

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 33 (2006)
Heft: 5

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 12.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

In support of "patriotism light"

MANY SWISS MEN AND WOMEN often have an uncertain, somewhat masochistic attitude towards their homeland. The British, French, Italians and even the Americans behave very differently. In contrast to the Swiss, they have always been proud of their home country. And yet some Swiss often seem almost embarrassed about their origins.

I recall radio programmes on August 1st and reports by foreign correspondents who had been asked to find out how Switzerland was perceived by people in their host country. The Swiss always feel the need to know what others think about them. That's why tricky referenda are frequently preceded by dire warnings that the outcome will affect Switzerland's image abroad. The French wouldn't care less, nor would the British. Anyone who consumes foreign media quickly discovers that few people beyond our borders are interested in domestic Swiss policy – perhaps unjustly so.

It's also fashionable here to overlook the fact that Switzerland enjoys an outstanding image throughout the world, and that the alleged land of milk and honey is often even presented too perfectly.

Is it insecurity that blinds us to certain realities? Why do we feel inclined time and again to hide our light under a bushel although there is no reason to do so?

Fortunately, the mood has changed in our country in recent years. As I mentioned in my last editorial, the white cross on a red background has long attained cult status in all segments of our society. It's now cool to be Swiss, especially among young people.

Kurt Imhof, a sociologist from Zurich University, has spent years studying patriotism and related issues, particularly vis-à-vis the situation in Switzerland. We discussed the definition of "love of one's homeland" with him, its necessity and the dangers inherent in misguided patriotism. During the interview, Professor Imhof reminded us that the student movement of '68 is largely to blame for bringing the state into disrepute. It painted a picture of an exploitative nation, and pilloried it as the ugly face of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. The political left was still preventing the Swiss getting to grips with the concept of "homeland" as late as the 1980s, since for leftist sentiments Switzerland was synonymous with immoral and incorrect political action. Intellectuals in particular were at loggerheads with Switzerland. Indeed, writer Max Frisch's statement that "My only link with my homeland is my passport" was more or less the acceptable position.



Heinz Eckert

Even the FDP, the country's one-time standard-bearer together with the SP, campaigned under the slogan "More freedom, less state". Those days are gone. Ever since the world became a global village, the nation state has been gaining in popularity and people have once more been allowed to express warm feelings about their homeland. Imhof therefore calls for what he terms "patriotism light": a form of patriotism free of religious, political and ideological connotations. We can and may be proud of our country's achievements and institutions, Imhof says. He also cites the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), a well-functioning public service, the solid welfare state and direct democracy, describing them as masterpieces borne of generations of work.

In the light of this, there really are plenty of reasons to be proud of Switzerland.

HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

5

Mailbag

5

Books: The Jeanmaire case

7

Images: Small Number – Big Impact

8

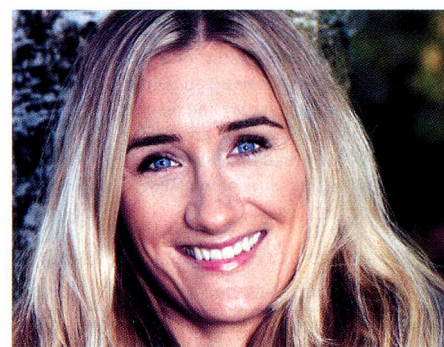
St. Gotthard – the legendary mountain

11

Voting

12

Official DFA information



Tanja Frieden, Olympic boardercross champion

Regional news

14

How much patriotism does a democracy need?

16

OSA news

18

Portrait: Tanja Frieden, Olympic boardercross champion

19

News in brief

Cover photo:
Tunnellers celebrate the first
breakthrough for the new
east tunnel through the Gotthard
on 6 September 2006.
Photo: Keystone

IMPRINT: "Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 33rd year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 21 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 390 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

■ **EDITORSHIP:** Heinz Eckert (EC), Editor-in-Chief; Rolf Ribi (RR), Alain Wey (AW), Gabriela Brodbeck (BDK), responsible for DFA information pages, Service for the Swiss Abroad DFA, CH-3003 Berne. René Lenzin (RL), reporting from parliament. Translation: CLS Communication AG ■ **POSTAL ADDRESS:** Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Tel. +41 31 356 61 10, Fax +41 31 356 61 01, Postal account (Swiss National Giro) 30-6768-9. Internet: www.revue.ch ■ **E-MAIL:** revue@aso.ch ■ **PRINT:** Zollikofer AG, CH-9001 St. Gallen. ■ **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please advise your local Embassy or Consulate – do not write to Berne. Single copy CHF 5.–