extraordinarily colourful and compact collection of impressions about a turbulent time which cannot be overlooked and is fascinating precisely for that reason.

Far more than Belle Epoque

What about this experiment of not knowing? Blom wanted to rectify the impression of that era. Firstly, it was not the jovial Belle Epoque of the costume dramas, a world made of porcelain that would only embrace modernity with the outbreak of war: people of the time were already captivated and perturbed in equal measure by

radical social change and technological development. On the other hand, it would also be inaccurate to simply view the years up to 1914 as the "pre-war period" and just look for what could have been a reason for or factor in the war. "In light of the many and often contradictory trends, events could have turned out very differently," writes Philipp Blom. It is that "open-ended future" that the exhibition organisers also pick up on.

All of this makes perfect sense. It is just that it is not that easy to forget. One display cabinet contains the Fox branded electric vacuum cleaner, a hundred years old - the gleaming metal tube on the two large wheels looks like a cannon. In another display, the Italian artist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti celebrates, in his "manifesto of futurism" of 1909, not just the beauty of technology but also the pounding of machinery and the roar of engines: "We seek to glorify war, military

principles, patriotism and the wonderful ideals for which one dies."

"... a good war"

Can it seriously be claimed, as can be read at the exhibition, that hardly anyone anticipated the impending catastrophe until the outbreak of war? There were also people in this country, like Richard Bovet, a journalist from French-speaking Switzerland, who wrote in 1911: "I believe we need a war, a good war." And, at the same time, the National Bank was seriously considering national supply in the event of war, as referred to in Georg Kreis' book (see page 19).

In reality, the increasingly intense rivalry between the European powers had long been preparing the ground for the idea; only the weapons were needed to make the situation definite. There was a belief that global trade bound nations so strongly together that war was no longer a possibility. But there were also people

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A straightjacket from the Waldau psychiatric hospital near Berne

like Friedrich Engels, a social theorist and close friend of Marx, who had foreseen a “world war of unprecedented scale and severity” as early as 1887: “eight to ten million soldiers will slaughter one another”.

The exhibition organisers’ claim that a “firm belief in peace and security” prevailed at the time is therefore questionable. On the other hand, the same applies to the exhibition as to Blom’s book – the emphasis is placed not on analysis, but rather on impressions. And there are more than enough of those – five hundred exhibits represent the sensations and confusions of that era and do not produce a linear path but rather come together to form an associative colourful kaleidoscope. Freud’s dream interpretation and the x-ray of a chameleon, a straightjacket and the Titanic, feminism and twelve-tone music, fitness equipment and the genocide in the Belgian Congo, Einstein and the wanted posters of hunted anarchists, tin cans and Monte Verità, the 1900 World Fair in Paris and the polar explorer Xavier Mertz from Basel. He died in the ice of the Antarctic on 7 January 1913, possibly of an unbalanced diet after he and his companion had begun to eat their sled dogs – exciting times indeed.

Talk of “dipping” into the past and the “atmosphere” of an era gives historians worry lines. Not without justification. The time machine has after all still not been invented: The present is always the prism through which history appears and, as in any era, manifestations of not just new departures and upheaval but also stagnation and regression were also found in the period from 1900 to 1914. However, the “frenzy” (Blom) caused by the accelerated rate of change – one of many experiences people had at that time – is conveyed by both the exhibition and Blom’s book.

DANIEL DI FALCO is an historian and culture journalist with the “Bund” in Berne

INFORMATION

Philipp Blom: “Der taumelnde Kontinent. Europa 1900–1914”; DTV, Munich 2014 (fifth edition). 528 pages; CHF 21.90.
The exhibition at the National Museum Zurich with various supporting events runs until 13 July. www.landesmuseum.ch. Accompanying book from Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess, 204 pages, CHF 39.

Switzerland during the First World War

While our nation was not directly involved in the First World War with millions of dead and wounded, the events that took place between 1914 and 1918 – also referred to as the seminal catastrophe of the 20th century – nevertheless left deep scars behind. In the recently published book entitled “Insel der unsicheren Geborgenheit” (Island of Uncertain Security), Georg Kreis, an historian from Basel, traces developments during this period.

“The black cloud that floated menacingly for years in the political skies” has released a deluge, wrote the Federal Council in a dispatch on 2 August 1914. In a response to the outbreak of war, two days later Switzerland declared to the warring powers that it would not shift from its position of complete neutrality under any circumstances. At the same time, the contentious, German-friendly Ulrich Wille was appointed general and 220,000 men were mobilised to defend the borders. Divisions opened up within the nation itself – the German-speaking Swiss sympathised with the Central Powers led by the German Reich, while the French-speaking Swiss leaned towards the Entente led by France and Great Britain. The war being waged around the country drove inflation up, supply problems emerged, the people lost confidence and a real test of society took place: between 250,000 and 400,000 workers took part in the general strike. The army was deployed against them.

However, Georg Kreis’ book, engagingly written as usual, does not just focus on these largely familiar events. He also presents the results of more recent research. For example, the reasons behind the “complete neutrality” which – in view of the significant level of economic interdependence even then – was actually impossible. Kreis



also examines the ethically dubious but lucrative trade with the warring nations and reveals how xenophobic the mood was within national borders. This book is an insightful overview of the war years in Switzerland that is well worth reading.

BARBARA ENGEL

GEORG KREIS “Insel der unsicheren Geborgenheit. Die Schweiz in den Kriegsjahren 1914–1918”; Verlag NZZ-Libro, Zurich 2013, 304 pages with numerous illustrations; CHF 44; www.nzz-libro.ch

Swiss literature – a presentation in Leipzig

Switzerland was the guest of honour this year at the Leipzig Book Fair, the world's largest festival of books. Switzerland's presentation won widespread acclaim. Authors and politicians nevertheless had much explaining to do after the referendum on 9 February.

