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People

Albert Frey, the Swiss architect, has died in Palm Springs. Born in 1903, this former colleague of Le Corbusier in Paris influenced the spread of the architectural modern movement in the USA and, among other achievements, collaborated on the construction of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Swiss composer **Rolf Liebermann** has died at the age of 88. As director of the Hamburg and Paris Opera Houses he achieved international fame and was responsible for no less than two dozen première productions. Liebermann was regarded as a pragmatist of unique vision, combining classical with twelve-tone music and jazz. For the National Exhibition in 1964 he composed a study for 156 typewriters entitled "Les Echanges".

Professor **Ettore Rossi**, former director and chief physician at the University Medical Clinic for Children in Berne, has died at the age of 83. The "Father of Paediatrics" enjoyed international recognition and acclaim as a medical researcher and educator of countless paediatricians.



Switzerland's highest-ranking female politician in 1999 is **Trix Heberlein** (Liberal Democratic Party FDP). Her deputy and subsequent successor as National Council President is **Hanspeter Seiler** (Swiss People's Party SVP).

The Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute – the Migros think-tank – has appointed a new head. The successor to Christian Lutz is 39-year-old philosopher and writer **David Bosshart**, until now responsible for cultural promotion at Migros.



The new director of Swiss Radio DRS is **Walter Rüegg**. The economist and journalist formerly headed up Vogt-Schild of Solothurn, Switzerland's tenth largest media concern. 51-year-old Rüegg will take over in autumn 1999 from Andreas Blum, who is retiring.

Italian architect **Renzo Piano** has been selected to build the Paul Klee Museum in Berne, to be financed by the Maurice E. and Martha Müller Foundation.

Piano was responsible for the design of the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Beyeler Foundation building in Riehen near Basle.

Glimmer of hope for Expo 01: **Martin Heller**, Director of the Zurich Museum for Design, has been appointed to replace **Pipilotti Rist** who resigned recently as artistic director. Also, technical director **Paolo Ugolini** has been replaced by **Nelly Wenger**, an area planner from the Canton of Vaud. It is now up to both new appointees to steer the national exhibition project out of a crisis following numerous problems concerning unresolved issues and staff departures. Further personnel changes and restructuring measures are expected.



Snippets

NZZ gains majority stake in "Bund": The well-known Bernese daily is now 90 percent owned by the Neue Zürcher Zeitung holding company. Ten percent of the shares are owned by Publicitas.

"Tages-Anzeiger" stake in local radio: TA Media has taken over 25 percent of the share capital of Radio ZüriSee, a private Zurich radio channel. The move is aimed at allowing both media to disseminate certain types of information jointly.

Transport fusion: Deutsche Post has paid CHF 1.46 billion for Danzas, a Basle-based logistics specialist that of-

fers its customers high-capacity transportation services by road, rail, sea and air. A similar alliance exists between Swiss Post and German company General Parcel Logistics.

Zurich airport's value soars: As part of the planned privatisation and flotation of Zurich airport, a value of CHF 1.04 billion has been calculated for the airport management business and a value of CHF 470 million for the real estate business.

New German spelling: The editorial staff of the "Swiss Review" has decided not to introduce the new German spelling until 1 January 2000. Both spelling methods will in any case continue to be regarded as correct until 31 July 2005.

After Borromini, Giacometti:



Switzerland is already familiar with the new face on one of the country's most important banknotes. A portrait of the renowned sculptor and painter **Alberto Giacometti** appears on the blue 100-franc note, which accounts for one-third (70 million) of all notes in circulation. Of the CHF 30 billion total cash in circulation, around one quarter is in 100-franc notes.

Point of view

"Anyone who from childhood has been confronted with alpine walls, glacier massifs and granite blocks like bars hemming them in, dreams of the sea as a liberating force."

Jean Ziegler, Sociologist and SP National Councillor

"Mountains induce homesickness, but the sea induces longing."

