

**Georg Kreis**

## **Outside History**

### **On Swiss participation and Nonparticipation in World Affairs**

Due to its neutrality and size, Switzerland has often regarded itself as unaffected by world affairs, or even as the best alternative in a bad world. This also applies to the era of Nazi domination in Europe, particularly during the «real» war years of 1933–1945, the post – war period and in historical representations of the past. During the period of Nazi domination, the notion of island neutrality not only served as an aid to survival and as a demarcation from its mighty neighbour, but also facilitated the possibility of cooperation from an illusionary «independent» position. Indeed, when Switzerland was accused of profitable involvement with its neighbour as late as 1997, it could be defiantly pointed out that Auschwitz was nowhere near Switzerland. This contribution aims to show how the past has caught up with Switzerland through reminders of its previous involvement. It also outlines the reactions of those affected by these unpleasant promptings and indicates how Switzerland as a whole missed an opportunity to make its appointment with world history.<sup>1</sup>

In a press interview at the end of 1996, the outgoing federal president, Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, referred to majority opinion when raising the rhetorical question of *whether Auschwitz was located in Switzerland*.<sup>2</sup> By giving voice to the majority, usually eclipsed or denied in communications between the so-called big bad world and the Helvetic haven, he dared to say what «everyone» was thinking. As an aside, Delamuraz also spoke about extortion for ransom – for which he was later obliged to apologize.

However, his remarks were contradicted within Switzerland. The minority opposition dismissed Delamuraz' statements as further evidence of the «national stereotypical way of thinking» and avoidance of guilt. The famous Swiss writer, Adolf Muschg, made a pertinent point in one of his repeated interventions: «The historic experience Switzerland had been spared because of its neutrality it lacks today.»<sup>3</sup> In other words, what in the past had seemed an advantage was now portrayed as a disadvantage.<sup>4</sup>

The collective identity of Switzerland is based on the idea that the country is a special case, an outdated idea promulgated during the 19th century (due to its singular democracy and pluricultural composition). As special cases cannot easily be compared, assessment is difficult – and the debate about whether Switzerland is a special case continues. Resistance to a normalization of self-representation leads at best to every country being a special case. In this respect, Switzerland would seem to be regarded as a very special case.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Georg Kreis, *Vorgeschichten zur Gegenwart. Ausgewählte Aufsätze*. Bd. 2, Basel 2004, S. 193–210.

<sup>2</sup> Interview of 31 December 1996 in «24 heures» and «Tribune de Genève». The protest against the statement that Switzerland was being «held hostage for ransom» was even stronger than the protest about the Auschwitz-word. According to Yves Seydoux, the cabinet's Chief Press Officer and Delamuraz's official speaker, of the 150 letters Delamuraz received, 145 were approving (*Tages-Anzeiger*, January 9, 1997). The executive board of the Swiss Socialist Party called for Federal Councillor Delamuraz's resignation. Soon after, in a letter to the World Jewish Congress, Delamuraz expressed his regrets about the chosen formulation, but no excuse. About the incapacity to feel guilt (*Maissen* 1998, pp. 261–267).

<sup>3</sup> Adolf Muschg, *Wenn Auschwitz in der Schweiz liegt*. In: *Tages-Anzeiger*, 24 Januar 1997

<sup>4</sup> Mariatte Denmann, «If Auschwitz were in Switzerland ...German Swiss Intellectuals Respond to the Nazi Gold Affair», in: *New German Critique* 85: pp. 167-191.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Widmer, *Die Schweiz als Sonderfall. Grundlagen, Geschichte, Gestaltung*. Zürich 2007. – More critical: Thomas Eberle / Kurt Imhof, *Sonderfall Schweiz*. Zürich 2007.

The «Swiss Case» is of more general significance, however. What can be observed in the example of this small country also happened in other societies *during* the Nazi era as well as *thereafter*. Here, I am referring to the penetration of processes for which no formal and immediate responsibility existed, and that were met with indifference, despite an element of co-responsibility due to the simple fact of living in the country at the time. In this respect, one could say that there is something of a little Switzerland in every country and every person.