The Swiss presence in Leipzig between 13 and 16 March was remarkable – it included over 80 authors from all four of Switzerland's linguistic regions, around 70 publishing houses, cultural institutions like Pro Helvetia, a delegation from the Federal Council's image promotion and communications agency known as Presence Switzerland, as well as academics, journalists and even Alain Berset, the Federal Councillor responsible for culture. "Auftritt Schweiz" (Switzerland Centre Stage) was the overarching title. The organisers of the Leipzig Book Fair avoided the term "guest country", which is widely used elsewhere, as after all a large number of Swiss writers belong to the German-language cultural circle and there are few boundaries between Germany, Austria and Switzerland when it comes to literature.

Many Europeans were nonetheless perplexed by Switzerland's approval of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) initiative against mass immigration shortly before the opening of the book fair. The spotlight was on a guest that itself is no longer a good host. After the referenda of 2009 and 2010 on banning minarets and the deportation of foreign criminals, was this another manifestation of a xenophobic Switzerland?

Two representatives of small Swiss publishing houses, Jean Richard of "édition d'enbas" in Lausanne and Madlaina Bundi from "hier + jetzt" in Baden, noted down their impressions of the book fair for "Swiss Review".

At the best possible moment

"You're from Switzerland, aren't you, with that wonderful rolling 'R'? Ah, the Swiss, they know how to do things right. They still put democracy into practice. The initiative on mass immigration just illustrates that. As a national conservative, I fully endorse it. I should probably emigrate to Switzerland..." Bursting with enthusiasm, a visitor to the Leipzig Book Fair shared this with me on the urban railway, without realising the irony of his words. I did not like to explain to him that immigration to Switzerland may soon become impossible. I was still too shocked by the result and fearing

the worst for us in Leipzig. I was concerned that we in the publishing industry and our authors would be stigmatised as anti-Europeans by colleagues and the audience and as provincials isolated and out of touch with the world. Before my trip, I was thinking that Switzerland being guest of honour at the book fair had come at the worst possible moment.

We had carried out long and intensive preparations. All the publishing houses had been asked to put forward ideas and suggestions for readings, discussions and debates a year ago. A diverse, multilingual presentation had been planned to include a wide range of cultural, political and social trends, and we were, of course, also expected to entertain.

My fears did not materialise. When Federal Councillor Alain Berset stepped up to the lectern on the opening evening, he found favour with the audience within minutes. His speech was full of insight, humour and self-irony – and this self-irony ran through the

Federal Councillor Alain Berset succeeded in redressing the situation somewhat with a short but brilliant speech. He began with a quotation by the Austrian writer Roda Roda: "To be born Swiss is a great blessing. It is also wonderful to die Swiss. But what does one do in between?" Alain Berset's answer was: "At the moment, one is tempted to say that one perplexes the world and then explains Switzerland to the perplexed world."

Berset also explained how much the Swiss enjoy crossing cultural boundaries and so are constantly obliged to produce translations for the various linguistic groups. He summed it up in one sentence: "We have the privilege of having to understand one another."

Many representatives of Switzerland, from the highly acclaimed young author Dorothee Elmiger to the bestselling author Martin Suter and the old master Franz Hohler, had the opportunity to give readers a closer insight into Swiss literature over the days that followed and also the task of clearing up the confusion and explaining Switzerland to the audience in panel discussions, TV programmes and newspaper interviews. Peter von Matt's explanation of the referendum result was widely quoted: "30% of every society is made up of idiots, Switzerland included".

BARBARA ENGEL

programme over the following days like a common thread. Whether in the literary wrestling show, spoken-word cameos on the tram or the literary journey to the canton of Africa, the Bernese Oberland, the Swiss guests took all the clichés and examined them thoroughly in their presentations. The audience appreciated this as I experienced myself during the presentation of our book "Die Schweizer Kuh" (The Swiss Cow). Using various images, I illustrated the cult status and marketing of our unofficial heraldic animal. This went down well as the images said less about the cow and more about us Swiss. I had everyone laughing.

I am also pleased that Switzerland presented itself in Leipzig as a nation with complex domestic and external relations far removed from the clichés. It is difficult to say whether we got this message across to everyone. But, in retrospect, the Swiss guest of honour status definitely came at the best possible moment.

MADLAINA BUNDI



The “red bench” was an eye-catching feature of Switzerland’s presence in Leipzig. Benches for relaxation and reading were placed throughout the city

A tale of minorities

Now an editor working in French-speaking Switzerland, I spent my early years as a Swiss abroad, only arriving in Geneva in 1975. I was born in Lesotho six decades ago to Protestant missionary parents from Romandie. While the mandatory study of Afrikaans at school in Bloemfontein meant I became familiar with the grammatical structure of Germanic languages, I do not speak any German. So why visit the Leipzig Book Fair?

For ten years, I’ve worked for a publishing house which publishes the work of Swiss German authors in French and which has links with German, Austrian and Swiss publishers. In view of its cultural importance, attending Leipzig is essential to some degree, not just because of professional contacts but also for the relationships that can be forged with authors during public readings and debates or at informal meetings. Few fairs of this size provide as many events where priority is given to authors and their literary work.

Thursday, 13 March. Leo Tuor, a Sursilvan writer from Grisons and Claudio Spescha, his German translator of Sursilvan origin, are surrounded by a group of young school pupils whose mother tongue is Sorbian. They have travelled 200 km from the Lusatia region in Upper Saxony to visit the Leipzig Book Fair. I am astonished that they are on familiar terms. Leo Tuor and Claudio Spescha explain to me (in Italian and French!) that they visited a class at a Sorbian high school in Bautzen a few days earlier to talk about Tuor’s latest work published in German, Cavrein (Limmat Verlag). The exchange initiative with the school pupils gave rise to a meeting between two minorities who study and write in their own respective languages: Sorbian – a language of Slavic origin spoken by a community of 60,000 which has lived in Saxony since the sixth century – and Sursilvan – one of the five Romansh dialects from the canton of Grisons, spoken by 15,000 people. Such an occurrence gives an indication of the extent of linguistic diversity and bibliodiversity. Minorities are real crucibles of literary creation.

