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Woman power

The five-man government of Canton Basle Rural now includes a woman! With the election of the 48-year old Christian Democrat chairwoman, **Elsbeth Schneider**, the executive of this small canton receives its first woman member. This means that her party has recovered the seat it lost to the Radicals in 1991, this time at the expense of the Swiss People's Party. In her election campaign, Mrs Schneider presented an image of a centre-right candidate with social issues at heart.

Just five years after women were first given the vote, the open-air assembly (Landsgemeinde) of Appenzell Outer Rhodes has voted two women into its government. With the arrival of **Marianne Kleiner-Schläpfer** and **Alice Scherrer**, this means that 15 out of 151 cantonal executive members throughout Switzerland are now women. With this historic election, Appenzell Outer Rhodes is the first canton in eastern Switzerland to include a woman, and after Berne the second canton in the country to boast two women **Dori Schaer**, Social Democrat and **Elisabeth Zölch**, Swiss People's Party.

Women are also doing very well in Canton Grisons: with 17 seats after the recent elections, their showing in parliament has more than doubled. In the judiciary elections, more women have also been successful. But, as before, only 1 of the 39 local councils is chaired by a woman.

In cantons where women sit in government, there are hopes that appreciation of women's work will mount in the world. If there were no wage discrimination between the genders in Switzerland, women would be earning about 30% more than they do. At present, women receive only about two-thirds of



Newly elected executive members Marianne Kleiner-Schläpfer (left) and Alice Scherrer celebrate their victory. At centre, guest of honour Federal Councillor Ruth Dreifuss.

men's earnings on average. This is the conclusion reached by social scientists at Berne University, commissioned by the National Fund to investigate wage differences. ■

Personal

Adolf Muschg, the Zurich writer and literary critic, was awarded this year's Büchner Prize by the German Academy of Language and Literature. This is the most important German literary honour and is worth 60,000 marks. Max Frisch in 1958 and Friedrich Dürrenmatt in 1986 are the only Swiss writers to have received it previously.

Anton Josef Widmer, newly appointed head of the Federal Police Office, has been in the headlines. This 50-year old former commandant of the Lucerne Cantonal Police destroyed several dozen documents in 1989 when the "police files affair" was at its height. He has been harshly criticised for this, but "I have learnt a great deal since", says Widmer.

A prominent Swiss is at present acting as general inspector of the UN forces in ex-Yugoslavia. Brigadier **Peter Arbenz**, formerly head of the Federal Office for Refugees, described his new task as a "matter of solidarity with the UN and the international community, as well as a continuation of our policy of good offices and our humanitarian tradition in its widest sense".

Refugees are one of the biggest world problems of our time. The fact that its solution is being approached with such hesitation is one of the darkest chapters of contemporary history. This is the opinion of **Sadruddin Aga Khan** the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees. At a public lecture in Berne on "Refugees: A People Apart", the prince reminded his listeners that the number of refugees worldwide has increased seven-fold since 1970 to over 19 million, not counting people displaced within their own countries.



A Swiss cathedral for Russia

Good news from eastern Europe for Zurich's star architect, **Justus Dahinden**. His design for a new cathedral has been accepted by St. Petersburg. This will be the first new church project since the October Revolution and is intended to be a symbol of the religious renaissance after the fall of communism. Dahinden is ordinary professor at Vienna's Technical University and honorary professor at Buenos Aires University. He describes the cathedral project as "unique, a once-in-a-century event". He compares the opportunity with Gaudi's "Sagrada Família" in Barcelona. ■

Obituaries



Former Federal Councillor **Max Petitpierre** has died at the age of 95 in his home town of Neuchâtel. This Radical statesman was head of the Political Department, now the Department of Foreign Affairs, from 1945 to 1961. During his time in office, Petitpierre exercised enormous influence on Switzerland's foreign policy. He successfully brought Switzerland out of its post-World War II isolation, and he later redefined his country's foreign policy in terms of solidarity and humanitarian assistance.

Charles Oser has died in Berne at the age of 92. This former Radical politician was in office as the eighth head of the Federal Chancellery from 1952 to 1967. Voting by correspondence was introduced under his aegis. Oser attached great importance to fostering linguistic diversity. He was also responsible for the French version of Edgar Bonjour's multi-volume "History of Swiss Neutrality".

The historian, **Golo Mann**, has died at the age of 85. Mann, who lived almost 40 years in Kilchberg, is the author of many highly respected works, including "Wallenstein" and "A History of Germany in the 19th and 20th Centuries", and he also published the "Propyläe World History".

One of the first Swiss women journalists has died. **Annemarie Schwarzenbach** was born in 1916 and worked for many years at the Berne daily, "Der Bund", where she wrote on many varied topics, including fashion, social matters, women's rights and economics – all this at a time when there were very few women in journalism. She was widowed too early, and brought up alone two daughters and a son. ■

The Swiss open their wallets

Route to Happiness, a charitable programme run by Swiss radio and television, has achieved a new record in 1993. As many as 52 million francs have been paid into its account, of which 28 million have already been used for good causes at home and abroad. ■



Celebration in Lucerne

Lucerne's Kappelbrücke is back. This 660-year old wooden bridge, the oldest of its kind in Europe, was seriously damaged by fire on August 18, 1993. Many invited guests from Switzerland and abroad took part in the celebration which followed the bridge's reopening.



Servette league champions, Grasshoppers take the cup

In a thrilling final, Geneva's Servette team came top of the soccer league, just ahead of Grasshoppers. With a 4-0 victory over Schaffhausen, Grasshoppers nevertheless won the Swiss Cup Final for the 18th time. ■

Rominger for the third time

The Swiss cyclist, Tony Rominger, has won the Round Spain race for the third time in a row. He took the lead on the first day and maintained his superiority by coming top in 6 of the 21 stages, including all 3 timed stretches. ■

Texts: Alice Baumann
Photos: Keystone

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