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Swissair disaster off Halifax: 229 people died



It was a scene of horror that met the rescue teams at the site of the Swissair crash.

215 passengers and 14 crew lost their lives off the Canadian coast in the worst accident hitherto in the history of Swiss air transport. There were 49 Swiss among the dead. The Swissair MD-11, on its way from New York to Geneva, tried to make an emergency landing at Halifax but crashed into the sea 7 minutes before reaching the airport. Since the crash both of the so-called “black boxes” – the voice and flight recorders – have been recovered, but the cause of the crash was still unclear when this edition of the Swiss Review went to press.

The pilots had reported smoke in the cockpit, but radio contact was lost before the aircraft could come in to land, and the aircraft crashed. Given the difficult conditions and the fact that the wreckage is widely dispersed, it is likely to be some time before the cause of this disaster is identified. ■

People



Felix Rosenberg is the new president of the Swiss Pro Patria Foundation. Formerly director general of the PTT he takes over from Walter Leu. Set up in 1909 as an August 1st committee, Pro Patria raises funds for cultural and social institutions and projects. It was the principal backer of the Swiss Abroad organisation until 1991, and continues to support Swiss Abroad institutions.



Peter Zumthor from the Grisons has won the internationally famous Carlsberg Architecture Prize for 1998, and with it 320,000 francs. The citation describes his work as a form of meditation, a reflection on form and function and their relationship to the landscape and mankind. Zumthor’s work is equated with beauty of form, perfection and sensuality.



“The toughest woman in the world” – **Nata-scha Badmann** won this unofficial title with her victory in the Iron Man Triathlon in Hawaii. The 31-year-old from Solothurn is the first European woman to win this prestigious event. She swam 3.8 km, cycled 180 km and ran 42.2 km in 9 hours 24 minutes.

From the EDA to the ICRC: **Jakob Kellenberger** currently state secretary at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has been elected as the new president of the International Committee of the Red Cross. He will take up his office at the end of 1999 in succession to Cornelio Sommaruga.



Hans O. Staub has died at the age of 75. For many years an analyst and commentator, he left his mark on the Swiss media landscape. Staub worked for the radio and television, for the “Tages-Anzeiger” and for

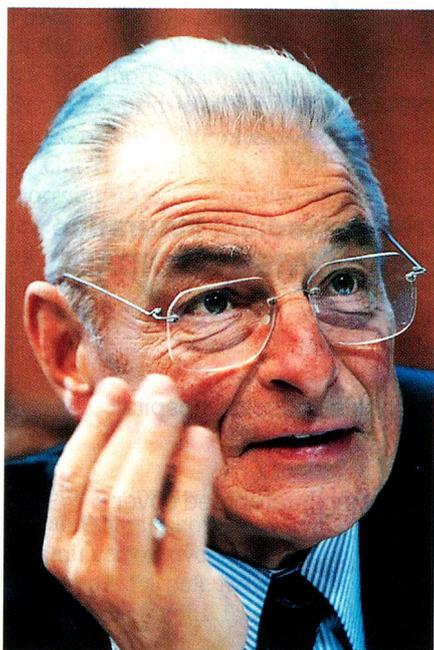
the “Weltwoche”, whose editor-in-chief he was until the beginning of the eighties. ■

Board room changes at Swiss multinationals

After only 3 months at the head of the new UBS Mathis Cabiavetta has resigned. In doing so he took responsibility for the losses of about a billion francs which the biggest of the Swiss banks suffered from its involvement in the LTMC hedge fund. For the moment Alex Krauer, the head of Novartis, has taken over the governing board of the UBS.

There is to be a change too at the second largest Swiss bank: for age reasons Rainer E. Gut will be retiring in 2000 from his job as president of the governing board of the Credit Swiss group. Lukas Mühlemann has been named as his successor. He is to remain CEO. For his part Gut is to become head of Nestlé, in succession to Helmut Maucher. ■

Jean-Pascal Delamuraz dies



Only six months after his resignation (Swiss Review 2/98) the former federal councillor Jean-Pascal Delamuraz has died. The 62 year old Vaudois was already unwell when he left the federal government. While still in office he had to go into hospital several times, most recently for an operation for liver cancer.