The Leipzig Book Fair places great emphasis on the work of translators and provides them with an opportunity to meet. Camille Luscher, a young translator of Arno Camenisch (Sez Ner and Derrière la gare, éditions d’en bas), introduces me to some colleagues and we discuss the practices and difficulties of translation, above all when it comes to translating a “spoken” literary work written in a largely un-codified language like Bärndütsch into French. Pedro Lenz’s novel, *Der Goalie bin ig*, which has just been published in French by our publishing house under the title of “Faut quitter Schummertal!” is a prime example. When Daniel Rothembühler and Nathalie Kehrlé translate Pedro Lenz’s work, they have to create a literary construction which conveys the notion of a “spoken” form of French. In Leipzig, authors belonging to the Bernese group “Bern ist überall” presented their work on stage. Such a theatrical treatment of language is rare in the francophone world. It would benefit greatly from visiting the Leipzig Book Fair.

JEAN RICHARD

The old man and his courage

Ottmar Hitzfeld will make his last major appearance at football's World Cup in Brazil. The manager of the Swiss national team is one of the most successful coaches in the world. The only thing the German has not managed to achieve is to bridge the divide between the desire to win and the fear of failure.

By Benjamin Steffen



Ottmar Hitzfeld announcing his retirement

“Mr Benthaus,” said Hitzfeld, “Mr Benthaus, I’d like to ask you whether I can come for a trial with FC Basel, assuming you actually hold them.” On the other end of the telephone line, Helmut Benthaus likely puckered his brow because he did not know this young footballer from the small club of FV Lörrach who had grown up in Stetten on the other side of the border. But after two or three attempts at restrained self-promotion, Hitzfeld talked the successful FCB coach Benthaus around. He could have a trial on a spring day in 1971 aged 22. When his golden opportunity arrived, he drove the short distance across the border in a Volkswagen Beetle. He arrived at his destination very early because he wanted to get a feel for his new surroundings and to find his feet. Benthaus did not take long to decide. Just a few impressions made in training were enough for him to inform the club management that this young man should be offered a contract.

Autumn 2013, 42 years later. The footballing nobody has become the “Hitzfeld” label, a world-class coach who won the Champions League with Borussia Dortmund (1997) and Bayern Munich (2001) and who has secured qualification for the 2014 World Cup with the Swiss national team. The view of the management of the Swiss Football Association was unequivocal – we need to offer this now somewhat older man a new contract. On 16 October 2013, two senior officials from the association sat down around a table with him with high and not unjustified hopes, but Hitzfeld plainly stated: “I’m stepping down.” He will retire after the World Cup in Brazil, and his deci-

sion is final. Hitzfeld announced his departure publicly on 17 October 2013. He was close to tears and had to summon up courage to take this step. And as though wanting to justify this decision – to the public and probably as much to himself – he said: “It is important to step down at the height of your powers.”

Marked by life

The Hitzfeld brand might stand for success and an array of titles but it also exemplifies exhaustion. In contrast to other managers of his calibre, he makes no secret of it. His body does not conceal the signs. For others, the hair simply turns grey or thins out; José Mourinho resembles George Clooney, and Pep Guardiola a self-satisfied, bald ascetic. But the crater-like furrows on Hitzfeld’s brow look as though they have been etched in. The more important the upcoming match, the deeper the lines. They are very visible indications of how much his managerial career has taken out of him, especially in the German Bundesliga, which never allows its protagonists time to hang around in a Volkswagen Beetle for a few minutes to get a feel for new surroundings and to find their feet.

In 1991, Hitzfeld left Zurich Grasshoppers as a championship-winning manager to join Borussia Dortmund. Some Germans derided him as a small-time Swiss. While it is true that he had visited the swimming pool in Riehen as a young boy and went shopping in Switzerland, he was in actual fact one of them. But many Germans were not interested in hearing that at first. Hitzfeld had to endure a fight for recognition and approval that others were spared because they had been big stars as footballers, though often they were soon forgotten because they were unsuccessful in management.

At times like this when he has something to prove, Hitzfeld’s instinct for self-preservation comes to the fore. He is like a *perpetuum mobile*. Ever since his coaching career began in 1983 with SC Zug in the Nationalliga B, the second tier of Swiss foot-

ball, he has constantly been on the go. Hitzfeld was a young father, the club president a building contractor with a tendency to be hot-headed. Hitzfeld was aware that nobody remembers a manager who fails at his first job. Hitzfeld did not fail anywhere, not at Zug, nor at Aarau and nor with Grasshoppers. And his instinct for self-preservation also helped him to overcome homesickness and to make an immediate impact at Dortmund. He subsequently made Dortmund better and better, and the first few lines started to appear on his forehead. When he suffered with lower back pain in 1994, Hitzfeld decided to use cortisone injections to cope with the hectic pace of life in the Bundesliga. He took no time off to recover – until the side-effects of the cortisone led to an intestinal rupture. “I was close to death,” revealed Hitzfeld in the biography by Josef Hochstrasser published in 2008.

Not fit enough

In 1997, after six years at Dortmund, he received an offer from Real Madrid, but Hitzfeld, at 48 years old, was burnt out. A great communicator but no linguist, he feared the “behemoth” of the Spanish language. He decided: “You are not physically or mentally fit enough to embark upon a new challenge.” He stood down and accepted the position of Dortmund’s sporting director. He once said that it took a long time before he was able to “enjoy being able to sleep better and find inner peace”. Accounts from 2004 sound even more dramatic. He felt only relief when Uli Hoeneß, Bayern’s manager at the time, told him one evening that he was thinking of terminating his contract prematurely after five seasons and eleven titles. Hitzfeld had felt himself that he was at the end of his tether. “I was plagued by terrible insomnia. I was no longer able to recuperate or to make clear decisions about which matters I should give my full attention to.” He continued: “I was no longer getting any pleasure out of life. I found every little task a chore. I did not want to get up in the morning and was living in my own little world.”