Switzerland's neutrality contributed to the strong tendency to regard the country as both an island and a mountain, and sometimes even as a «mountain island»<sup>6</sup> This view became more prevalent over the centuries, and escalated rapidly during the course of World War I. Indeed, the idea of a severely restricted membership of the international community persists to this day – even if one believes and hopes that time will contribute to its erosion and eradication.

Switzerland is often regarded as an exclave of world history and a multifunctional duty-free warehouse. It is also a popular venue and base for organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Nations, the UN, Universal Postal Union, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), international secret service agencies and companies specialising in various lines of business, such as banking, insurance, travel, nutrition, machine manufacture (including watches), the chemical industry, the art trade, etc. While the formula «Switzerland as an international Institution»<sup>7</sup> describes reality, it is also an illusory representation in that it deals with an ambivalent myth. This ambivalence exists in the fact that one imagines Switzerland as being untouched, immaculate, independent and exempt from paying tributes to anyone. Delamuraz' predecessor, Georges- Andre Chevallaz, criticized Switzerland in recent years and in the late 1960s accused it of happily dozing a «sommeil du juste».<sup>8</sup>

## Retrospection without Real Concern

Refugee policy, or in other words the real way of coping with the challenge of events outside Switzerland, was the subject of a large 1950s report in which Swiss officials appeared as very cooperative with their counterparts of the Third Reich.<sup>9</sup> At that time, however, nobody really felt that Switzerland had failed in its duty of humanitarian aid. For example, the enthusiastic welcome of refugees from Hungary in 1956 (victims of Communism and not majoritarian Jews) created a favourable image.

The suggestions made by a number of books and articles in the 1960s (in the context of international debates) and the late 1970s (in the context of a TV documentary film about the Holocaust in May 1979) that Switzerland practiced a very restrictive refugee policy had very

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<sup>6</sup> Georg Kreis, *Kleine Neutralitätsgeschichte der Gegenwart*. Bern 2004, pp. 297.

<sup>7</sup> Herbert Lüthy, «Die Schweiz als internationale Institution», in *Festschrift für Walther Hug zu seinem 70 Geburtstag*, 14 April 1968, pp. 653-666. Bern 1968.

<sup>8</sup> Georges-Andre Chevallaz, *Die Schweiz oder der Schlaf des Gerechten*. Zürich 1969. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. in French: *La Suisse ou le sommeil du juste*. Lausanne 1967, 1985. Chevallaz became one of the most ardent defenders of the positive self-representation of the nation. – Georges-Andre Chevallaz, *Die Herausforderung der Neutralität. Diplomatie und Verteidigung der Schweiz*. Zürich 1997. 1st ed. in French: *Le Defi de la neutralité. Diplomatie et defense de la Suisse 1939-1945*. Vevey 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Georg Kreis, *Switzerland and the Second World War*. London 2000, pp. 1–25 and pp. 103–131. More generally: Georg Kreis, *Switzerland in the Second World War. Responding to the Challenges of the Time*. Zürich Pro Helvetia 1999.

little impact.<sup>10</sup> The well-established image simply indicated a few dark pinpricks on an otherwise spotlessly white jacket.

This situation remained more or less the same until 1996. There had admittedly been only a medium sized shock after the war, in 1945/46, which was laid to rest by the Washington agreement of May 1946. In 1985 - in time for the 40th anniversary of the end of the war – the journalist Werner Rings, who came to Switzerland as a Jewish refugee in 1942, attempted to awaken Switzerland from its slumber with a well-researched book on the Swiss National Bank's trade with stolen Nazi gold – and achieved nothing.<sup>11</sup>

In 1989, when the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the war was commemorated, there were signs of readiness also to remember the dark side of the past. With a main focus on the restrictive Swiss refugee policy, restitution and compensation payments had not yet been thematized. On the contrary, initial interest in the collective memory was on the heroic commitment of the Swiss people who devoted six years of their lives to collective resistance to the Nazi threat.<sup>12</sup> The remembrance of the more critical side of the past, the (probably inevitable) cooperation with their powerful neighbours and a restrictive refugee policy were mainly understood as a threat to so-called «good» memories.

