

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 28 (2001)  
**Heft:** 1  
  
**Rubrik:** Mosaic

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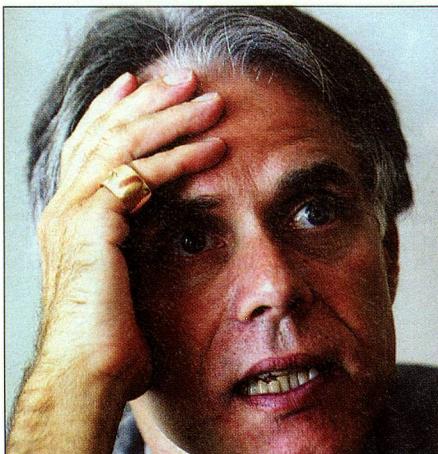
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## President Moritz Leuenberger

The President of the Swiss Federation for 2001 is Moritz Leuenberger. The Minister of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications is regarded as an intellectual with a penchant for communication and aesthetics, who believes in the importance of asking questions, probing, and reading books as part of the opinion-forming process. All the sectors for which he is



responsible are currently undergoing change in the form of privatisation, which ultimately may result in job losses. Leuenberger is from Biel, was born in 1946 and attended high school in Basle. He studied law in Zurich and until 1991 ran his own law office. In 1987 he gained nation-wide recognition as a Social Democrat when he was nominated Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the secret files affair. In 1991 Leuenberger was elected to the Zurich Cantonal Executive and four years later succeeded Otto Stich as a Federal Councillor.

## SNIPPETS

**STRONG DANES:** First the Danes bought the Feldschlösschen Brewery, then they moved in on telecoms companies Diax and Sunrise. Tele Danmark owned 44% of Sunrise when the latter fused with Diax and invested CHF 3.4 billion in the merger. This

gives Tele Danmark a 22% market share of the Swiss fixed network, 15% of the mobile telephony market and 36% of the Internet market.

**INDUSTRIOUS SWISS:** Switzerland boasts the fourth-highest labour costs in the world. However, the high hourly wages (CHF 36.30

on average) and ancillary wage costs are offset by strong productivity and long working hours, making Switzerland an expensive but efficient source of labour.

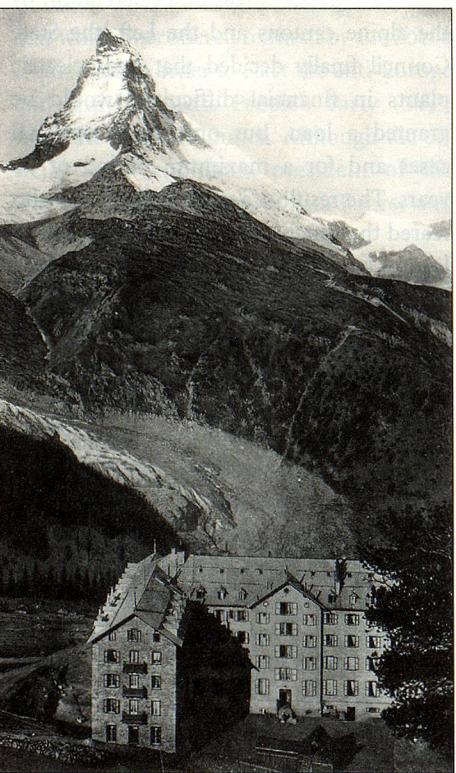
## Room with a view on the Matterhorn

Zermatt now boasts another 128 hotel beds, at 2222 meters above sea level: In the space of 30 months a CHF 50 million hotel complex has been built on the Riffelalp, a popu-

lar spot for skiing and hiking. Built in Valaisian chalet style by the Sandoz Family Foundation and Seiler Hotels of Zermatt, the Riffelalp Resort lives up to its five stars with state-of-the-art facilities, ski slopes on the doorstep, and a breathtaking view of the Matterhorn. It also offers attractions such as the highest tramway in Europe which transports summer guests and their luggage through the pine forest to the hotel from the Gornergrat railway. Winter guests are ferried by piste machine and snow scooters.

The first Grand Hotel Riffelalp was inaugurated in 1884 and completely destroyed by fire in 1961. It was famous as a meeting-place for royalty, politicians, industrialists and artists from all over the world. The region's popularity has not declined: Over the past 15 years the number of overnight stays in Zermatt has increased by 22%.

