

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 38 (1974)
Heft: [4]

Artikel: How a Bernese village entered history
Autor: Trevor, John
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942080>

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: 09.08.2025

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

★ HEDY'S CORNER

"ONCE UPON A TIME"

Recently I re-discovered my mother's cookery book, published in 1901. Browsing through it becomes a mixture of gentle nostalgia for the days past and of amusement. The place of honour in this series "Once upon a time" is a diet for *skinny* people. Being one of these I hitherto searched in vain; women's pages only abound with reducing diets. And so here is the fattening diet:—

"First 4 days: Drink 60 gr milk (1/3rd cup) every 2 hours, increase this amount until the amount is up to 3 litres after the 4th day. 5th day: At 7.30 a.m. $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk; 10 a.m. $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk; 12.30 p.m., plate of soup with egg, 50 gr fried meat, mashed potatoes, vegetables, stewed fruit; 3.30 p.m. $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk; 5.30 p.m. $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk; 8 p.m., $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk, 50 gr white bread and butter. 6th day: As on 5th day but add 2 toasts. 7th and 8th day: Gradual increase of previous quantities. 9th day: 7.30 a.m. $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk and 2 toasts; 8.30 a.m., Coffee with cream and white bread with butter; 10.30 a.m., $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk and 2 toasts; noon, $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk; 1 p.m., one plate soup with egg, 100 gr meat, mashed potatoes, stewed fruit; 3.30 p.m., $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk; 5.30 p.m., $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk with 2 toasts; 8 p.m., $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk, 50 gr meat, white bread and butter; 9.30 p.m., $\frac{1}{2}$ litre milk and 2 toasts. On the following days the diet remains the same but meat quantity gradually increases and a sweet, which includes flour, is added as well. The duration of the diet is between 4 to 6 weeks. During this time bed rest is essential as well as twice daily massage."

Try as I would I could not discover a reducing diet, only the kinds which are prescribed for religious reasons. Animal meats are prohibited but delectable recipes abound with fish, oysters, crayfish, frog legs, beaver tails, shellfish, snails and otter.

Quaint reading, isn't it? Next time amongst other goodies: the most fabulous pineapple recipe ever read!

Recipes from: "Grosses Illustriertes Kochbuch" edited by Mathilde Erhardt.

HOW A BERNESE VILLAGE ENTERED HISTORY

By John Trevor

Zimmerwald is a pleasant little village in the lush, green farming country south of the Swiss federal capital, Berne. Its name would probably be unknown to non-Swiss but for the fact that in 1915 an important and secret socialist conference was held there—much to the later annoyance of the local people. The conference revealed a split between "evolutionaries" and the "revolutionaries" led by Lenin, who was then living in Swiss exile.

GO EAST-GO WEST



It's a small world

when ATLANTIC & PACIFIC Travel International makes every centre so easy to reach. Take the weight of the world off your shoulders, and find out what your travel agent can do for you. He'll make all your arrangements, for business or holiday trips around the world . . . or around the corner. And it costs you no more than booking direct . . . just saves you the trouble! By land, sea or air to anywhere, book through

ATLANTIC & PACIFIC

TRAVEL INTERNATIONAL

AUCKLAND

PHONE 364-100
77 QUEEN ST.

TAKAPUNA

PHONE 499-146
HALL'S CORNER

WELLINGTON

PHONE 46-031 -
4th FLOOR NAT. BANK
BLDG. - OPP. G.P.O.

CHRISTCHURCH

PHONE 68-117
131 CASHEL ST.

The left-wing creed that all workers were brothers irrespective of their nationality took a hard knock when the First World War broke out in August 1914.

Socialist parties of the nations at war had not long before been preaching internationalism, but now they joined in the nationalistic fervour that swept the belligerents and enthusiastically voted funds for the war.

Working men jettisoned their earlier belief that war was a cynical exploitation of the masses and rushed to join armed forces. They soon found themselves facing men much like themselves, except that they wore uniforms of a different colour.

Secret Preparations

But some socialist leaders—including politicians in neutral Switzerland—held firm to their earlier beliefs. Seeing the death and destruction caused by the war they proposed a conference to see what could be done about restoring peace.

One of the Swiss concerned was Ernst Nobs, later to have a career as a competent administrator, to be elected Mayor of Zurich and then to become the first socialist to join the Swiss federal coalition cabinet.

Talks began as early as September 1914 in Lugano with the Social Democratic Party of Italy, a country which was at that time still neutral.

It was decided to hold an international socialist conference in Switzerland. The organiser was a Swiss member of Parliament, Robert Grimm, and he went about his task in complete secrecy. Grimm picked the village of Zimmerwald as the meeting-place because it was a quiet spot well off the beaten track and because he knew of a pension there which could accommodate and feed all the participants.

Among the socialists from many countries who gathered in Berne for their "mystery trip" into the Bernese countryside was a man of destiny, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known as Lenin, then living in exile in Switzerland. With him was another man who was to play a leading part in the establishment of Communism in Russia, Leon Trotsky.

The participants lodged at the "Beau Sejour" pension. The local people thought they were tourists, very welcome at a time when the war had practically brought the tourist industry to a standstill.

A Quick End to the War

It was only later that the villagers found out what the visitors had really been doing and then they were extremely angry, complaining that their hospitality had been abused. Even in later years they were never very proud of the incident, and some time ago the pension itself, the only physical reminder of the conference was demolished.

Some socialist parties sent official delegations. But others

like those of France and Germany, were unofficial, because the official party line in those countries was support for the war.

After several days of deliberations, the participants drew up a statement condemning the political party truce which socialists had made for the duration of the war with "bourgeois" governments in a number of countries.

They declared that the war should be ended as quickly as possible in the interests of the workers and they urged socialists everywhere to work for this irrespective of national considerations, calling for a "peace of reconciliation in socialism".

With a flash of intuition, the delegates from France and Germany rejected any ideas of territorial conquests, saying that these would be bound to carry within them the seeds of future wars.

A "Proletarian Revolution"?

Lenin and his supporters, who included some of the Swiss delegation, did not agree with the views of the majority of the conference participants. But to preserve unity they did not insist on their arguments being published. Lenin's view was that the war, started as he said by the capitalists, should now be turned against them and transformed into a "proletarian revolution".

Although unity was formally preserved at Zimmerwald, the split between the "moderate" socialists and the revolutionaries was already apparent and it became more marked at another conference held in the following year at Kiental.

Robert Grimm, who had stood surety for Lenin and his wife when they started their Swiss exile, soon discovered that he did not speak the same political language as the Russian.

Disagreement on Methods

They discussed politics for hours on end but Grimm later recalled that he broke off the argument when he asked Lenin what he would do if he were Swiss in the present situation of Switzerland. Lenin replied: "I would proclaim civil war."

Grimm remained on speaking terms with Lenin and, as he said, respected his iron will and sympathised with the Russians who wanted to change their country's political system. But he disagreed with Lenin's methods.

And so the conference ended and the participants went home to spread the word of what had been decided. Lenin and wife went back to the Swiss resort of Sorenberg, where they had been holidaying before the conference. His wife later recounted how they climbed the Rothorn mountain and how, at the summit, Lenin threw himself down and slept like a log for an hour. She wrote that the Zimmerwald conference had strained his nerves and that he did not recover for several days. Less than three years later Lenin was to return to Russia.

And the little Bernese village of Zimmerwald, against its will, became part of the history of the 20th century Europe.