Six or seven years later, in 1995/96, when external agents drew Switzerland's attention to the different occurrences (the appropriation of bank accounts, the handing over of victims' fortunes to the Nazi administration, participation in Aryanisation, the buying (of) Nazi gold, etc), this appeared as something completely new and unheard of. The past not only returned as a dark shadow, but also in the form of real people. In other words, «flesh and blood» survivors began knocking at Swiss doors.<sup>13</sup>

Later, in the years 1996-2001, Switzerland mandated scholars to shed light on the past. Instead of the whipping boy it had become, Switzerland once again appeared as a model tower of strength. The parliament unanimously decided on the creation of an independent commission. The government designated nine members of this internationally comprised group presided over by Prof. Jean-Francois Bergier. The Bergier-Commission was given more or less free rein to execute its mission to clarify the facts. It was provided with a considerable sum of money, Fr. 22 mio., a lot of time (5 years), given unlimited access to public and private archives and even to the banks, and, at least initially, enjoyed high national prestige.<sup>14</sup>

What resulted from the commission's work was a monumental report in the form of a synthesis volume of some 600 pages and a series of 20 monographs with a total of 10 000

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<sup>10</sup> The most famous book in this context is Alfred A. Häslar, *Das Boot ist voll. Die Flüchtlingspolitik der Schweiz 1933-1945*. Zürich 1967

<sup>11</sup> Werner. Rings, *Raubgold aus Deutschland. Die «Golddrehscheibe» Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Zürich 1985.

<sup>12</sup> Simone Chiquet, «Der Anfang einer Auseinandersetzung: Zu den Fakten, Zusammenhängen und Interpretationen in der Debatte um die «Übung Diamant»» 1989, in: *Jubiläen der Schweizer Geschichte 1798-1848-1998, Studien und Quellen des Bundesarchivs*, vol. 24, dir. Christoph Graf, Bern 1998, pp. 193-227.

<sup>13</sup> The Spring case was an especially prominent example. Joseph Spring was one of three Jewish refugees who had tried to escape to Switzerland in November 1943 and were delivered directly to the Gestapo by Swiss officers. Two of them were killed in Auschwitz while Joseph survived – and brought his case to Switzerland in 1998. The Federal Government passed the case on to the Federal Tribunal. The latter denied entitlement to compensation, but conceded the payment of 100 000 Swiss Francs for legal expenses; incidentally the same amount Spring had demanded as compensation. (Keller, Stefan. 2003. *Die Rückkehr. Joseph Springs Geschichte*. Zürich: Rotpunkt. ). Noteworthy is the fact that the following formulation succeeded in becoming the title in the main Swiss daily: «Were we allowed to send back Joseph Spring in 1943?» (NZZ 2003, November 10.).

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Maissen, *Verweigerter Erinnerung. Nachrichtenlose Vermögen und Schweizer Weltkriegsdebatte 1989-2004*. Zürich 2005. – Werner.Rings, *Raubgold aus Deutschland. Die «Golddrehscheibe» Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Zürich 1985.

pages.<sup>15</sup> This difficult to digest opus magnum was admittedly well-processed by the daily media and communicated to some degree to readers, listeners and viewers. The topic «dominated» public attention for several days.