In the meantime another luxury hotel in Zermatt, called "Into the hotel", has had to close its doors because an artist called Heinz Julen unsuccessfully tried his hand at architecture. The experiment cost the sponsor, Münsingen based (BE) furniture dealer USM, several million francs.



The Grand Hotel Riffelalp before the fire.

**A NATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS:** More and more people are finding employment in the service sector rather than industry, the former engine of the Swiss economy: Only just under one million employed persons (full and part time) now work in a traditional industrial outfit. The opposite is happening in the commercial, banking, insurance, hospitality and other sectors. This tertiary sector of the economy now employs almost half a million more people than 15 years ago.

**CULTURAL VESSEL:** Zurich's western district has been given an old-new complex which is the source of much excitement: The plan comprises a cultural centre to be run by well-known director Christoph Marthaler, as well as restaurant and apartments. The protected building was formerly an Escher-Wyss production plant where around 300 ships, marine turbines and boilers were manufactured.

**DÜRRENMATT HONOURED:** High above Lake Neuchâtel and in the presence of many prominent personalities, the city of Neuchâtel inaugurated the Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel. The unique construction by architect Mario Botta integrates the former home of writer and painter Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990) and has been acclaimed as a first-class tourist attraction. The buildings and comprehensive exhibition were financed by government, cantons and private sponsors.

## PEOPLE

**Daniel Nordmann**, former union leader and until now Head of Human Resources at Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), has succeeded SBB Head of Freight **Per Utnegaard**. The SBB promises that this change will bring about progress in the fusion of freight operations with Italian state railways.



The new head of the Bankers' Association is **Urs Roth**. The 53-year-old successor to **Niklaus Blattner**, who is moving to the board of the National Bank, was for many years head of the UBS Legal Service.

Designated head of the Sunrise-Diax joint venture **Urs Fischer** has not taken up office. Instead he has answered the call of the Ascom telecoms group and will succeed **Hans-Ulrich Schroeder** as CEO.



Swiss concert singer and music teacher **Jolanda Rodio** has died at the age of 86. In 1972 she founded the Kulturmühle Lützelflüh in the Emmental, where she ran the "School for Total Theatre" until 1984.



41-year-old **Jacqueline Bachmann** has taken over from **Simonetta Sommaruga** at the helm of the Foundation for Consumer Protection. Her experience includes work with the Berne Women's Home and the Swiss Cancer League.

The Swiss Social Democrats (SP) have a new General Secretary: the party committee decided narrowly in favour of 47-year-old **Reto Gamma** (UR).

**Urs Weber**, 44-year-old former editor of "Blick", "Cash", "Facts" and "Sonnagszeitung" and current editor-in-chief of the commuter newspaper "20 Minuten", died unexpectedly from a heart attack. "20

## Mediaeval military architecture protected



The eating is good, and they are beautiful to behold: the Tre Castelli of Bellinzona have recently been added to the list of cultural landmarks. The three castles of Castelgrande, Montebello and Sasso Corbaro and the surrounding fortifications have been entered in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. According to the protection order signed by 161 UN member states, the buildings represent the only extant example of mediaeval military architecture in the Alps.

"Minuten" is one of two free newspapers which are currently flooding the Swiss market.

Popular actor and director **Inigo Gallo** has exited life's stage at the age of 68 due to cancer. He played alongside Anemarie Blanc, Stefanie Glaser, Hannes Schmidhauser, Heiri Gretler, Margrit Rainer and Ruedi Walter, to name but a few.



The Swiss Disaster Relief Corps has a new head: **Toni Frisch** succeeds **Charles Raedersdorf**, who is retiring.



The new President of the SMUV Trade Union is **Renzo Ambrosetti** (TI). The successor to new SP President **Christiane Brunner** is regarded as a traditionalist.

Journalist **Alphons Matt** died at the age of 80. He became famous for his political discussions broadcast on Swiss TV.



## Point of View

"Since the fall of Federal Councillor Kopp in 1989, Switzerland has stumbled, lurched and stuttered ... Most of the goings-on in latter-day Swiss politics have become increasingly annoying, embarrassing and in general also rather stupid, but because of their very triviality, too harmless to warrant flashing any warning signs."

Andreas Blocher, high school teacher and author, brother of SVP politician Christoph Blocher

Texts: Alice Baumann

Photos: Keystone, Reuters