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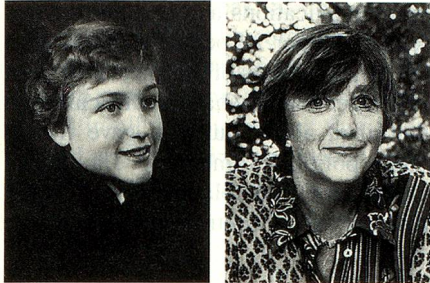
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Cover:

Uniforms and clothes filthy, shoes torn, the dominant colours military grey, green and brown: refugees on the march in Switzerland. (Repro: Max Baumann)

I M P R E S S U M

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 22nd year of issue and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 20 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 310,000. Regional news appears four times a year.

Editors: René Lenzin (RL), Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad (chairman); Alice Baumann (AB), Press Bureau Alice Baumann Conception; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Swiss Radio International, Berne; Giuseppe Rusconi (RUS), parliamentary correspondent for "Corriere del Ticino". Editor of Official News: Paul Andermatt (ANP), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH-3003 Berne. Translator: Ian Tickle.

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◀◀ The end of the Second World War, demobilisation, the men coming home, peace again, return to normal. And then with the celebrations over – questioning, doubts, perhaps a bad conscience kept carefully at bay. Silence. And now, fifty years on, a critical look back for the commemoration. Grey areas, black spots, troubling compromises, human dramas. The Swiss cross is not as white as it was once thought to be.

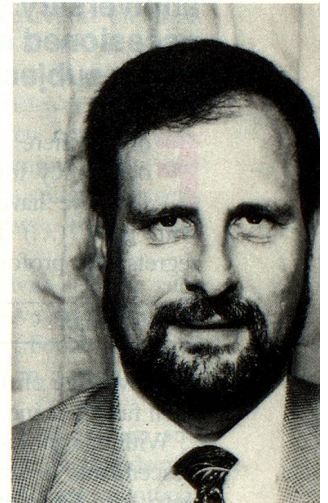
Switzerland has been making a painful examination of its conscience in this jubilee year of the end of the war. How many human lives did the very restrictive asylum policy of those war years cost? Nobody knows. But Switzerland behaved badly, that much is certain. The President of the Confederation did well to express the regrets and apologies of the Swiss government and people.

Reminders of the events and questions about the role of those running the country at the time have dominated Swiss life throughout this year. It is now the turn of Swiss Review to make a modest contribution to this vast enterprise. We cannot

know ourselves without knowing our past.

This quest for Switzerland's past has been heavily influenced by the identity crisis which the country has been suffering from since the end of the 1980s. The Swiss disease has affected our view of the war years, just as it did our look back over the 700 years of the Confederation four years ago. In this decade of commemorations – the 150th anniversary of the federal state is coming up in 1998 – the Swiss are showing a strong propensity to harp on what divides them rather than what unites them, concentrating more on the wound itself than the healing process.

This is not our attitude. Our retrospective is intended to integrate rather than to separate. How could our slate be completely clean after the huge distance we have travelled together? We should pick ourselves up and get going once more. ▶▶



PA Tschanz

Pierre-André Tschanz