Ottmar Hitzfeld's life has been dominated almost entirely by football for over 40 years

It is astonishing that someone so given to self-reflection has constantly allowed himself to be tempted back to the coaching dug-out. One reason might be that Hitzfeld's character is coloured not just by his instinct for self-preservation but also by his penchant for gambling. This trait not only means he always wants to win but is also usually clever and calculating. In the early 1980s, when his playing career was coming to an end at FC Lucerne, he was a notorious poker player. When a game was planned for the evening, he is said to have slept for two hours during the afternoon so he would be fresher than his opponents in the evening.

Hitzfeld is always seeking to exercise control. Many journalists have followed him closely over many years, but hardly any have got really close to him. He gives little away about his private life. But if you listen to him carefully, you will sometimes detect a discord which wears him down and shapes his life: On the one hand, there is the indomitable desire to win and, on the other – actually incompatible with it – is the unconquerable fear of failure. Hitzfeld has achieved more

success than almost anyone else and yet he feels the need to constantly prove himself time and time again – it is as though the achievement is not good enough even if it represents the zenith.

The fact that the highly successful Hitzfeld is extremely unlikely to win the last match of his career might be seen as a deliberately chosen and cynical end. Even the most optimistic of people would not expect Switzerland to become world champions in Brazil. They will either fail to progress from the group stage or get eliminated in the sub-

sequent knock-out rounds. Hitzfeld remarks: "We'll see. The round of sixteen is our primary objective. If we're well prepared and give our all, there are no limits to what can be achieved." Hitzfeld won't relent. What has been with him throughout his life will remain there to the end – the hope of not losing because defeats diminish the enjoyment of life.

When FC Bayern Munich asked him to step in again as coach in 2007 in an emergency situation, Hitzfeld accepted the offer without hesitation but recognised at the same time that he had fooled himself. He knew that he would have come to a different conclusion had he given himself time to reflect. His decision would then have been: Bayern, never again.

In autumn 2013, he took longer, much longer, to reflect and hardly anyone knew about it. He did not want others to influence him, to listen to any well-intentioned advice or to prompt people to exercise unwelcome powers of persuasion. He simply wanted to listen to himself, his wife, his body and his soul. He will still travel to Brazil and the furrows on his brow will become even deeper. He will sit in the Swiss dugout on a few more occasions, lose for one last time and then make his departure never to return. He has succeeded in giving up an addiction. He lacks the courage to take it up again.

BENJAMIN STEFFEN is an editor with the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung"

AN EVENTFUL LIFE

The 50-year-old Vladimir Petkovic, a coach who spent a long time on the peripheries of Swiss football, has been appointed as Ottmar Hitzfeld's successor. In 1987, when he arrived from Sarajevo, he joined FC Chur in the Nationalliga B; in the

years that followed, he played and coached in peripheral regions in geographical and footballing terms, including Valais, Grisons and Ticino. For a few years the Swiss-Croatian dual citizen also worked part-time as a social

worker until the Bernese club Young Boys gave him the opportunity to manage a Super League club in 2008. He came close to winning a title on several occasions. In 2013, he led the Serie A club Lazio of Rome to a cup victory. BSN

Between two worlds: books and literary figures among the Swiss abroad

By Charles Linsmayer

He put the small town of Grignan in the south of France on the map of world literature – Philippe Jaccottet

The fact that the landscape and atmosphere of the little town of Grignan, near Montélimar, which is surrounded by lavender and sunflower fields, became a setting of world literature is thanks to French-speaking Switzerland's most famous living author, Philippe Jaccottet, who was born in Moudon on 30 June 1925. He studied literature in Lausanne and gained access to the leading authors of his day in Paris. Ever since 1953, when he moved to the small town at the foot of Mont Ventoux with his wife, the artist Anne-Marie Haesler, he has discovered in this barren landscape of rocks and water the "other condition" so craved by Musil, the dream of real life. Here he has found the solitariness – "it was a kind of escape so I could remain myself" – that has enabled him to enter into creative dialogue with great literary figures of the past and present.

Lightness of touch and reticence

In Grignan, in addition to the "Carnets de notes" (Notebooks) published in five volumes between 1984 and 2013, he has also produced lyrical works such as "Airs", or "Leçons" (Learning) inspired by the death of Gustave Roud, the feather-light "Pensées sous les nuages" (Thoughts under the clouds) and the ascetic prose poems "Après beaucoup d'années" (After so many years). Jaccottet dedicated two major works to his friend, the lyrical poet André du Bouchet who died in 2001: the prose epigraph "Truinas" (Truinas) and the "Notes du ravin" (Notes from the abyss), where he called on the help of Hölderlin, Claudel, Virgil and Goethe to take the sting out of death. Even when it comes to the final realities of life, Jaccottet's prose always possesses the lightness of touch, the hesitancy and the reticence that he showed in the poem "On voit" (You see) in 1976: "I've stored up grass and fast water, /I've kept myself light, /So that the barque sinks

less." They are very subtle but Jaccottet's messages are by no means just dreamy and apolitical. His consistently critical travel book "Israël, cahier bleu" (Israel, blue book) of 2004 also contains lines like: "I fear that the power of money, which is spread like a plague, will ruin everything that is human down to the very roots."

And although he certainly does not make any concessions to contemporary tastes, Jaccottet reaches his audience through the noise of the 21st century too. In 2001, poems of his were displayed in every Parisian metro station and, in the previous year, when the 75-year-old was first persuaded to give a reading, the Centre Culturel Suisse was bursting at the seams.

