

# Chronology: Switzerland and the Second World War

## Put together by the Parliamentary Services

### 1. Brief Survey 1934-1994

- 1934 Introduction of bank secrecy
- 1939-45 Second World War (for the chronology of events during this period, refer to tables of events in the relevant literature)
- 1946 Federal Decree concerning the approval of the financial agreement concluded in Washington (the Washington Agreement, with message of the Federal Council, the Federal Decree, debates in the National Council and in the Council of States, and several newspaper articles)
- 1947 Short parliamentary question Meister: concerning valuable objects which might have found their way from Auschwitz to Switzerland
- 1949 Compensation Agreement of Switzerland with Poland (see also: Hug/Perrenoud Report, 1996)
- 1950 Compensation Agreement of Switzerland with Hungary (see also: Hug/Perrenoud Report, 1996)
- 1950 Interpellation of Werner Schmid. Heirless assets
- 1951 Short parliamentary question of Philipp Schmid
- 1957 Ludwig Report: Switzerland's Refugee Policy from 1933 to the Present (1957)
- 1959 Motion by Huber. Assets of missing foreigners
- 1959 The Swiss Bankers Association argues against a registration decree on « heirless assets ». The assets without known beneficiary amount to only something like 900,000 francs. (information according to the NZZ-Fokus, Nr.2, Feb., 1997)
- 1962 Federal Decree on Assets situated in Switzerland belonging to Foreigners or Stateless Persons Persecuted for Reasons of Race, Religion, or Political Beliefs, approved on 20 December 1962
- 1962 The task is given to Edgar Bonjour « to elaborate a comprehensive report for the Federal Council on Swiss foreign policy during the last World War »
- 1970 Publication of the Bonjour Report
- 1975 Federal Decree on the Use to be Made of the Assets in Switzerland belonging to Foreigners or Stateless Persons Persecuted for Reasons of Race, Religion, or Political Beliefs, approved on 3 March 1975
- 1980 The Federal Finance Administration closes the « Heirless Assets Fund » account (see also Hug/Perrenoud Report, 1996)
- 1984/85 Robert Vogler's The Swiss National Bank's Gold Trade with the German Reichsbank 1939-1945

- 1989 50th anniversary of the 1939 mobilization « Diamond » (Parliamentary debates in the context of an addendum to the preliminary estimate: Official Bulletin of the Federal Assembly 1989, NC transcripts 779 and 805; C of S transcript 321)
- 1989-94 Upon mandate of the Jewish Agency, the then National Councillor Andreas Gerwig and the then Federal Councillor Kurt Furgler search for a solution to the still unclaimed assets. Their recommendations for the creation of a fund or for a new statutory regulation are not accepted  
More detailed chronological reviews are also to be found under: Bonjour and Häsler ( for the Second World War); Hug/Perrenoud (1945-1980)

## Detailed Overview of Events 1994 - 1995

### 1994

06.12.94 Ordinary question Piller. « Unclaimed » assets, supported by reports in the foreign press

### 1995

- 07.03.95 Ordinary question Ziegler. Assets of Holocaust victims deposited in Swiss banks
- 24.03.95 Parliamentary initiative Grendelmeier. Unclaimed assets of victims of National-Socialist persecution. On 13 May 96, withdrawn in favor of the initiative of the National Council's Legal Affairs Committee
- April 95 Israeli press reports on 40 to 50 million francs in unclaimed Swiss bank accounts
- 07.05.95 Extraordinary session of the United Federal Assembly in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, with [speeches by Swiss President Villiger](#), André Lasserre, historian; Josi Meier, as first-hand witness; and the presidents of the parliamentary chambers, Claude Frey and Niklaus Kuechler (Official Bulletin 1995, NC pt. 1719)
- 08.05.95 A working group of the Bankers Association tests out a system for simplifying the search for deposited assets of Nazi victims
- 12.06.95 Motion Piller. Unclaimed assets in Swiss banks
- 29.08.95 Debate on the parliamentary initiative Grendelmeier: the Legal Affairs Committee of the National Council decides to continue the discussion after the publication of the Bankers Association's guidelines
- 08.09.95 Report of the Swiss Bankers Association on unclaimed assets in Swiss banks

