

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 17 (1990)
Heft: 3

Rubrik: Mosaic

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A belated tribute to a Swiss consul



Carl Lutz. (Photo: archive)

In 1944, Carl Lutz, at the time Swiss Vice-Consul and head of the Protecting Power Department in Budapest, hit on a clever method for saving the lives of thousands of Hungarian Jews. In his honour, a bronze monument will be unveiled in December in the centre of the Hungarian capital.

Carl Lutz, who died in 1975 aged 80, decided during World War II, together with several like-minded persons, to rescue as many Jews as possible who were threatened with death, and to get them brought to a safe place: all this without any instructions or even backing from his superiors. For this action, he invented the "Swiss Collective Passports" as he managed to convert 5000 "letters of safe conduct" issued by the Germans for 5000 "Units" into documents for 5000 "extended families", thus broadening their scope to give protection to some 44000 individuals.

The Hungarian committee who took the initiative for this tribute were concerned to rectify at long last the "historical injustice" whereby Carl Lutz had up to now been overshadowed by the Swede Raoul Wallenberg, who had also during the war done much to save the lives of people in Hungary who were in mortal danger. At the same time that tribute will be paid to Carl Lutz, the memories of all those

persons who risked their lives will be honoured, above all Friedrich Born, then the local Delegate of the ICRC in Budapest.

The very foundation of the Swiss Carl Lutz Committee will, it is hoped, express admiration and appreciation of this Hungarian initiative. After all, the intention is not only to honour Carl Lutz as a shining example of Switzerland's well-known humanitarian achievements but also to make long-overdue amends for the delay in so doing.

Death of a great popular actor

On June 16, Ruedi Walter died, at the age of 73. For countless Swiss he had for decades been the actor of our times. In cabaret performances, in films based on Gotthelf stories, in famous stage plays like Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" or in radio sketches on Saturday afternoons, together with his ideal partner Margrit Rainer, that almost became an institution, Ruedi Walter had always understood how to make his audience laugh, without ever lapsing into cheap or vulgar comedy.



Ruedi Walter in "Die kleine Niederdorfoper". (Photo: Keystone)

Voting rights for foreigners too

As the first local authority in Switzerland to do so, the Great Council of Neuchâtel has decided to allow foreigners among its inhabitants to be elected to its Municipal Council. A right for foreigners to participate actively in voting in local elections has existed since 1850. The change now introduced is to permit a passive eligibility at the municipal level – against which the "Nationale Aktion" party has already petitioned for a referendum to take place!

The Canton of Jura is the only canton to have granted foreigners voting and electoral rights not only in municipal issues but also – with certain limitations – at the cantonal level.

The Federal Census

On December 4 1990, for the fifteenth time since 1850, a Federal Population Census will be held. In the completely revised Census Law, comprehensive provisions will regulate the protection of the privacy of personal data. Consequently, the exclusively statistical objectives of the information supplied by the public will be of great significance. The preparations for this combined operation on the part of the Federal government, the cantons and the municipalities, were begun four years ago, and entered a new phase at the beginning of this year, inasmuch as in addition to the Federal Office for Statistics, the cantons and municipalities responsible for the actual execution of the census will this time have a more active role to play. The quality of the information gathered, and the cost of the operation, which will have a new feature concerning the collection of data about housing and buildings, will be strongly dependent on the understanding of the population, and its willingness to cooperate. As already mentioned, the information supplied by the public

(there will even be a special "Census Telephone"!)) will be of great importance, all the more so in view of the fact that the confidence of many citizens of both sexes in the utility of the official gathering of data has been severely shaken by the affair of the "fiches" and the extent to which such files have been maintained in Federal and other official bodies. Any utilisation of data referring to individual persons, and any form of registration or filing on the basis of data gathered in the census is strictly forbidden. The securing of data from all Swiss citizens resident inside the Confederation is the most important and most extensive element in Swiss social statistics. It will supply information regarding alterations in settlement areas, the economy, the households, languages and religions, to serve as the basis for decisions in the fields of politics, trade and industry, science and research.

Swiss at the 1990 Football World Championship

The only "active" participant



Kurt Rötchlisberger. (Photo: Keystone)

Unfortunately, the Swiss National Team did not succeed in qualifying for the last round of



games in the world soccer championship in Italy. On this occasion however, Switzerland was able to show to advantage other qualities than those directly involving sporting performance on the field, both behind the scenes and in full view.

As the sole Swiss actually present on the football field, Kurt Röthlisberger, the 39-year old regional school-teacher from Argovia Canton, made an excellent impression as a completely unbiased and impartial referee. High spots in his career as a referee up to now include his performance at the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988, and his courageous behaviour at the European Cup quarter-final game between AC Milan and Mechelen (in French: Malines) last March. He had been nominated as one of the world's sixteen best "refs" for the final round of this year's championship games. Kurt Röthlisberger remains an important figure both in Swiss and international football, and it seems quite possible that he may be asked to appear again at the world championship games for 1994 in the USA.