A small exhibition and two popularisations for schools were produced.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, however, parliament conducted *no* debate whatsoever on the content of the report. In an attempt to banish the commission's findings into the background, the political right preferred to discuss the commission's methods and ask questions about how the commission had spent the money allocated to it, whether commission members disagreed with each other, and whether they might have made errors. In addition, the government – which for five years could refer to the ongoing investigation to escape explanations – remained indifferent to the commission's findings. As an aside, some years later both the government and the parliament reacted in a similar manner to the report on Swiss relations to the South African apartheid regime.<sup>17</sup>

In the process of coping with the past, the readiness for benevolence suddenly accompanied willingness to create special funds. High amounts of funding flowed to different foundations. The three largest operations were:

- 1) The creation in February 1997 of a *Special Fund for Victims of the Holocaust* with a grant of Fr. 300 mio. 100 mio. were given by the three main Swiss banks, 100 mio. by the Swiss Nationalbank and 100 mio. by several others. The chair was given to Rolf Bloch, the president of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities. This allowed aid to be sent to about 300 000 people in more than 60 countries.
- 2) In March 1997 the Federal government launched a project for a Solidarity Foundation. It allocated a capital of Fr. 7 billions with an annual payment of Fr. 350 mio. for the amelioration of severe human hardships, half in Switzerland and half abroad.<sup>18</sup> The announcement of this project was followed by several years of domestic political quarrelling. The political climate then changed and the window of opportunity closed. The project was rejected in September 2002 in a general referendum with about 52 % No votes.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Switzerland, National Socialism and the Second World War. Final Report of the Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland-Second World War. Zurich 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Heimberg, *La question des refugies en Suisse à l' époque du nationalsocialisme*. Geneve 2002: Cycle d'orientation. – Pietro Boschetti, *La Suisse et les nazis – Le rapport Bergier pour tous*. Lausanne 2005. Boschetti's book was advertised as follows: «Ce livre est un trait d'union. Le trait d'union qui manquait entre le grand public et les 11 000 pages des travaux de la commission Bergier sur la Suisse et la Seconde Guerre mondiale. De quoi rebuter les meilleures volentes ! Si bien que beaucoup en etaient restes aux comptes rendus des medias lors de la polemique sur la Suisse face au nazisme. Grâce à Les Suisses et les nazis, chacun a desormais acces aux points principaux etudies par les historiens: comment la Suisse est-elle cornportee pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale avec les refugies et avec les fonds places dans les banques ? Que savait-on du sort qui attendait les Juifs refoules aux frontieres ? Quel rôle jouait la place financiere suisse ? Qu'en etait-il du transit ferroviaire et du travail force en Allemagne pour le compte d'entreprises suisses? Cet ouvrage livre enfin au grand public les reponses proposees par la Commission Independante d'Experts.» – Barbara Bonhage, et al., *Hinschauen und Nachfragen. Die Schweiz und die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus im Licht aktueller Fragen*. Zürich 2006. – Hans Saner, / Hans-Dieter Jendreyko, eds., *Was gehen uns unsere Väter an? Jugendliche zu den Spuren des Holocaust in der Schweiz*. Basel 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Georg Kreis, *Die Schweiz und Südafrika 1948–1994. Schlussbericht des im Auftrag des Bundesrats durchgeführten NFP 42+*. Bern 2005. [Published in French and English in 2007].

<sup>18</sup> More precisely it was stated: «Zu denken ist an Opfer von Armut und Katastrophen, von Genoziden und anderen schweren Menschenrechtsverletzungen, selbstredend auch an jene von Holocaust und Shoa.» The latter notion created confusion because it was thought that the mentioned and recently created fund was for such kind of assistance.