Congenial intermediary

However, Jaccottet's significance can only really be appreciated by putting his creative work, which he delayed publishing for a long time, alongside his work as a translator which began with the French version of Thomas Mann's "Death in Venice" in 1947. In the words of Rilke, Jaccottet wanted to become "someone appointed to extol", and he extolled the poets by translating their work. His translations provided the French-speaking world access to Robert Musil, Thomas Mann, Hölderlin and Ingeborg Bachmann.

In 2008, Jaccottet undertook probably his most demanding translation task with Rilke's "Duino Elegies", and it was again evident here how this great lyrical poet is able to get into the mind of other poets and to render their words with the subtlest moods and nuances: "It was this tone that I wished to convey, the very specific tone of a voice in which a lyrical work spoke to me."



Quotation:

"Poetry is this song that nobody can grasp, this space which remains uninhabitable, this key which we keep having to lose. If it ceases to be doubtful, ceases to be elsewhere (should that be: ceases to no longer be?), it founders and is no more."

(From: "La promenade sous les arbres" (Walk under the trees), 1957. "La promenade sous les arbres" has been translated into German by Friedhelm Kemp as "Der Spaziergang unter Bäumen", Benziger-Verlag, Zurich 1981. It is currently out of print.)

Bibliography: German translations of Jaccottet's works are available in several volumes from Hanser-Verlag, Munich. The original French versions, including the 1626-page Pléiade edition of "Œuvres", are available from Gallimard, Paris.

CHARLES LINSMAYER is a literary scholar and journalist in Zurich



OSA advice

Shortly after my 70th birthday, I received a demand from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Office regarding a mandatory medical examination for my Swiss driving licence. This was sent to me via federal government's RIPOL police search system. What does this mean?

Anyone who emigrates from Switzerland must exchange their Swiss driving licence for one of their country of residence within a certain period of time. For example, the deadline in EU states is six months. The competent authority in the country of residence can provide you with binding information on the deadlines and procedure. Failure to exchange the Swiss driving licence for one of the country of residence may result in fines or penalties.

If you are moving abroad, you must notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Office in Switzerland; then, when you are abroad, you must replace your driving licence with one issued by the country of residence. If you subsequently move back to Switzerland, you may drive with your foreign licence for a year during which time you must apply for this to be exchanged for a Swiss driving licence. An eye test may be required for a Swiss driving licence depending on the canton.

If your move abroad is not reported to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Office, a search may be initiated at the age of 70 when the medical examination to assess fitness to drive becomes due, for example, via RIPOL, federal government's police search system. This happens because the

person concerned is no longer registered in Switzerland but is still in possession of a Swiss driving licence.

Swiss citizens whose definitive place of residence is abroad but who still hold a Swiss driving licence can contact the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Office that issued it so that it can be suspended. There is generally no charge for fees or costs.

Addresses of the cantonal Driver and Vehicle Licensing Offices:

<http://www.strassenverkehrsamt.ch/>

OSA LEGAL DEPARTMENT

OSA's Legal Department provides general legal information on Swiss law and specifically in areas that concern the Swiss abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law and does not intervene in disputes between private parties.

Information on the right to participate in votes and elections

The Swiss abroad can participate in elections and referenda in Switzerland provided they are registered on an electoral roll in Switzerland. Swiss citizens are not automatically enrolled when they register with a consulate or embassy abroad. They must explicitly request the right to vote. Swiss abroad are usually registered on the electoral roll at the commune where they last resided in Switzerland. This enrolment must be renewed regularly - at least every four years - with the commune (not the representation abroad). This does not take place automatically. Some communes

regularly ask their eligible voters abroad to do this, while others do not. The forms for enrolment and renewal can be found at: www.eda.admin.ch > Documentation > Publications > Swiss Abroad > Leaflets "Political rights"

Direct link: <http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/doc/publi/ptrali/merkbl.html>

Youth Seminar at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad



From August 15 to 17, 2014, the Congress of the Swiss Abroad will take place in Baden. This meeting will be the perfect opportunity for Swiss Abroad to learn about modern information technologies and social media. At the congress, the generation of digital natives will get its own platform and undoubtedly bring its input on this topic.

Two years ago, an article in the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" read: "Since time immemorial, older generations have observed young people's activities with a critical eye.

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 Swiss-Community.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.sjas.ch

■ **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



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Generally everything was better in the past – or at least different, since everything one does not know generates a considerable portion of scepticism. Sometimes parents can even feel overtaken by the rapid technological development which, in recent years, has totally changed not only the professional world but the consumption of the media as a whole especially by the young generation.”

The seminar “Information Technologies and Social Media” will start on 10 August, in Baden, where the participants will meet their host families. From Monday to Thursday the OSA will give the young Swiss Abroad an introduction to the subject. The youngsters will assess and define their way

of using the modern media, exchange views and information, work on their own media competence and publish reports on www.swisscommunity.org. For this course, the OSA has put together an interesting panel of lecturers, speakers and workshop hosts. The social programme will provide diversion and entertainment.

At the Congress of the Swiss Abroad the group will present the outcome of its work while participating in the panel on “Youth and Online Media”. The discussion with the older generation will therefore be based on specific examples.

Young Swiss from all over the world are welcome to join this informative and interesting course.



*Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Youth Service, email: youth@aso.ch
www.swisscommunity.org, www.aso.ch*



92nd Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Baden – 15 to 17 August 2014

This year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Baden will focus on the theme of “information technology and social media: opportunities for the Swiss abroad”. Speakers will include Federal Councillor Alain Berset and Otfried Jarren, professor of journalism at the University of Zurich.

Find out more about the theme of the congress at www.aso-kongress.ch. You can also order your congress registration pack online here. Put the congress dates in your diary today. We look forward to seeing you.