Some fair-play please!

The Secretary-General of FIFA is Joseph Blatter, from the Valais region of Switzerland. FIFA stands for "Fédération Internationale de Football Association": in other words, the world federation for matters concerning "Soccer", and its Secretary-General has to be a very busy man "behind the scenes" in the world of Association football. Last year, on behalf of FIFA, Joseph Blatter was privileged to accept the "Fairplay" trophy awarded by the Swiss National Federation for Sport (usually referred to as the "SLS").

So it is understandable that when this year's World Championship games took place, it was in the spirit of fair play and true sportsmanship, and that measures to ensure this were put in-



Joseph Blatter.
(Photo: Keystone)

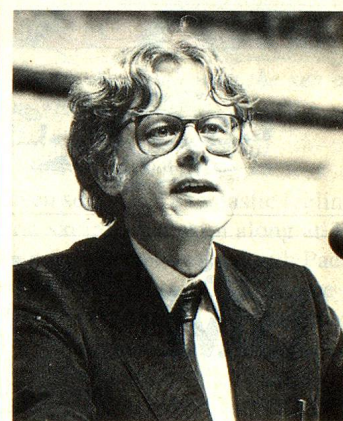
to effect forthwith. Thus for example, a new rule was introduced for these games, whereby a fine would be payable in respect of every red or yellow card – payable by the offending player himself, not by his club. In the

initial round of matches at the beginning of the competition, the fine in the case of the player getting the red card amounted to Sfr. 10 000. It was increased in stages as the matches continued, reaching Sfr. 30 000 in the semi-final. (The fines had to be paid into a special "Fair Play Fund").

A new President for the Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland (the SPS)

To succeed Helmut Hubacher, who had been President of the SPS for 15 years, a member of Parliament from the Valais Canton, Peter Bodenmann, has been elected. He received 634 votes, his opponent, the less well-

known member of Parliament from Solothurn, Mrs. Ursula Ulrich, getting only 269. The newly elected SPS President, who is only 38 years of age, son of the former "Ständerat" representative of the CVP ("Christian-Democratic People's Party"), Hermann Bodenmann, has his law practice in Brig, and can already look back on a career as a politician that has so far lasted for 20 years. In 1976 Peter Bodenmann – then still a student – was elected to the Brig Municipal Council. In 1985, he succeeded in becoming a member of the Cantonal Parliament, and in 1987, he was chosen to be the second SPS man in the national Parliament to represent the Upper Valais. His oppositional activity, which has already given conservatives in the Valais plenty of headaches, is characterised by its commitment in respect of protection of the environment and in that of social policy.

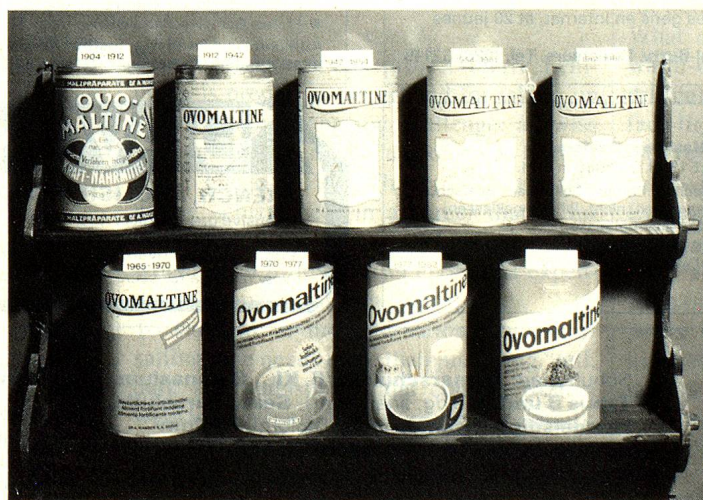


Peter Bodenmann.
(Photo: Keystone)

Wander AG – 125 years young!

For many people, the name "Wander" is synonymous with "Ovomaltine" – not surprisingly. That product, containing barley malt, milk, eggs, yeast and a little cocoa (but without sugar or roughage!) was one of the earliest successes of Wander AG and became a "hit" all over the world. To be sure, Ovomaltine was not the outcome of a one-day brain-wave, but was the result of years of research and the quest for new methods. But the firm did not rest on the laurels it had won at the start, and from a two-person business

on the Kirchgasse in Berne it has grown into an enterprise specialised in the field of nutrition, known and appreciated all over the world. In spite of its amalgamation in 1967 with the far greater Sandoz concern, the company has kept its name and preserved its independence, and in the face of ever-increasing competition, is successful in keeping pace with contemporary developments and in remaining one of the top-flight makers of "household name" products.



Ovomaltine packages of long ago and of today. (Photo: archive)