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Snippets

- After a year of negotiations Swissair and Aeropers, the cockpit staff association, have signed a collective labour contract. Pilots will have to give up 5% of their salaries and fly more hours. Swissair anticipates savings of at least Sfr. 60 million.

- There is to be a huge merger in Swiss technology. Schaffhausen engineering group Georg Fischer (GF) has taken a majority holding in Agie Holding AG, whose head office is in Zug. Together with its Charmilles Technologies in Geneva, this will make it the biggest Swiss high-tech company, with sales of up to Sfr. 750 million. It will have 2,500 employees at production plants in Switzerland (accounting for 60% of sales), the United States (25%), China and Japan (15% together).

- Rumantsch Grischun – which has existed since 1982 – is now fully recognised. The government of Canton Grisons has authorised the harmonised written Romansh language for official use. ■

Three fire-fighters lost their lives in a blaze which completely burnt out the Tela AG paper goods factory at Niederbipp, Canton Berne. The disaster, which cost Sfr. 150 million, was due to a technical fault. The staff, about 350 people, are still working, but at different places. The fire will result in roughly a year's delay in deliveries.



Point of view

"We should think back to the atmosphere of transformation of the 19th century, to our radical thinking and self-assurance then. In those days we still had the courage to build up something new, while today the only thing we are building is walls around us."

Hermann Strittmatter, advertising specialist

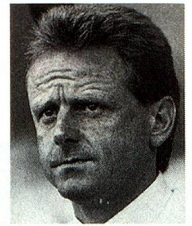
Thousands of jobs to be lost in banking

Dramatic downsizing by banks is in the wind. The domestic branch network of CS Holding (Kreditanstalt, Volksbank, Bank Leu, Neue Aargauer Bank and CS First Boston) will be reduced by one-third and streamlined. The name Kreditanstalt will go and be replaced on signs with Credit Suisse Group.

Staff are very worried about losing their jobs. It has been announced that the reorganisation will take place over a period of two to three years and that about 5,000 jobs will be lost worldwide, of which 3,500 (out of 24,000) will be in Switzerland. Group head Jo Ackerman will disappear together with the name Kreditanstalt, and the first chief executive of Credit Suisse Group will be Lukas Mühlemann, ex-head of McKinsey Switzerland and Swiss Reinsurance. ■

People

39-year old Austrian citizen **Rolf Fringer** – who was brought up in this country – is Switzerland's new national soccer coach, **Artur Jorge** having left this post after seven months. The Swiss Football Association released the 50-year old Portuguese from his contract, which lasted until summer 1998. Jorge now trains the Portuguese national team.

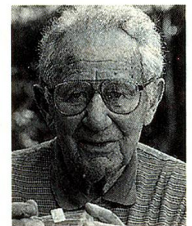


Werner Marti is the new Mr. Price. The 39-year old member of the government of Canton Glarus, Social Democrat national councillor and almost-ran Federal Council candidate has become the national price supervisor. He will be able to intervene in matters of concern to household budgets, such as electricity, health care and waste disposal. Marti succeeds Joseph Deiss.

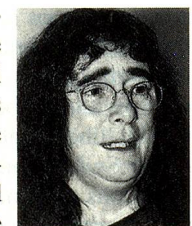


Pharmacologist **Tadeus Reichstein** has died in Basle aged 99. In 1950 he received a Nobel Prize together with two other researchers for the discovery of cortisone. He also devised a method of synthesising vitamin C.

Basle authoress **Adelheid Duvanel**, one of the most original of Swiss writers, has taken her life at the age of 60. The homeless, drug addicts and outcasts were at the centre of her imaginative and fantastic prose texts.