Please send me the registration documents in spring 2014 for the 92nd Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Baden. My address is:

Surname: _____ first name: _____

Address: _____

Country: _____ postcode/city: _____

Email: _____

Please write clearly in block capitals. The registration documents are available in two languages: German French (please tick the language required) Return the completed form to: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Communications & Marketing, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND / Fax: +41 (0)31 356 61 01 or email us at communication@aso.ch

Switzerland as a Protecting Power

At the start of 2014, Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, met US Secretary of State John Kerry in Davos and Vice President Joe Biden at the White House. On both occasions, the US representatives expressly thanked Switzerland for acting as a Protecting Power on behalf of the USA. This gratitude is more than a matter of courtesy. It shows appreciation of Switzerland's services, which demonstrate our dependability, credibility and discretion.

A nation acts as a Protecting Power when it accepts a mandate to mediate between two States which do not have any diplomatic and/or consular relations with one another, in order to ensure a minimum level of reciprocal contact. A distinction is made between two types of mandate: the "Geneva mandate" and the "Vienna mandate". The less common "Geneva mandate" is based on humanitarian international law and aims to ensure the proper application of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the appropriate treatment of civilians, prisoners of war and injured persons. The ICRC usually acts as a Protecting Power under the "Geneva mandate".

Protecting Power mandates today are generally the representation of interests under the "Vienna mandate". They focus on the diplomatic and consular relations between two States and are based on the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963.

The specific content of the Protecting Power mandate differs depending on whether the emphasis is placed on technical/humanitarian or political aspects. The first case primarily concerns the performance of traditional diplomatic and consular tasks, such as conveying messages, providing support for citizens, protecting the property of the country represented, and handling passport and visa matters. In practice, consular tasks are today also sometimes undertaken by "interest sections" of the represented States. One example is Switzerland's mandate on behalf of the USA in Cuba. A US interest section

with some US staff that is affiliated to the Swiss embassy has been dealing with complex consular affairs here since 1977.

At the political level, the Protecting Power mandate often involves keeping a discreet and reliable channel of communication open between two States despite the breakdown of diplomatic relations. A representation of interests by a third State only comes into play if the governments of the Protecting Power and the two States concerned grant their approval.

A Protecting Power is entitled to receive payment for expenses from the sending State. If the consular tasks are carried out by interest sections of the represented States, the costs for the Protecting Power are limited. Switzerland therefore sometimes refrains from claiming compensation for its mandates in the reciprocal representation of interests between the USA and Cuba or Georgia and Russia.

There are various reasons why Switzerland represents interests between States whose relations have broken down. These include the objectives of promoting peace, providing a channel of dialogue between hostile parties and increasing human security for the citizens concerned.

Switzerland is currently exercising six Protecting Power mandates:

- USA in Cuba (since 1961)
- Iran in Egypt (1979)
- USA in Iran (1980)
- Cuba in the USA (1991)
- Russia in Georgia (2008)
- Georgia in Russia (2009)

USA – Iran

Special importance is attached to the mandate as a Swiss Protecting Power (SPP) on behalf of the USA in Iran. Following the Iranian revolution, the proclamation of the Islamic Republic and the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran by revolutionary students, followed by the hostage-taking of US diplomats for 444 days, the

USA broke off relations with Iran in April 1980. The US government subsequently approached the Federal Council to ask whether Switzerland would take over the representation of its interests in Iran. The Swiss government accepted the mandate in May 1980, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Iran also confirmed its approval of this assumption of the mandate by the Swiss Confederation.

Foreign interests in Tehran

A team of ten employees represents the interests of the USA at offices physically separate from the Swiss embassy in Tehran. Close contact is nevertheless maintained with the embassy in terms of both administrative matters and political interventions in connection with the Protecting Power mandate.

The consular work of the "foreign interests" section is comparable with the duties performed by a chancery at a Swiss representation. Around 10,000 registered US and dual citizens are currently provided with support. The section also provides consular protection for various US nationals and dual citizens in Iran.

The SPP is in regular contact with the Foreign Interests Section at the FDFA in Berne. This is the interface at the federal administration for contact between the parties involved. It ensures communication with the US embassy in Berne through which most consular business with Tehran is conducted. The Protecting Power mandate is based on trust in Switzerland from both the US and the Iranian sides. The suc-



The Foreign Interests team at the embassy in Tehran: Giulio Haas, ambassador, Reza Goorabi, Francine Zuchuat, Nasrin Tamadon, Nooshin Davami, Mitra Nasirpoor, Mojdeh Sedighi, Safoura Joorabchi and Emil Wyss, head of the Foreign Interests Section (from left to right)

successful work over many years of the Swiss departments involved in Tehran, Washington and Berne is appreciated by both States.

USA – Cuba

The representation-of-interests mandate was assigned to Switzerland in 1961 following the Cuban revolution which led to the breakdown in US relations with Cuba. Switzerland accepted the Protecting Power mandate as part of its traditional “good offices” policy. On 30 May 1977, the USA and Cuba agreed the opening of interest sections in Havana and Washington and the dispatch of their own staff to conduct matters on the basis of bilateral exchange. The US interest section in Havana remains nevertheless under the diplomatic protection of the Swiss Confederation and is officially part of the Swiss embassy, despite being physically separate from it.

The activities of the US interest section in Havana comprise consular services for US citizens living in Cuba and tasks concerning the representation of US interests in Cuba. They are carried out by Cubans and, to a lesser extent, also by members of the US diplomatic service. The Swiss Protecting Power mandate is therefore primarily of a formal nature. In practice, besides consular business, diplomatic matters are also increasingly being dealt with directly between the USA and Cuba.

In early April 1991, Switzerland also took over the representation of Havana’s interests in the USA, which had previously been undertaken by Czechoslovakia, at the request of the Cuban government.