3)The reaching of an agreement in August 1998 between the major Swiss banks (by then reduced through a merger from the former three to two banks), the plaintiffs in a class action suit in the USA and Jewish organisations on a compensation payment of Fr. 1,8 billions. At the time the sum of money was considered exorbitant, although in light of the speculation losses the banks suffered during this year (2008), it is not really that impressive. In addition, about Fr. one billion was devoted to expenses for seeking out hidden or forgotten bank accounts. (This included Fr. 276 mio. for an investigation of the independent auditing firm and Fr. 300-800 mio. for the banks' own internal expenses.) Nobody cared about this last billion. In contrast, the CHF 22 millions spent on historical research was considered by many to be far too much. The fact that the compensation of Fr. 1,8 billions asked from the banks was paid as a private sum without engaging public money outraged a large part of the Swiss population who identified themselves with the banks rather than the victims. The amount was not perceived as recognition of guilt, however, nor was it perceived as a gesture of restitution. Instead, it was widely classified as extorted ransom money, just as Delamuraz had done. For the banks, these compensation payments meant that they had won back the freedom of action in the US market they had lost. With the conclusion of this «deal», the political climate in Switzerland abruptly changed. The work of the Bergier-Commission, that still had three years ahead of it, was felt to be superfluous and even annoying.

## The Return of the Past: the Case of the J-Stamp

The discussion about who was responsible for the introduction of the J -stamp in the passports of Austrian and German «non Arians» in 1938 shows how difficult the establishment of historical truth in collective memory really is. The difficult process of implementing unpleasant facts is characterized by the following reflexes: the more the incriminating truth appears as a result of historical research, the more the defenders of the old and comfortable ideas about the past feel obliged to deny these disturbing findings. Interestingly, denial contributes to the greater visibility of new findings, as demonstrated by the debate on the J-stamp, We can also observe the same effect in, for example, the case of the genocide of the Armenians, which became an important issue in Switzerland in 2006 precisely because it was being denied.<sup>19</sup>

With regard to the J-Stamp, in 1997, within the context of the controversies about the dormant Swiss bank accounts of victims of the Holocaust, several letters to the press expressed the opinion that Switzerland had been co-responsible for the introduction of the J-stamp in the autumn of 1938. While this is not the place to give a full account of the establishment in 1938 of the new rules in the German passport-regime, two specific aspects of this history are important: firstly, the mentioned comeback effect in the form of repeated attempts to re-establish the older representations of the past which, in combination with a

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<sup>19</sup> The author of this article was involved in this debate several times in his function as President of the Commission against Racism, because Art. 261 bis of Swiss Criminal Law prohibits the denial of genocide. At the beginning this was understood as necessary because one wanted to combat the propaganda of Auschwitz negationism. But in the end it was formulated in a general understanding. As a historian one cannot approve of establishing historic truth by justice. In these cases it is not about historiographical research, but with racist arguments that accuse the victims (like Jews and Armenians) of having invented their victimhood with the view of benefiting from it (Georg Kreis, *Kein Volk von Schafen. Rassismus und Antirassismus in der Schweiz*. Zürich 2007, pp. 164–175; on the historical development: Georg Kreis, *Die Strafbarkeit der Genozidleugnung vor dem Hintergrund der Genozide im Ersten und im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, in: *Der Völkermord an den Armeniern, die Türkei und Europa*, ed. Hans-Lukas Kieser and Elmar Plozza. Zürich 2006, pp. 169–175.

revelatory effect, results in the picture becoming clearer in the face of efforts to erase it, and secondly, the typical difficulty (inherent in this matter) of distinguishing responsibilities in bilateral agreements and identifying which state is actually responsible for what. Like Switzerland, Sweden also found itself in a similar situation and behaved likewise. In the end, the apologists for Switzerland argued with the well-known excuse according to the well-known pattern: We didn't do it, and the others did it too.

What made the whole debate about the J-stamp more difficult was the fact that a false statement could be rectified through the revisionism that downplayed Swiss responsibility. However, the adjustment was overstretched to such a degree that a new fallacy resulted. The first error was the claim that Switzerland had introduced the J-stamp. Such a claim is implausible, since one state is unable to unilaterally introduce measures that affect the passports of another state, and the second was that Switzerland was not actually involved in the introduction of the J-stamp, precisely because its introduction was a measure of a foreign state.