Delamuraz was a political thoroughbred. Throughout his life he devoted himself to politics avidly, joyfully and with great commitment. He was mourned particularly in French-speaking Switzerland where he had a reputation as an apostle of integration. For many French speakers J. P. D. was an outstanding representative of "la Suisse Romande". ■

Stepping stones on the way to modern Switzerland

The New Helvetic Society has published a commemorative paper with the title "Etappen zur modernen Schweiz" ("Stepping Stones on the Way to Modern Switzerland") to mark the 1998 jubilee and commemorative year. Written by Roberto Bernhard, the paper - a good 100 pages long - deals with the years 1648, 1798 and 1848 as stepping stones on the Federation's path. Among the issues addressed are the recognition by treaty of federal sovereignty in the context of the Peace of Westphalia and the failed attempt to turn the old con-

federation into a modern Helvetic Republic, as well as the foundation of the federal state 150 years ago.

From these three key periods in Swiss history the author draws lessons for the ability to change which the country had to show then as it does now. All three events are of current interest at a time when we think of the federation's internal reforms and a new direction in the international community of states. The paper does not therefore limit itself to a historical retrospective, but relates the past to the problems of the present and future.

Etappen zur modernen Schweiz (Stepping Stones on the Way to Modern Switzerland). A commemorative paper written by Roberto Bernhard and published by the New Helvetic Society to mark the jubilee year 1998. Available in German or French. 115 pages. CHF 18.- (+ postage). The book can be ordered from the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16. Please indicate the language required. ■

SRI: Carla Ferrari resigns

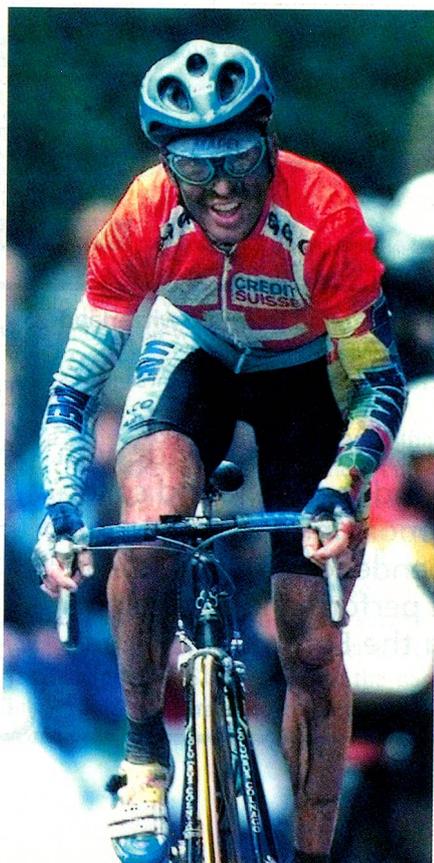
Carla Ferrari, the Director of Swiss Radio International (SRI) has given up her job by mutual agreement after only a year in office. She felt obliged to do this because financial circumstances did not allow her to carry out the strategy which she had developed (see "Swiss Review" 1/98 and 4/98). This is said to be true in particular of what she planned to do in the TV field. The Deputy Director Nicolas Lombard has taken over the management of SRI for the interim.

Carla Ferrari's strategy was not fundamentally in question, Lombard told the "Swiss Review". SRI continued to wish to produce television programmes but was obliged to downsize its projects in this field. ■

Light and shade for Swiss cycling

Switzerland has a world champion road-race cyclist once again, 47 years after Ferdi Kübler. Oscar Camenzind won at Valkenburg in Holland after pulling ahead of the 6 man break-away group 9 miles before the finish. Camenzind, 27, from central Switzerland, is only the third Swiss world champion cyclist; the others were Hans Knecht (1946) and Kübler (1951).

But a shadow has been thrown on this triumph by the drug abuse affair at this year's Tour de France. The three Swiss, Laurent Dufaux, Armin Meier and Alex Zülle were concerned among others. All admitted having regularly injected the forbidden substance EPO and have since been banned for 7 months by the International Cycling Union. ■



Oscar Camenzind on his way to becoming World Champion.

Point of view

"The likelihood of an event or issue becoming a news story is inversely proportional to the cost involved, and directly proportional to its expected attraction for the public which the advertising industry is trying to reach."

The media expert Werner A. Meier on the news world.

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