Russia – Georgia

Since the turn of the year 2008/2009, Switzerland has represented Georgian interests in Russia and Russian interests in Georgia. After the war between the two countries in August 2008 and recognition of the breakaway Georgian regions of Ab-

khazia and South Ossetia by Russia, Georgia broke off diplomatic relations with its northern neighbour. Following protracted negotiations, both countries decided to assign the representation of their respective interests to Switzerland. Switzerland’s role is greatly appreciated by both Russia and Georgia.

During its OSCE Chairmanship in 2014, Switzerland, together with the EU and the UN, will mediate at the Geneva Talks on the Georgian conflict over the key issues surrounding the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

FDFA, DIRECTORATE OF
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AMERICAS DIVISION

Change at the top of the Consular Directorate

From 1 May 2014, I will take up my new position as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Benin and the Republic of Togo based, in Accra. In my long professional career with the FDFA, I will be leaving Berne for a final time after setting up the Consular Directorate from 2010 and leading it for four extremely exciting and intensive years as Director. The contact with the Swiss community abroad was always one of my priorities. The lively exchange with the delegates of the Council of the Swiss Abroad will remain with me as an enriching and stimulating experience; it was the icing on the cake in terms of my position as head of the Consular Directorate. The insights from my many discussions with you will also serve me well in my

new position. I am sure that my successor will continue this dialogue and wish him every success and much enjoyment in this exciting role.



Gerhard Brügger
From Berne to Accra/Ghana




Jürg Burri
From the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) back to the FDFA

On 1 May, I took over the position of Director of the Consular Directorate at the FDFA from Ambassador Gerhard Brügger. I am highly motivated to represent the concerns of the Swiss abroad in performing my duties. I am 49 years of age and married with four children. I previously worked at the FDFA from 1996 to 2002 and from 2006 to 2009. During my studies and professional career, I have spent short and long periods in Spain, France, the USA, Belgium and China. After holding various diplomatic po-

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www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris

sitions, I was most recently head of the Research and Innovation Directorate at SERI. With the support of my highly motivated Consular Directorate team, I look forward to continuing the work of my predecessor on behalf of the Swiss abroad.

Publication

The Federal Chancellery published the brochure “The Swiss Confederation 2014 – a brief guide” in March. It provides current information on Swiss politics, the administration and the judicial system. With 237,000 printed copies in five languages, it has one of the widest circulations of all the federal administration’s publications.

How is Parliament made up? Why can it take years for a law to enter into force? How many people are employed by the federal administration? What does the Federal Supreme Court decide upon? “The Swiss Confederation – a brief guide”, published by the Federal Chancellery every year, answers such questions. The 80-page publication is aimed at anyone interested in the Swiss system of government. Many secondary schools and vocational colleges use it in the teaching of political studies.

The Federal Chancellery works closely on the text with the Parliamentary Services, the departments and the Federal Supreme Court. Graphical information illustrates the descriptions, and photographs show federal government employees in various roles.

237,000 copies of “The Swiss Confederation 2014 – a brief guide” have been published in the four national languages as well

as in English. The brochure can be ordered free of charge from the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics at www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch (art. no. 104.617).



FEDERAL REFERENDA

The proposals to be put to the vote on 28 September 2014 had not been announced by the time of going to press with this issue.

2014 referendum dates: 28 September; 30 November.

POPULAR INITIATIVES

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

- “Wiedergutmachung für Verdingkinder und Opfer fürsorgerischer Zwangsmassnahmen (Wiedergutmachungsinitiative) (Compensation for contract children and victims of compulsory social welfare measures – compensation initiative) (01.10.2015)

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

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Little gems

An outside perspective on national history

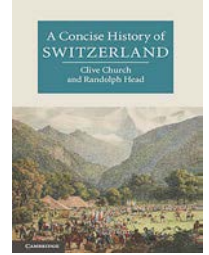
Anyone interested in Swiss history has until now primarily been dependent upon books and articles written by German-speaking or French-speaking historians. This has also resulted in Swiss history increasingly being overlooked in an academic world dominated by the English language. That may now change. The prestigious UK publisher Cambridge University Press has released a volume on Switzerland in its “A Concise History of...” series. The two professors Clive Church of the University of Kent and Randolph Head of the University of Riverside in California have produced a highly readable book



that is not just intended for academics. Thanks to numerous illustrations and graphical images as well as a detailed chronology, it also serves as a reference book – one which surpasses Wikipedia by some distance and could prove a real source of knowledge for the Swiss abroad.

BE

Clive H. Church, Randolph C. Head: *A Concise History of Switzerland*; Cambridge University Press 2013; 339 pages; CHF 32.90, EUR 22.50.



Globi becomes an organic farmer

German-speaking Swiss children have enjoyed the Globi stories for decades. Originally designed as an advertising medium for the Globus chain of department stores, Globi the parrot has since gone on many adventures in over 80 children’s books. Although the first translations in French-speaking Switzerland

enjoyed little success, selected editions are still translated into French today. English translations have also been available for some years now.

In the latest edition “Globi, der schlaue Bauer” (Globi, the Smart Farmer), the protagonist modernises a family farm by converting to organic standards and mild forms of pest control. The book has been brought out

in the UN’s International Year of Family Farming, and the stories were produced in cooperation with the Swiss Biovision foundation.

As usual the story is told in rhyme – even in French and English in which this illustrated book has also been published. The stories and songs on the accompanying audio book CD are in Swiss German.

