

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 24 (1997)
Heft: 4

Rubrik: Mosaic

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People

The new State Secretary for Science and Research is **Charles Kleiber**. This 55-year old Canton Vaud senior official, visiting professor and health economist is known for his determination to bring together Vaud and Geneva hospitals and to link the medical faculties of the two universities. Kleiber, who started professional life as an architect, succeeds Heinrich Ursprung.



Ulrich Loock is the new director of the Lucerne Art Museum. From the year 2000, this institution will be housed in the cultural and congress centre designed by Jean Nouvel. Loock is 44, comes from Brunswick in Germany and has been head of Berne's Contemporary Art Institute for twelve years. In Lucerne he takes over from Martin Schwander, and in Berne he will be succeeded by Bernhard Fibicher, who is aged 40 and up till now has been head of the Graphic Collection of the Zurich Fine Arts Museum.

The most prestigious Swiss theatre prize, the Reinhart-Ring, which was first awarded 40 years ago, goes in 1997 to **Luc Bondy**. This Zurich-born director is one of the top guard of creative figures in both German and French language theatre.



Swiss writer **Jörg Steiner**, aged 67, is the new 'literary town clerk' of Bergen-Enkheim, near Frankfurt in Germany. Other well-known writers, including fellow-Swiss Paul Nizon and Peter Bichsel, have held this honorary position in the past.

Lucerne historian and journalist **Hilmar Gernet** has been elected to succeed retiring Christian Democrat general secretary Raymond Loretan. Until now he has been deputy editor-in-chief of Solothurner Zeitung, part of the Neue Mittelland Zeitung group.

Lawyer **Jacqueline Stalder-Meyer** is to follow Regula Lanz at the head of the Federation of Swiss Women's Organisations. She hopes to see this big umbrella organisation, which counts about 400,000 members, through its centenary in 1999. However, one of Switzerland leading women's rights organisations, Ofra, is to close down after 20 years work.

Switzerland's Social Democratic Party now has a lady at its head. Zurich City Councillor **Ursula Koch** outdid her opponent, Grisons National Councillor Andrea Hämmerle, to obtain a two-thirds majority. The Social Democrats now have a woman president, two women vice-presidents, a woman leader in parliament, a woman general secretary and a woman federal councillor. The only man still playing a leading role is Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger.



Switzerland's Green Party must once again seek a new chairman. After only two years in office, **Hans-Peter Thür**, aged 48, is resigning the post and also his seat in the National Council. He says he wishes to return to the legal profession. At the last federal elections, the Greens lost much ground to the Social Democrats.

Fritz Leutwiler has died. He became famous as head of the Swiss National Bank and later prepared the ground for the merger which brought Brown Boveri and Asea together as ABB. Until the last, he was considered an important cosmopolitan thinker and doer. Dogged, pragmatic and consistent, he defended Switzerland's monetary policy interests for almost 30 years.



Expo 2001 in the eye of a storm

Expo head Jacqueline Fendt has already caused a furore. Scarcely in her new office, she sent thousands of the projects lodged with the 2001 national exhibition organisers back to their originators, accompanied by an explosive demand that they should be revised. She did not want to see back-burner projects, said Fendt, and would accept only those which were technologically and culturally innovative in terms of content, as well as intellectually, ecologically and emotionally sustainable. Projects must also suit the ten theses and the four lake-borne centres of Expo 2001. No single canton, firm or institution should occupy the foreground – partnership was the order of the day. And finally project financing must be guaranteed. ■

Switzerland's 'disease landscape'

Researchers into the geographical distribution of serious illnesses have made the astounding discovery that there are major differences in Switzerland not only in language and culture but also in the prevalence of illness. French-speaking Swiss have the same death rate as the French, while that of German-speaking Switzerland is similar to that in south Germany. Taken as a whole, cancer is substantially more prevalent in French-speaking Switzerland, whereas people in the German-speaking part have more heart and circulation problems. The highest life expectancy rate is found amongst wealthy people living in the countryside to the south of Basle and Zurich respectively and in the Lake Geneva area. The lowest is in Roman Catholic areas, which are mostly poorer.

