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Locked up in Switzerland  
simply for being poor and undesirable



We Swiss know terms like “administrative detention” only too well. However, people who were not affected have no idea what it was like. The report of the Independent Expert Commission has finally brought to light the full extent

of this inhuman practice, and it sends shivers down my spine when I read the findings. And the fact that the legislation was not amended until 1981, under pressure from other countries (incompatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights), shows that there was still little awareness of any actual wrongdoing, even in the 1980s. Therefore, many brave people had to step forward to end this unjust system, and now – decades later – again, to make sure the deeds of the past are not forgotten. I am in awe of these people.

OSKAR SCHMID, OTTOBRUNN, GERMANY

Thank you for exposing my country’s shameful past. In retrospect, I feel disgusted, but grateful for the courage it has taken to reflect on this not so glorious period of our history. Despite it all, I remain attached to the country that made me!

LAURENT BÜRKI, GUIDEL, FRANCE

Surprised and totally shocked to find this out now. Couldn’t stop reading your report. And this was going on under my nose for 25 years while living in Switzerland. Never spoken about, non-existent conversation at the table. Who knew? Repulsive and shameful.

ISABEL FUCHS, CONNECTICUT, USA

Reading this article sent shivers down my spine. I would like to congratulate your magazine for publishing it. I was so proud to have been granted citizenship, but the idyllic view I had of Switzerland is now somewhat tarnished.

ISABELLE LESCURE-BELLAN, LISBONNE, PORTUGAL

There is still reason to be proud of a country which is prepared to face the dishonourable moments of its past and to accept them.

DAVID GANI, LONDON, GB

When I read the date 1981, I was shocked to the core. I thought that this episode had come to an end after the Second World War and did not continue for so long. Those responsible thought they were doing the right thing for these “detainees” and the families that they separated. But this is not an excuse.

ERNST RÜTIMANN, TRANG, THAILAND

Elections 2019:  
Switzerland has been hit by a green wave

I can understand why some of my friends who reside in Germany are (rightly in my opinion) rather jealous of Switzerland’s political system. Let’s see what the “new” policy achieves. I’m really optimistic that women and young people will bring something different to the political arena than a whole lot of men who have been holding onto their jobs for a long time.

On the proportion of women in politics: how wonderful! It’s hard to believe that Switzerland, once Europe’s “taillight” in the area of women’s suffrage, is now virtually a front runner. Keep it up, Helvetia!

ANDREA FRÖHLICH, BENNINGEN BEI STUTTGART, GERMANY

I am pleased about the new trend in voting and above all about the strengthening of the green bloc.

Let’s hope that electronic voting will be adopted. I feel that thinking and acting from a global perspective, without neglecting the “national” side of things, could make for a more efficient and coherent Swiss foreign policy in the face of new challenges.

MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ DÍAZ, OSORNO, CHILE

I received the material to vote too late: about three weeks after the deadline. I hope that we will soon be using the electronic vote. We are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Congratulations to the women and the young people who represent the best of your Swiss people.

CHRISTIANE JOHNSON, REDDING, CALIFORNIA

Why does the author not touch on the low voter participation of only 45.1 per cent? There were more non-voters than voters: that puts the results in context. Besides giving the impression of lack of interest, political impotence or complacency, it could be said to cast doubt on the credibility of many politicians and parties. That’s a pity and is also dangerous as you should not surrender democracy to totalitarian movements of any political hue, just because they tend to seek attention more loudly than others. Good policy ultimately requires consensus as well and not the ability to be confrontational. It is less spectacular but much more effective for the common good.

ERIC WEBER, THAILAND



Switzerland in cardboard

In its last edition, the “Swiss Review” also explored the 100-year-old history of Swiss modelling. We would like to thank the numerous readers who took part in our draw for 20 models. The winners have been notified; the models are already on their way to you by post – and we wish you a lot of fun with building “Switzerland in cardboard”.

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,  
AND SANDRA KREBS, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

### The first star park in Switzerland



It is entirely true: we humans also need darkness at night for sleep to be truly restorative. Being able to look up at a starry sky is a RIGHT that human beings should demand, just like listening to the birds sing and the frogs croak. It

forms part of our natural emotions: those of childhood which have been replaced by the emotion created through cinema or television. Whilst nature, the great provider of magical scenes, no longer attracts attention.

SANTIAGO DE GERMAN RIBON, BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Thank you for being brave and a good role model. I hope this encourages many people throughout Switzerland and the rest of the world to follow suit.

KATHARINA PREIS-JOST, HAUSEN OB VERENA, GERMANY

### Bank fees eat up any interest



Things have got slightly worse for us all. The bank fees for Swiss Abroad have increased sharply. For example, the cantonal bank that we looked at charges 120 Swiss francs per customer base on top of the account fees – and only because we live in Germany. That equates to 360 Swiss francs per year – for actually doing nothing.

GIACOMO A MARCA, GERMANY

Negative interest rates are a real problem. At the moment here in Australia the interest rates are at a record low but not negative yet. If they ever go below zero, then money in your hand is worth more than the same amount in the bank. People will start looking for alternatives. The problem is if the government threatens us with a jail term and heavy fines for holding cash at home. Also cash transactions of over 10,000 Australian dollars carry heavy fines and potential jail. I wonder how the banks gained so much power over us. Negative interest only works for a handful of people. I don't think it's good.

DANNY ZEMP, AUSTRALIA

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