The truth is located – for once - somewhere in-between, since Switzerland was actually involved in the introduction of the German measures in various ways. First of all Switzerland threatened to introduce a general visa-regime for all Germans and Austrians with the aim of already identifying and declining entry to «non Arian» candidates at the time of visa application in Swiss embassies and consulates abroad. Secondly, Switzerland suggested recommendations (even about the size of the incriminating sign) and applied a little pressure. In addition, the J-sign was already used – written by hand or stamped – in Swiss documents for domestic purposes.

The Swiss part in the responsibility of the German innovation was erroneously attributed in 1954 (at the time of the discovery of the affair) to the Chief Officer of the Aliens Police, Heinrich Rothmund. This was a comprehensible and «plausible» mistake, because Rothmund was well known for his anti-Semitic attitude.<sup>20</sup> In fact, however, other officers, and in the end the Federal Government, were responsible for the Swiss agreement to the German solution.

In contrast, revisionists have insisted that with the justified exoneration of Rothmund, Switzerland as a whole could also be exonerated. This is absolutely incorrect. The hopeful conviction (especially of the writer of these lines) that it would be possible to rectify these «errors» with the recognized professional methods of the historian (documentary proof and logical argumentation) turned out to be, at least in part, an Illusion.<sup>21</sup> It was nonetheless possible to maintain the predominance of the «correct truth». Hence, serious accounts kept to the interpretation that Switzerland was partly responsible.

Despite this, a group of obstinate and intractable defenders of the «wrong truth» remain. They persist in distributing underground information – by oral means in social meetings, by photocopies (in the case of older people) and e-mails (in the case of younger men, with the masculine version intended). In the *Schweizerzeit*, a small right-wing journal that ought not to be underestimated, these inconvincible defenders of the country still propound the «not-guilty-theory». By way of example, Ernst Walder (born in 1929, with a PhD in Law) wrote in

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. (Peter Rippmann), Eine unglaubliche Affäre. In: Der Schweizerische Beobachter vom March 31st 1954. - Heinz Roschewski, Heinrich Rothmund. Eine historische Fallstudie des Antisemitismus in der Schweizerischen Flüchtlingspolitik 1933–1957. Basel 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Georg Kreis, Die Rückkehr des J-Stempels. Zur Geschichte einer schwierigen Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Zürich 2000. – Georg Kreis, Der Pass mit dem Judenstempel. Eine Familiengeschichte in einem Stück Weltgeschichte 1925–1975. München 2001.

the spring of 2007, under the headline «Botch and Forgery in History», that the revelation of the J-stamp-story in 1954 had caused Switzerland considerable damage.<sup>22</sup>

Believing that it is possible to break with and dismantle such intransigence is an illusion. However, it is important that the erroneous version doesn't become dominant, and that what is correct instead remains at the top.

## What is likely to Remain?

In the meantime, the years 2007/2008 saw a number of ten year anniversaries coming and going. The first two – namely the possibilities of remembering the creation of the Holocaust Fund and the announcement of the Solidarity Fund – went unnoticed. Only the last date drew attention in some of the media to the so-called «Billion Francs Deal»: This gives some indication of the long-term effects of the matter. However, the two central issues have still not really been discussed, namely: to what extent may one benefit from the hardship of others?, and secondly, to what extent might indirectly involve people who have not dirtied their own hands still make themselves co- culpable? In cheap self criticism, the view is at best expressed that one does not want to remember the matter. Alongside this, criticism was levelled that one fifth (about \$ 250 mio.) of the amount paid by the banks had still not found its way to the victims of Nazi-related atrocities.<sup>23</sup>

Three phases can be distinguished in an overview of this entire series of events. Accordingly, we can answer the question what has Switzerland made out of the rendez-vous with world history, in three ways.