In addition, a link between alcohol, nicotine and certain types of cancer has been found. Since alcohol consumption is higher in French-speaking Switzerland, Canton Ticino and towns in general, some cancers occur more often in those places. Profession and environment are factors which have little influence. ■

Point of view

"This typical Swiss atmosphere made up of nice people, beautiful landscapes and fine hotels was and remains an ideal place for smugglers, spies, secret services, intrigue and so on."

Jan Karski, Polish Holocaust survivor

Texts: Alice Baumann
Photos: Keystone

Marital violence

Every fifth woman suffers from violence in her marriage or partnership, and the phenomenon does not depend on social status. This has emerged from a Swiss National Science Foundation study. It is not only a matter of beating and rape. Men addicted to violence also bring psychological pressure to bear on their partners. This type of violence is not as easy to define as physical violence, but here too society must protect the rights of victims in private life. Since there exists no legal basis for expelling a violent husband from the joint residence, women are always faced with a stark choice between remaining as victims and taking flight.



A campaign called 'Stop Violence against Women in Marriage and Partnership' aims to put an end to such mistreatment. This goes in the direction indicated by Social Affairs Minister Ruth Dreifuss when she said: "Switzerland is no special case: it has violence too".

Old uniforms used to stuff roofs

In the last five years, the Swiss army has thrown out almost 5,000 tonnes of old uniform and several thousand pieces of baggage. This is because of the army reform. In the course of two years the number of troops fell by one-third. At the same time top military officials wanted the army to present "a standardised appearance".

In earlier days many assistance organisations were interested in cast-off army material. Now, however, it is passed on to wholesalers. These are ready to buy anything made of textile, and they send scrap clothing abroad for recycling. Fibre taken from uniforms contains tannin and may be used as a binder for asphalt, to make wool blankets and roofing felt or to insulate car interiors.

Snippets

Women's archives. The Berne Citizens Corporation has been presented with the Gosteli Archives on the Swiss women's movement together with the property which houses them in Worblaufen, near Berne. Marthe Gosteli, now 79, is considered as a pioneer champion of women's rights. She supported votes for women first at the municipal level, and she then persisted at the national level until the final breakthrough in 1971.

Nine digits. Terrible news for those with bad memories: Switzerland will once again have new telephone numbers as early as 2001. The present seven-digit numbers will be replaced with nine digits, and area codes starting with zero will disappear. An advantage will be the possibility of keeping the same number when moving house within Switzerland.

Child molesters. Those involved in sex crimes against children will soon be open to prosecution for ten years, even if the offences were committed under existing law which has only a five-year limitation statute. In addition, all Swiss residents accused of molesting children abroad will be criminally liable in Switzerland.

Specialised universities. 13 out of the 14 design schools in Switzerland would like to be upgraded to become specialised universities. But the first result of this new education offensive goes in the opposite direction. In its attempt to

Champagne all round three times for Sion



Football Club Sion has been the best Swiss Cup team for the last thirty years. Participating for the ninth time in nine finals, FC Sion has now won the Cup for the third consecutive time. In addition, the club again became Swiss champion

after taking its first championship title five years ago.

A third reason to celebrate was the resounding Yes by the voters of Canton Valais to Sion's candidature for the Winter Olympics in 2006.

become a design and art university, the Zurich Design School has dropped its specialised graphics course. This marks the end of an important opportunity for initial training.

'Gold vreneli'. Switzerland's most popular gold coin has reached its century. In 1897, its critics complained that the 'gold vreneli' put an official seal on the idea that the Swiss nation was made up

of herdsmen and hoteliers. This safe investment was a great favourite of the wartime generation, but now we have to ask whether it was made of Nazi gold.

ZSC Lions. This Zurich skating club has federated with the ice hockey section of Grasshoppers. The new team will be called ZSC Lions.