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Abstracts

Sandra Bott, Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, Sacha Zala:

International Switzerland in Times of the Cold War: an Interim Assessment

Considering the vibrant controversies about Switzerland's role in World War II, it is hardly surprising that the historiography of the country's international relations during the Cold War years remains relatively sparse and the critical mass of studies that would allow for a satisfying historical debate has not yet been reached. The first historical works were published in the decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall and analyzed the general question of Switzerland's neutrality and its position between the two superpowers. Since 2000, this theme has been taken up by further studies and completed by publications about national security and more recently about Switzerland's international relations in the Cold War, Swiss anticommunism and solidarity movements with Third World countries caught up in the conflict between the two power blocks. This paper discusses the contributions of existing histories and identifies tendencies and approaches in ongoing studies about the country's international role during the four decades of the Cold War. It thus aims at presenting a provisional interim assessment of the current historiographical landscape regarding this crucial period.

Luc Van Dongen:

Switzerland as Part of the Transnational Network of Anticommunism during the Cold War: Some Thoughts and Parameters for an Analysis

This paper deals with the transnational dimensions of anticommunism during the Cold War and discusses some methodological issues of this relatively new historical approach, with special attention given to the Swiss case. How deeply – and in what manner – was Switzerland involved with the transnational anticommunist networks at that time? What type of interconnections through Swiss and foreign State-Private Networks could be observed? The example of the *Schweizerischer Aufklärungsdienst* demonstrates the intensity of these links, despite official neutrality. Although it was somewhat ambiguous, Switzerland engaged in what could be called a kind of invisible integration to the West.

Marco Wyss:

Unintentional Dependence or Longing for the West? Switzerland's One-sided Arms Purchases and Sales during the Early Cold War

After the Second World War, the Swiss wanted to equip their army with modern

weaponry that could be used against the Soviet Union, which was perceived as the sole potential enemy. In their quest for aircraft and tanks, Swiss authorities increasingly departed from the idea of a self-reliant armaments policy. While Switzerland refused arms imports and exports across the Iron Curtain, it eventually became part of the Western arms transfer system, and thus endangered the status and policy of neutrality.

Mauro Cerutti:

Neutrality and Security: the Swiss Nuclear Program

This contribution focuses on the military aspect of the Swiss nuclear program and covers the period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, which corresponds largely to the term of the Vaudois Paul Chaudet as head of the Federal Department of Defense. In July 1958, the Federal Council published a policy statement that did not exclude the possibility for the Swiss army to be armed with an atomic bomb in order to defend neutrality. The position of the supporters of such a bomb was backed up by the rejection of two anti-nuclear socialist initiatives in popular votes in 1962 and 1963 as well as by an expert report, which corroborated the feasibility of the program from a scientific and financial point of view. In 1964, however, the scandal of the Mirage weakened the position of the supporters of a nuclear program. Even if the policy statement of 1958 was not revoked, the Federal Council's decision in 1968 to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty presumably marked the end of this military project.

Marisa Birri:

Switzerland and the Cold War in the Congo

This article aims at analyzing Switzerland's role during the conflict that started right after the Congo's independence from Belgium in 1960 with the secession of the resource-rich province of Katanga, and which was followed by one of the largest and most expensive UN peacekeeping missions up-to-date. The author highlights how the ideological framework of the Cold War and Swiss economic interests in the Congo shaped Switzerland's policies toward the country as well as its major involvement in the UN peace-keeping mission.

David Gaffino:

Switzerland and the Race towards Peace in Vietnam: Cumbersome Neutrality

When the President of the United States and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam finally agreed to start peace talks in May 1968, they chose to

meet in Paris. Why didn't Switzerland, which hosted the Geneva Conference of 1954 ending the war in Indochina, once more succeed in welcoming the negotiators on its soil? This article tries to answer this question by analyzing Switzerland's foreign policy towards the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This policy was influenced by its secret competition with another Neutral, Sweden, and by the contradictory pressures of Swiss public opinion.

Isabelle Lucas:

Swiss Francs to Support a Liberal Non-Peronist Argentina: Economic Relations Between Switzerland and Argentina During the three first Decades of the Cold War

During the Cold War period, the years 1956–1957 were essential in the reinforcement of the economic relations between Switzerland and Argentina. They coincided with an increase of financial exchanges between the two countries, at a time when a new generation of openly anticommunist liberals came to power in Argentina. This contribution begins with an overview of the evolution of the economic exchanges between the two countries from 1947 to 1976 and then highlights the key issues regarding the negotiations that took place during the two pivotal years of 1956 and 1957.

Martin Kuder:

Money Without Borders: Italian Capital Flight to Switzerland and the Rise of the Financial Centre of the Tessin

In the 1960s, illegal Italian capital flight to Switzerland was very considerable (33 billions of Swiss francs at current prices). In 1963 and in 1969 this outflow played an important role in the destabilization of the Italian balance of payments. As a result, Lugano became the third Swiss financial centre in terms of importance. Not only banks were involved in the management of Italian money, but also a great number of financial corporations. On a more general level, Italian capital flight contributed to strengthen the Swiss financial centre and its wealth management business during the Cold War.

