

Mailbag

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What is the cause of Switzerland's insecurity?

Isn't Switzerland, in light of its referendum system, simply much more transparent than any other country and therefore less protected against criticism? Isn't being a Swiss Federal Councillor therefore the most difficult job in politics? Can the government be strong in a country where the people are strong? The Federal Council must masterfully strike a balance between self-determining Switzerland and an EU governed from afar. The Federal Council needs our full support for its Swiss statesmanship.

EDGAR RUF, DÜSSELDORF

[HTTP://HOME.ARCOR.DE/EDGAR.RUF](http://home.arcor.de/edgar.ruf)

These Swiss voters

The majority of Switzerland's cantons are German-speaking and it is their votes that determine whether initiatives are approved or not. The Swiss want to be masters of their own destiny and not take orders from the EU. French-speaking Switzerland has left-leaning ideas influenced by France and its political representatives are ready to hand Switzerland over to the EU. These voters are fortunately in the minority and I hope that Switzerland remains a prosperous and much-envied country despite voting in favour of the initiative put forward by the Swiss People's Party.

GUY NICOLAS,
DIJON, FRANCE

Damage limitation

Shocked at the outcome of the immigration referendum on 9 February, I wish to express my indignation at its obtuse and reckless architects and also my disappoint-

ment with the political, economic and social groups opposed to the initiative for being incapable of exposing the widespread falsehoods and the threats to our country. Can our leaders now do some damage limitation? I wish them all the best.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MONNIER,

ST JULIEN DE PEYROLAS, FRANCE

Unacceptable editorial

Over the immigration initiative, Barbara Engel categorises the Swiss as either FAR-SIGHTED or NARROW-MINDED, FAINT-HEARTED and EGOISTICAL. One might expect such an intolerant and insulting classification from the politburo of a totalitarian state but not from a country that stands for democracy and freedom. Barbara Engel should apologise for her tasteless faux pas.

HANS WALDISPUHL,

SHEDIAC BRIDGE, CANADA

Thank you!

After the grievances expressed in the February issue (and others) I would like to pay tribute to Barbara Engel and her team. Under the editorship of Barbara Engel, "Swiss Review" has become an extremely varied and interesting magazine that does a fine job of keeping us informed about developments in our native land. Divided opinion about content is obviously acceptable. You can't please everybody all the time, as they say. What is regrettable is that some readers express their criticism so harshly. Crass criticism is anything but inspiring.

RAYMOND HOECHLI,
BARCELONA, SPAIN

"MEMORIES ARE ABOUT ALL THAT IS LEFT of the dramatic life that took Louis Chevrolet from La Chaux-de-Fonds to Paris and finally to the United States where he became one of the greatest racing drivers of all time" – this line appeared in the US newspaper "The Corpus Christi Times" on 18 March 1938. Now Martin Sinzig, a Swiss business journalist, has taken a journey through Europe and North America to capture these memories and present them in a biography. The result is "Louis Chevrolet – der Mann, der dem Chevy seinen Namen gab" (Louis Chevrolet – the Man Who Gave His Name to the Chevy), a portrayal of the adventure-filled life of the native of Neuchâtel who arrived in New York by ship on his 22nd birthday and became one of the most influential engine and racing car designers in the USA.

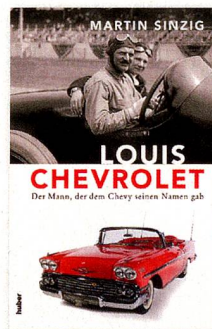
Everyone is familiar with the name Chevrolet today. But what lies behind it? Little was known for many years about the life story of the company's founder Louis Chevrolet, who was born on 25 December 1878 in La Chaux-de-Fonds and died on 6 June 1941 in Detroit, the "Motor City". The biography published to mark the 100th anniversary of the Chevrolet company in 2011 is the result of many years of meticulous research. It contains new findings and previously unpublished contemporary documents and photographs together with press articles about the highs and lows of the early automotive industry. Sinzig also provides the first in-depth insight into the events surrounding the founding and development of Chevrolet as a company. However, he does not just focus on the work of the ingenious designer and inventor but also on Louis Chevrolet as a person – a very family-oriented man, a devoted brother and father, and a loyal and caring husband. A special touch is added by giving the book's foreword to Bob Lutz, the former long-time head of development at General Motors and a fellow Swiss American.

GM, Chevrolet's parent company, was badly hit by the economic and financial crisis at the beginning of the 21st century and had to undergo a painful restructuring process. The longstanding Pontiac brand fell victim to the reorganisation, but the established Swiss name survived. Thanks to Chevrolet, GM held the biggest IPO of all time in 2010. Chevrolet has developed into the fourth-largest brand in the world.

Sinzig, who himself has a strong interest in the US automotive scene, is part of the muscle-car generation and experienced first-hand the oil crisis in the early 1970s and the end, at least for the time being, of the big and powerful road cruisers.

This biography, which is not just about Chevrolet, is a great read for anyone interested in the international economics of the early 20th century. Through Chevrolet's life and his influence over the automotive industry, it presents the economic background to modern-day mobility and emerging globalisation.

THOMAS KALAU



MARTIN SINZIG, "Louis Chevrolet – Der Mann, der dem Chevy seinen Namen gab"; Orell Füssli Sachbuch, 2011; 190 pages. CHF 35, EUR 25.