- 12.09.95 Swiss Bankers Association guidelines on the handling of dormant accounts, deposits, and unclaimed safe-deposit boxes in Swiss banks
- 23.10.95 The National Council's Legal affairs Committee decides to appoint a sub-committee with the task of carrying out in-depth investigations
- 20.12.95 The Council of States votes 6 to 4 to reject the motion Piller

## 1996

- 01.01.96 The central information service of the Swiss banks under the direction of banking Ombudsman Hanspeter Häni becomes active. The guidelines of the Swiss Bankers Association enter into vigor
- 07.02.96 Publication of the results of a survey on unclaimed assets in Swiss banks: 775 accounts containing a total of 38.7 million francs
- 08.02.96 Vehement reactions on the part of representatives of Jewish organizations; the survey is in some instances rejected as being « unacceptable »
- 20.02.96 Hearing of the sub-committee of the National Council's Legal Affairs Committee with representatives of the World Jewish Congress (Israel Singer), the Swiss Federation of Israelite Communities, the Swiss Bankers Association, the Federal Banking Commission, as well as the Swiss Banking Ombudsman
- 27.02.96 The National Council's Legal Affairs Committee announces that it perceives a need for clarification and for action in connection with the overall issue of unclaimed assets.
- 23.04.96 First hearing before the U.S. Senate Banking Committee under the chairmanship of Senator Alfonse D'Amato
- 02.05.96 Agreement between international Jewish Organizations and the Swiss Bankers Association to create an « Independent Commission of Eminent persons », also known as the « Volcker Commission ». The commission is mandated to audit the search for assets of Nazi victims in Swiss banks Memorandum of Understanding
- 10.05.96 The Federal Council appoints an ad-hoc working group under the direction of Ambassador Mathias Krafft, whose task is to investigate whether Swiss banks accepted loot (in accordance with point 5 of the Memorandum of Understanding)
- 13.05.96 The Legal Affairs Committee of the National Council decides to elaborate an initiative of its own
- 02.07.96 The Legal affairs Committee of the National Council approves a draft consultation procedure on the Committee's initiative
- 26.08.96 Parliamentary initiative of the Legal Affairs Committee of the National Council # 96.434 Unclaimed Assets. Approval of the Report by the Committee

- 10.09.96 According to a memorandum published by the British Foreign Ministry, Switzerland took in 500 million \$ of German gold; This sum is subsequently corrected to 500 million francs; Debate in the Lower house
- 16.09.96 The Federal Council states its position on the parliamentary initiative Unclaimed Assets
- 30.09.96 Discussion of the parliamentary initiative Unclaimed Assets in the National Council
- 03.10.96 First suit filed on behalf of Nazi victims against Swiss banks; claims of 20 billion \$ are sought
- 06.10.96 The U.S. government announces its own investigations into the whereabouts of Nazi gold; the coordinator is Stuart Eizenstat, Special Envoy of the U.S. Department of State in the search for unclaimed assets
- 16.10.96 Second hearing before the U.S. Senate Banking committee; Senator D'Amato speaks about a « secret treaty » between Switzerland and Poland in 1949 (Hug/Perrenoud report)
- 18.10.96 The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs declares that the Agreement with Poland was published in the Official Collection of documents; a confidential, i.e., unpublished exchange of correspondence between the two delegation heads was annexed to the Agreement
- 23.10.96 Second lawsuit against Swiss banks; restitution of assets is demanded
- 25.10.96 The appointment of a coordinating [Task Force "Assets of Nazi Victims"](#) headed by Thomas Borer is announced
- 30.10.96 Klaus Urner, head of the archives on contemporary political history, proposes the creation of a Swiss Holocaust Foundation in a television interview
- 12.11.96 Press conference by the Swiss Banking Ombudsman
- 27.11.96 Discussion of the parliamentary initiative Unclaimed assets in the Council of States
- 4.12.96 New figures from the Federal Archives are published on the refugees turned away at the Swiss border (Article by Guido Koller in Studien und Quellen - Studies and Sources - 22)
- Dez. 96 Clearing up of differences between the National Council and the Council of States
- Dez. 96 Eight parliamentary actions are submitted on the subject
- 11.12.96 Hearing before the Banking Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, under the chairmanship of James A. Leach [Statement of Ambassador Thomas Borer](#)