Jean Grädel and Armin Kerber will run Zurich's Gessnerallee Theatre for the 1997/98 season. 53-year old Grädel, who specialises in dance and experimental theatre, is a recognised director of acting troupes and theatre houses. He is at present on the staff of Pro Helvetia, the federal cultural foundation. 39-year old Kerber, a qualified psychologist, has worked as a theatre director and dramatist, at the Kampnagel Cultural Centre in Hamburg amongst other places. ■



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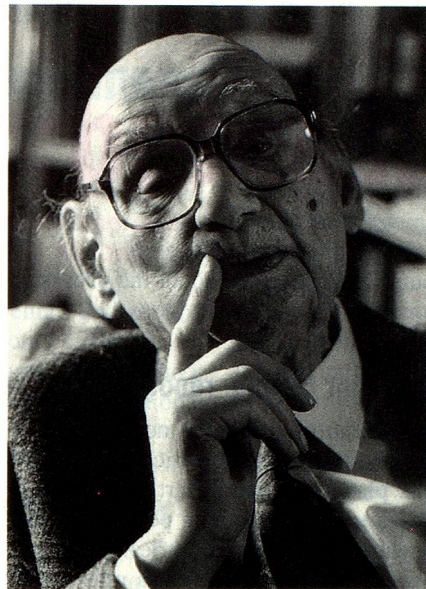
On the death of Jean Rudolf von Salis

A great man, a wise man and a noble man has left us. That was the unanimous sentiment of the Swiss media on learning of the death of the intellectual aristocrat, Jean Rudolf von Salis, at the age of 95. This world-renowned historian and writer was indeed one of the most versatile and highly-regarded Swiss figures of the century.

One of his greatest interests was European civilisation. Non-European observers – Americans, Russians, Chinese – can sometimes understand the situation of Europe better than Europeans themselves, who are too busy concentrating on their own special characteristics, wrote the cosmopolitan von Salis with his characteristic provocativeness. Not for nothing was one of his books called “Problematic Switzerland” (1968).

He liked idiosyncrasy. Complexity was a matter of course to him. History, said historian von Salis once, consists of multilayered and interwoven streams of energy and can in no case be defined by objective social and political assertions. Since he was always able to examine his subject from every conceivable point of view, von Salis was widely respected and turned to as a moral reference. He was regarded as a genuine interpreter and cultural ambassador of Switzerland.

At the outbreak of the Second World War von Salis was called upon by the



Federal Council to make a weekly broadcast on Swiss-German Radio Beromünster. He was to comment on international events as an independent chronicler. He was also president of Pro Helvetia and was given a number of UNESCO assignments. In his capacity as talented speaker and writer he received many literary and cultural prizes, and he counted men such as Thomas Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke, Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt amongst his friends.

Up to his retirement in 1968 he taught history at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. Until shortly before his death he received important figures from all parts of Europe at Brunegg Castle, his home in Canton Aargau.

Jean Rudolf von Salis was a famous Swiss writer and at the same time a remarkable world citizen. His influential voice is now silent. ■

Joining hands in health care

Sickness insurance funds Helvetia and Artisana will merge on January 1, 1997, to become Helsana Versicherungen AG. This will be the biggest sickness fund in Switzerland, insuring 1.6 million people. For the time being the original names will continue to exist as trademarks. Artisana will target young people and businesses, while Helvetia will advertise itself as “a partner for comprehensive security”. The closing of ranks has a synergy potential amounting to Sfr. 150 million. It should lead to a drop in premiums of 3% to 4%, the present premiums of both funds being amongst the highest in the country. The merger is likely to cost 150 to 200 jobs by 1999. ■

Swiss tobacco company swallowed up



Big takeover on the Swiss tobacco scene: the Dutch company, Rothmans International, is acquiring 182-year old Burrus Group, whose 22% share makes it number 2 in the Swiss tobacco market. It produces its own brands, Parisienne and Select, as well as Gauloises and West under license. ■

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad

Winter sports camp 1996/97

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad is once again organising a winter sports camp for Swiss Abroad children over Christmas and New Year. Skiing at various levels of ability, snowboarding, “Big Foot”, cross-country, sledging, skating, swimming, curling, etc. Beginners are most welcome!

Who? Swiss Abroad children, aged 8–15

When? December 25, 1996–January 4, 1997

Where? Splügen, Canton Grisons
Last date for registration: November 15, 1996, at:

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad

Wattstrasse 3, CH-8050 Zurich

Tel. 41 1 313 17 17

Fax 41 1 313 17 18

(From December 15, 1996, the Foundation's address will be: c/o Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16

Tel. 41 31 351 61 00

Fax 41 31 351 61 50) ■

Texts: Alice Baumann

Photos: Keystone