

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 21 (1994)
Heft: 6

Rubrik: Mosaic

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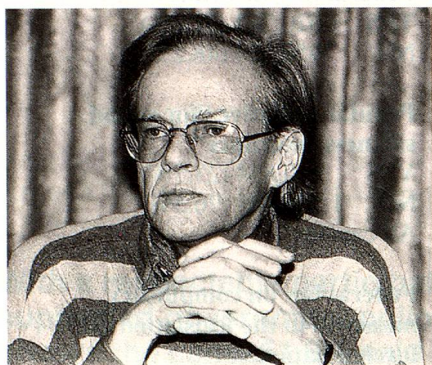
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Personal



Author **Otto F. Walter** has died at Soleure of lung cancer at 66. He was one of the greats among Swiss men of letters, concentrating on contemporary subjects like nuclear power, youth riots and xenophobia. His best known work was "Der Stumme" (The Mute).

Nobel Prize writer **Elias Canetti** has died in Zurich at the age of 89. He was born in Bulgaria of Spanish-Jewish parentage and lived in several European countries. From 1972 he alternated between London and Zurich and settled permanently in the latter in 1988. He is regarded as one of the most important writers of the century. He has bequeathed his literary work to Zurich Central Library.

Former Canton Vaud executive and National Councillor **Claude Bonnard** has died in Lausanne at the age of 72. From 1966 to 1978 he was a member of the Vaud Council of State, before going on to the National Council in Berne. He was thought of as one of the great theoreticians of liberalism in Switzerland.

From January 1, 1995, Switzerland's only prison for women will be headed by a woman for the first time: the Canton Berne executive has chosen 48-year old **Marianne Heimo** as the new governor of Hindelbank Prison. This appointment means that all vacancies at the head of Bernese gaols have now been filled. The FDP municipal councillor, journalist and expert in health matters describes her motives for accepting in this way: "Much of what many women go through in the various phases of their lives has also happened



to me as a woman". And: "Society must take care of offenders and try to give them back a solid base for the future and some self-esteem".

At the beginning of 1995, well-known Canton Grisons tourism director **Marco Hartmann**, aged 43, starts as head of the Swiss National Tourist Office, which will probably be renamed "Switzerland Tourism". He follows Walter Leu, who becomes president of the Pro Patria foundation.

This year's Youth Book Prize awarded by the General Association of Swiss Teachers went to 51-year old cabaret artist and writer **Franz Hohler**. The prize is worth Sfr. 5,000 and was given to Hohler for his short story collection,

"Der Riese und die Erdbeerkonfitüre" (The Giant and the Strawberry Jam).

"The Pneumatic Drill Cuts Deeper Every Year, or Changes in the Landscape". That was the title of the picture series published more than 20 years ago by illustrator **Jürg Müller**, born in Lausanne in 1942, on the urbanisation of unspoiled landscapes and cities. Since then he has had other successful works, mostly in cooperation with writer Jürg Steiner. Now Müller has received the most important international honour for children's and youth literature, the Hans Christian Andersen Prize, for his work as a whole. After Alois Carigiet, Jürg Müller is the second Swiss to get this prestigious award. ■

The army's carrier pigeons phased out



Military carrier pigeons are to be disbanded in the new cost-cutting reforms – at a saving of Sfr. 600,000. The 266 federal employees involved will have to be retrained. Carrier pigeons have been used by the army for 77 years. ■

Death of 53 sect members

Switzerland was rudely awakened by a sect drama after 48 bodies belonging to members of a Swiss-Canadian sect called the Order of the Solar Temple in Canada and the Cross and the Rose in Switzerland were found in burnt-out houses in Granges-sur-Salvan (Valais) and Cheiry (Fribourg). Another five bodies were found in Canada. They

were said to have been shot, and the sect leaders were identified amongst those found in Switzerland. Their deaths substantiate the theory that the slaughter was a reckoning between two warring factions and that at least some of the victims were murdered. There are also suspicions that the sect was a cover for money laundering and arms dealing. ■

Books

Alfred Huber, **Staatskunde Lexikon** (Civics Lexicon), 4th edition enlarged and revised, Verlag Schweizer Lexikon, Lucerne 1994, 364 pages, Sfr. 21.80 (plus postage). This lexicon – penned by former gymnasium teacher Alfred Huber – is a bestseller. Since 1979, 225,000 copies have been sold. The revised edition now available contains 232 entries, arranged alphabetically, about the organisation and tasks of the state and its authorities, the rights and obligations of citizenship, and much else worth knowing about Switzerland and its people. The index has 1,200 names and abbreviations providing easy access to all subjects. The text is illustrated and supplemented by about 200 maps, diagrams and tables. The lexicon is a very varied reference work useful for schools and libraries, as well as for voters both at home and abroad. At present it is available in German only, but a French version is being prepared.