- 13.12.96 Final vote, unanimous passage of the Federal Decree of 13 December 1996 « on the Historical and Legal Investigation into the Fate of Assets which Reached Switzerland as a Result of the National-Socialist Regime » Entry into force: 14 Dec 96
- 13.12.96 Press conference of the Swiss National Bank
- 19.12.96 Independent Commission of Experts (Bergier), appointed by the Federal Council
- 19.12.96 Publication of the "Hug/Perrenoud Report" « Assets in Switzerland of Victims of Nazism and the Compensation Agreements with East Bloc Countries »
- 31.12.96 Interview-statements by President Delamuraz who in connection with the restitution demands speaks of « extortion - blackmail », provoke violent reactions particularly from Jewish circles  
More detailed chronological reviews are also to be found under: Bonjour and Häsler ( for the Second World War); Hug/Perrenoud (1945-1980)

## **Detailed Overview of Events 1997**

- 07.01.97 The Federal Council declares its willingness to begin talks about the creation of a fund for Nazi victims
- 14.01.97 Christoph Meili, employed as night watchman of a security firm, reveals the destruction of records of the Union Bank of Switzerland
- 15.01.97 Jewish groups are ready to resume dialogue following the declaration of Federal Councillor Delamuraz that he was sorry he had offended the feelings of many people
- 21.01.97 A parliamentary coordination group is deployed under the direction of Lili Nabholz
- 25.01.97 Officials of the Social Democratic Party call for Federal Councillor Delamuraz to resign
- 26.01.97 Publication of statements from an internal memorandum of the Swiss Ambassador in Washington, Carlo Jagmetti
- 27.01.97 Resignation of Jagmetti
- 29.01.97 Publication of the « 21 January 1997 Manifesto », appears on 31 Jan 97 as an ad in various daily newspapers  
Third class action suit against Swiss Banks by the "World Council of Orthodox Jewish Communities" and individual persons
- 4./5.02.97 Lili Nabholz and François Loeb travel to the USA upon mandate of the presidents of the National Council and of the Council of States

- 05.02.97 The three major Swiss banks appropriate 100 million francs to set up a humanitarian fund for Nazi victims
- 10.02.97 Hearing by the New York City Council
- 12.02.97 The Federal Council wants a two-step procedure: first, the creation of a Special Fund, and second, the groundwork for a definitive structure, most probably in the form of a Foundation
- 14.02.97 A meeting of representatives of Jewish organizations with representatives of both the Swiss and the American governments is described as a turning-point in the polemic
- 25.02.97 The Federal Archives and the Task Force organize an information day on the status of disclosures and the perspectives for the on-going research
- 26.02.97 "The Federal Council approves an « Executive Ordinance Concerning the Special Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust/Shoa ». The Ordinance enters into force on 1 March 1997
- 01.03.97 Speech by Christoph Blocher « Switzerland and the Second World War: A Clarification »
- 05.03.97 Statement of Swiss President Koller before the Joint Federal Assembly; Proposal of the Federal Council for a « [Swiss Foundation for Solidarity](#) » with an endowment of approximately 7 billion francs
- 05.03.97 The Chairmen of the National Council and the Council of States write a letter informing parliamentary chairmen in 25 states in Europe, North America, and Israel about the measures which the Swiss parliament has undertaken in the last 2 years
- 11.- Federal Councillor Cotti travels to the USA
- 14.03.97
- 18.03.97 General debate in the National Council on the various parliamentary actions
- 19.03.97 Debate in the Council of States on a parliamentary action concerning future settlement of unclaimed assets
- 4.u.8.04. A demonstration by Swiss army veterans underscores the achievements of the generation of active service
- 17.04.97 The Federal Council names the four Swiss members of the « Holocaust Fund » executive; Rolf Bloch is appointed president
- 30.04.97 The Swiss Bankers Association announces its willingness to publish the names of the holders of dormant accounts
- 01.05.97 Elie Wiesel, Avraham Hirshson, and Josef Burg are appointed by the Federal Council to the Holocaust Fund executive. Nobel Prize winner Wiesel is given the honorary status of « Dean/International Chairman »