Jürg Federspiel, Author

Federal Councillors Cotti and Koller to retire

Both were elected twelve years ago. Now CVP Federal Councillors Arnold Koller (65) and Flavio Cotti (59) are both to retire on 30 April 1999. This unexpected double vacancy frees the path for a second female Federal Councillor.



Retiring Federal Councillors Cotti (l) and Koller (r).

Press commentaries described the cautious and conscientious Appenzell lawyer Koller as a "Master of Swiss compromise". Among his most important successes while in office were the preparations for the initiative to remove the army, the handling of the "secret files" affair, the introduction of provisions to facilitate naturalisation, the penal standard against racism, compulsory measures on the rights of foreigners, the equal opportunities law and the divorce law. The highlight of his career looks set to be an endorsement of the constitutional reforms to be presented to the electorate on 18 April 1999 (see also under Votes).

As Minister of the Interior Ticinese lawyer Cotti, whom the media variously describe as keenly ambitious, brusque, hierarchy-conscious, a gifted linguist and consummate statesman, laid the foundation for the new health insurance law but failed to push through his proposals for a 10th AHV revision. He also approved the "Stop Aids" campaign that attracted Europe-wide attention, and presided over Switzerland during its 700th anniversary in 1991. As Minister

for Foreign Affairs, a role for which he was better suited, he attended the Earth Summit in Rio, chaired the OSCE in 1996, oversaw the holocaust debate and, as Federal President once more in December 1998, crowned his career by bringing the bilateral EU-Swiss negotiations to a successful conclusion. While both Koller and Cotti brought high ideals and a wealth of new ideas to their offices, the two appear somewhat burnt-out after twelve years in high office.

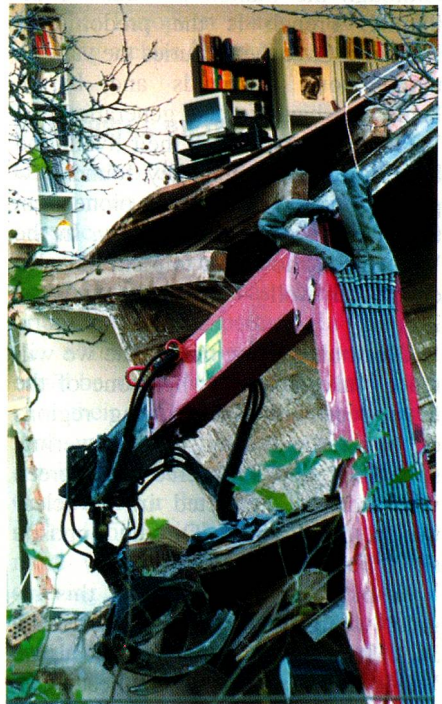
As we go to press there is no firm information on the successors to the two CVP Federal Councillors. It is generally believed, however, that their replacements will be elected during the March joint session of the Federal Assembly. It seems clear to all parties in the Federal Council that Federal President Ruth Dreifuss will be joined by another female colleague, and the quotas for the French and Italian-speaking regions are no longer the subject of debate. The most favoured candidature would involve a German-speaking woman and a man from a Swiss Romance-language region.

A man's world

In 1998 Switzerland celebrated 150 years of the Federal State. Political discrimination against women lasted almost as long. As recently as 1968 the Federal Council was only willing to sign the European Human Rights Convention with provisos, among other reasons because the convention promoted equal political rights for men and women. Switzerland only granted women's suffrage in 1971. The Federal Commission for Women's Issues presents this and other telling anecdotes in a binder entitled "Women Making History". This fascinating collection of texts documents aspects of daily life such as wages, divorce, emancipation and marriage from 1848 to the present day. ■

People and cars under rubble, shards of glass scattered far and wide

Five people died in Berne as a result of a severe gas explosion. The five-storey apartment block and integrated garage and car workshop on Berne's busy Nordring thoroughfare collapsed like a house of cards. The suspected cause was a faulty gas line. ■



Texts: Alice Baumann
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