«Kids», Deutschschweiz und Tessin mit Kindern (German-Speaking Switzerland and Ticino with Children), Editions des Deux Guérites, Morges 1994, 608 pages, Sfr. 38.50 (plus postage). A separate edition provides tips for kids in French-speaking Switzerland at Sfr. 32.– (plus postage). Goldpanning in Emmental, walking in Heidi's footsteps at Maienfeld, looking for bearded vultures in the national park, visiting the Museum of Musical Automata at Seewen, mines at Buchs or a playground in Zurich – «Kids» is a guide of trips and leisure activities with details of 872 excursions with children in German-speaking Switzerland and Ticino. This family-oriented work has 119 tips for the city and canton of Zurich alone. The suggestions have been collected by six journalists and cover over 600 pages, arranged by canton. In addition to details of hiking trails, theatres, sport, swimming pools, boat and rail trips, «Kids» includes the addresses and prices of hotels which welcome children gladly.

These books may be obtained from the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16.

Texts: Alice Baumann

Photos: Keystone/Archives

Switzerland's first federal parliament in Aarau

In April 1798 – after the French had beaten Berne and the old confederation – the government of the Helvetian Republic chose Aarau, which was a nest of Jacobins, as the seat of the first national parliament. The big house in the castle park became the residence of the Directory, the first republican Swiss Federal Council. The renovated house has now been opened to commemorate the birth pangs of the first all-Swiss unitary state, with a history exhibition as its main cultural theme. The property belongs to the Aarau Burghers' Association, which is responsible for this new contribution to the city's life.

Eastern Institute to close

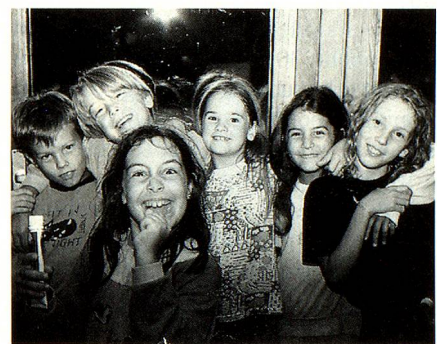
The Swiss Eastern Institute (SOI) is to close its doors at the end of 1994 for financial reasons. Set up in 1959 by Peter Sager – later elected to the National Council – the SOI kept a critical eye on the dominant political structures in communist countries. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the institute increasingly lost support. "Forum East-West" will continue under different management as a platform for "bridge-building activities", in addition to some of the SOI's individual publications, including the English-language "Swiss Press Review and News Report".

Free legal process possible from abroad

Foreign nationals resident abroad now have the right to free legal process in Switzerland – provided they are needy and the case is not hopeless. The Federal Supreme Court has declared in a pathbreaking decision that legal treatment which differs according to nationality or residence cannot be justi-

fied. Any party should have a basic right of access to the courts and to legal representation. This guideline decision resulted from the case of a Libyan citizen who had been operated upon in Berne three times and was not satisfied with the outcome. His income was not high enough to enable him to take action against the doctor, which involved about Sfr. 50,000 in legal costs – leading him to request free legal process at the Berne Court of Appeal. The Libyan citizen's operations were apparently paid for by his government.

Holidays in Switzerland for Swiss Abroad children



The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad is again organising holidays in Switzerland for Swiss Abroad children in order to strengthen their ties with the homeland.

Where?

- In a Swiss family
- At a holiday camp organised by the Foundation

When?

Summer holidays July/August '95 for any 2–3 weeks, ski holidays over New Year 95/96 for 1 week.

Who?

Children aged 7–15 of Swiss nationality or whose mother was born Swiss.

How much?

A holiday stay with a family is free, while that at a holiday camp is offered at cost price.

Registration:

Before April 15, 1995
Through your diplomatic post abroad (embassy or consulate)

**Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad
Holiday Scheme**

Wattstrasse 3

CH-8050 Zurich

Tel: 41 1 313 17 17

Point of view

"When we walk through the market in front of parliament we see lettuce heads. We must learn from the lettuce. Because its heart is in its head".

Ernst Sieber, National Councillor and pastor, on the drugs controversy.