In a first immediate phase from 1996 to 1998, the concern was big, as was the willingness to accept Switzerland's own transnational entanglement. In a second phase, the old image of an independent Switzerland was re-established and seemed to become even more entrenched than ever. Thomas Maissen, who dedicated himself to an exhaustive study on the operation as a whole, gave the following pertinent title to his important book: *Verweigerte Erinnerung*.<sup>24</sup> Instead of confronting the actual problems, people preferred, and still prefer, a few quick comments on the Bergier-Report, which they assert is «gene rally known to be controversial» In this case «controversial» means not credible enough and not worthy of being taken into account.<sup>25</sup>

As the third phase seems uncertain it is difficult to say what the «final» effect of «coping with the past» will be. In the national context, the two memories – the heroic self-confirming «good» memory and the self-critical «bad» memory – appear to balance each other out. Does this mean that Switzerland has become a doser part of European history? Well, in a more broadly posed question, one would want to know what Europe on the whole has learnt from the return of the unacknowledged past. The international comparison of the national findings that many have proposed and that Francois Bergier suggested in October 2001 in Vienna in the framework of a conference organized by Oliver Rathkolb has, to my

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<sup>22</sup> Schweizerzeit April 20, 2007; Walder was published several times in this paper. Ernst Walder, «Fragwürdiger Geschichts-Unterricht. Der Bergier-Bericht für Schüler», in: Schweizerzeit April 30st, 2004.

<sup>23</sup> «Eine unglaubliche Affäre», in: Der Schweizerische Beobachter, March 31,1954, pp. 282–284. Basler Zeitung. 2008, August 9, pp. 11–13.

<sup>24</sup> Maissen 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Kreis, Georg. 2004. "Das verpasste Rendezvous mit der Weltgeschichte. Zurück in den Zweiten Weltkrieg (Teil III)," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 54 (3): pp. 314-330. Cf. Ausgewählte Aufsätze, Vol. II, 2004, S. 195ff.

knowledge, never taken place. It is also highly unlikely that it will happen during the present conference.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, whether Switzerland has learnt anything – in the sense that it now understands itself as part of the world – from all this is an important factor. In 2005, the president of Switzerland went to Oswiecim for the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz like other heads of states or governments. In order to avoid a situation in which one would be a single case apart from the others, Switzerland had already become a member of the organisation promoting the remembrance of the Holocaust and consequently recommended that schools commemorate the international day of the 27th January if they wished. A survey into the real practice came to the conclusion that this top-down enactment was rather artificial and that commemoration had not been internalized.<sup>27</sup>

The German sociologist Ulrich Beck is convinced that we – after the period of post-modernity with its arbitrariness and termlessness – are moving towards a second modernity that yet again demands – as in the period of the first modernity – more liability and commitment. Concerning the Holocaust, this leads to an increased readiness to be concerned by occurrences outside one's «own» national territory. In this sense Wolfgang Schmale observes a kind of deterritorialisation of the Holocaust and an acceptance of that «event» as something that is important for everyone in Europe and for European identity.<sup>28</sup>

Switzerland, although still characterized by an island-mentality, is not totally excluded from this global process. We can assume that the insight that «Auschwitz» cannot simply be dismissed as a concern of others in an apparently distant Poland has gained some ground. In a third phase it could still be possible that the idea of an internationally responsible and active Switzerland could be established. If this proves to be the case, the Bergier-Report may have made some kind of contribution.

Whatever might evolve, the time after 1996–1998 cannot be the same as that before 1996–1998. Did not Heraclitus say –«You cannot step into the same river twice»?

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<sup>26</sup> Iean Francois Bergier, «Commissioned History in Switzerland», in: «Revisiting the National Socialist Legacy», ed. Oliver Rathkolb. Innsbruck 2002, pp. 41–50.

<sup>27</sup> Sophie Kaeser, «Schulische Umsetzung des Holocaust-Erinnerungstages vom 27. Januar», in: ed. Georg Kreis, «Judentum, Holocaust, Israel», Basel 2009, pp. 45–64.

<sup>28</sup> Wolfgang Schmale, *Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität*. Stuttgart 2008. – *Die Schweiz, der Nationalsozialismus und der Zweite Weltkrieg. Schlussbericht der Unabhängigen Expertenkommission Schweiz – Zweiter Weltkrieg*. Zürich 2002.