MH

“Globi, der schlaue Bauer”, Globi-Verlag, Zurich; book (also in French and English), CHF 21.50; audio book CD in Swiss German, CHF 16.90



Untouched nature

The experiment to leave nature to its own devices and observe its development began at the Swiss National Park 100 years ago. It was a political decision: On 27 March 1914, the National Council adopted the federal resolution “on the establishment of a Swiss National Park in the Lower Engadine”. The 100-year anniversary of the foundation of this unique outdoor laboratory in Switzerland has provided opportunity for celebration and review. What happens if human activities are completely excluded from a landscape? These events in the 170 km² nature reserve are documented cartographically in the “Atlas of the

Swiss National Park”. The 230-page publication is a lavishly filled treasure trove and not just of interest to map lovers and hikers. www.atlasnationalpark.ch

BE

“Atlas des Schweizerischen Nationalparks – Die ersten 100 Jahre”, (in German; also available in French);

edited by Heinrich Haller, Antonia Eisenhut and Rudolf Haller; Verlag Haupt Bern, 2013; 247 pages, colour illustration throughout; CHF 69, EUR 59. www.haupt.ch



Bulletins

Compensation for contract children

The victims of compulsory administrative measures should not just receive an apology but also compensation. A popular initiative aiming to achieve this objective was launched on 31 March. It calls for a 500-million-franc compensation fund to be created. The money should be used to help the worst-affected victims and make amends for the injustice they suffered. Parliament adopted a law at the beginning of March that recognises this injustice. It also governs access to records and an historical reappraisal but does not provide for any financial compensation. This is now to be achieved through a popular initiative.

Members of Parliament fond of travel

Swiss Members of Parliament spent more time travelling abroad last year than ever before: 466 person travel days were booked compared with just 302 days in 2012. Out on his own at the top of the travel list was Filippo Lombardi, who visited 22 countries as the Council of States President. Travel costs for Members of Parliament amounted to 520,200 francs in 2013. They totalled 328,900 francs in the previous year.

More Swiss wine drunk

The Swiss consumed just under 107 million litres of Swiss wine in 2013. According to details from the Federal Office for Agriculture, that is almost 10 million litres more than in the previous year. The market share of Swiss wine amounts to 39% of a total of 273 million litres consumed. Among Swiss wines, consumption of white and red wines, standing at 53 million li-

tres and 54 million litres respectively, is almost identical. Among foreign products, significantly more red wine – 183 million litres – is consumed.

Disclosure of bank data for US clients

Swiss banks must obtain approval from their US clients to provide data to the US authorities under the FATCA agreement. They must also inform clients about a possible administrative assistance procedure in accordance with this agreement. The FATCA agreement with the USA will enter into force before 1 July 2014, according to the Swiss Federal Tax Administration. If a bank does not receive from a US client a declaration of consent to the transfer of account details to the US Internal Revenue Service within a stipulated period, the account will be classified as a “non-consenting US account”. The US authority may request details of the “non-consenting US accounts” from Switzerland on the basis of this information using the administrative assistance procedure.

Ambiguous advertisement

The advertisement by soliswiss, not clearly labelled as such, that appeared on the back page of the April 2014 issue of “Swiss Review” caused some confusion. Some readers got the impression that the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) was supporting the petition launched by soliswiss for the integration of soliswiss into the new law on the Swiss abroad and for a default guarantee from federal government. However, this was simply a paid-for advertisement that had nothing to do with OSA.

Quotes

“We cannot be certain that we will not face conflict situations even in Switzerland.”

Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer in the referendum campaign over the Gripen fighter jet

“Just escaping is not enough; you have to escape in the right direction.”

Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (1878–1947), Swiss author

“In the past we had confessional wars in Switzerland, today we have the jihad.”

Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer again

“Madness is part of man.”

Blaise Cendrars (1887–1961)

“I, too, find it difficult not to see a possible demise of Switzerland as the end of the world. Only reason makes me appreciate that the world is bigger.”

Peter Bichsel, Swiss writer

“To be spared by fate means neither shame nor glory but it is a portent.”

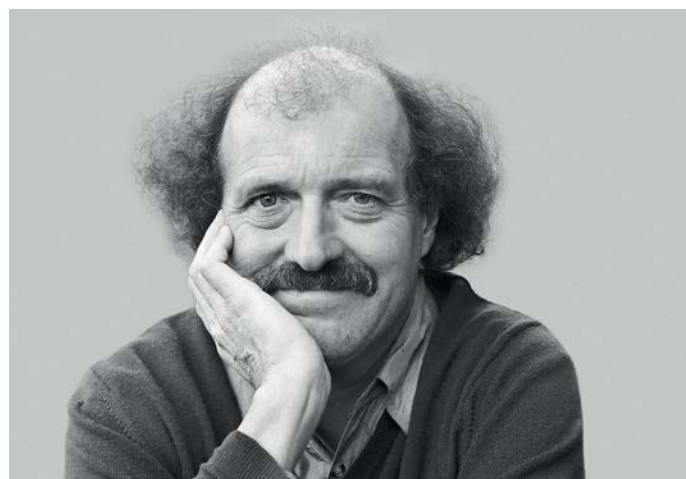
Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990), Swiss author, about his homeland in a speech three weeks before his death

“Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact.”

George Eliot (pen name for Mary Ann Evans) (1819–1880), English writer

“William Tell is still the only Swiss person whom the whole world knows.”

Friedrich Dürrenmatt again



“You only die once, that’s guaranteed. Death remains the scandal of every life. Absolutely nothing is more incomprehensible than death.” Urs Widmer wrote these words in 2002. Now the writer is dead, having passed away on 2 April, aged 75. Urs Widmer, together with Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, was one of the most famous Swiss authors in the German-speaking world. With his passing, Switzerland has lost a great literary talent and a vociferous intellectual who addressed issues ranging from colonialism to the conduct of senior executives. Widmer achieved his great public breakthrough in 2000 with the novel “Der Geliebte der Mutter” (My Mother’s Lover). His autobiography, “Reise an den Rand des Universums” (Journey to the Edge of the Universe), published last year, begins with the words: “No author in their right mind writes an autobiography because your autobiography is your last book.”

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Stockhorn, Bernese Oberland

Fresh mountain air, panoramic restaurants and high trails with spectacular viewpoints: all easily reached with our cable cars, funiculars, cog railways and chairlifts. [MySwitzerland.com/summer](https://www.myswitzerland.com/summer)