- 06.05.97 Hearing before the US Senate Banking Committee; Testimony of Christoph Meili
- 07.05.97 Publication of the [« Eizenstat-Report »](#) (U.S. and Allied Efforts to Recover and Restore Gold and Other Assets Stolen or Hidden by Germany during World War II, Preliminary Study)
- 10.05.97 Elie Wiesel declines post in the Holocaust Fund executive
- 12.- National Councillor Lili Nabholz and Councillor of States Gian-Reto Plattner travel to the USA
- 14.05.97
- 15.05.97 Hearing before the US Senate Banking Committee on the Eizenstat Report
- 16.05.97 Two working groups, « Foundation Activities » and « Financing », are appointed by the Federal Council to prepare the [« Swiss Foundation for Solidarity »](#)
- 21.05.97 Publication of an investigation into the activities of the Swiss machine industry and its associations, the ASM and the VSM, 1933-1945
- 22.05.97 Detailed statement of the position taken by the Federal Council on the Eizenstat Report
- 23.05.97 The US Senate unanimously pronounces itself in favor of granting Christopher Meili, his wife, and their children asylum in the USA [Bill for the relief of Christopher Meili](#) (in section 3 "Bill/Amendment" enter the number: S. 768)
- 26.05.97 American President Bill Clinton holds a short telephone conversation with Swiss President Arnold Koller
- 28.05.97 The Federal Council appoints the President of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), Edgar Bronfman, as seventh member of the Fund executive and designates the 18 members of the Fund council
- 12.06.97 National Councillor Stucky proposes to finance the planned Fund for Solidarity with a part of the net proceeds of the National Bank (debated within the framework of a minor revision of the Law on the National Bank). The request is withdrawn and is subject to further examination by the Federal Council
- 16.06.97 The Federal Council supports the new regulation proposed by the Legal Affairs Committee of the National Council which protects employees who make declarations or provide information to the « Bergier Commission of Experts » from incurring legal damages
- 20.06.97 An "[Eizenstat Report Information Seminar](#)" is organized by the parliamentary coordination group « Unclaimed Assets » in cooperation with the Task Force « Switzerland - Second World War » in the chamber of the National Council

- 21.06.97 Statement of National Councillor C. Blocher on the « Eizenstat Report »; announcement that he would donate a year's salary for a private solidarity movement if others do the same as well
- 23.-  
25.06.97 International conference of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) in Geneva on the search for and the restitution of assets looted by the Nazis
- 25.06.97 The Federal Council approves the « Message regarding the participation of the Swiss National Bank in the Special Fund for Needy victims of the Holocaust/Shoa ». The National Bank is to contribute 100 million francs to the Fund  
The Federal Council passes the « Executive Ordinance on the Historical and Legal Investigation into the Fate of assets which Reached Switzerland as a Result of the National-Socialist Regime »  
The Swiss Bankers Association, the Federal Banking Commission, and the « Volcker Commission » announce the creation of a contact point (at the Atag Ernst & Young Trust Company) as well as that of an international court of arbitration for claims on dormant accounts/assets in Swiss banks  
[Hearing before the US House of Representatives Banking Committee](#) on the « Eizenstat Report »
- 02.07.97 The Committee of Legal Affairs of the National Council supports a further extension of the protection of those providing information to the "Bergier Commission of Experts"
- 03.07.97 The Swiss Television shows the controversial BBC-film "Nazigold und Judengeld" about Switzerland in World War II. The film was shown in Great Britain on 18 June 1997
- 07.07.97 A first portion of the Fund for Holocaust Victims, 17 million francs, is released for Needy Holocaust Survivors and their Descendants
- 08.07.97 The Ombudsman of the Swiss banks found approximately 17 million francs of unclaimed assets in Swiss bank accounts up to the beginning of June 1997; approximately 10 million belonged to Holocaust Victims
- 15.07.97 The US House of Representatives follows the US Senate and passes the [bill for the relief of Christopher Meili](#) (in section 3 "Bill/Amendment" enter the number: S. 768)
- 23.07.97 Publication of a list with names of foreign unclaimed assets [Swiss Bank Dormant Accounts](#)
- 29.07.97 US President Bill Clinton signs the bill giving Christopher Meili and his family permanent resident status



- 25.08.97 The intention of the National Bank of Switzerland to transfer 100 million francs to the Holocaust Fund is undisputed in the Committee for Legal Affairs of the National Council. To the contrary the Committee approved the view that no extraordinary legal authorization for the transfer is necessary by twelve votes to five
- 26.-  
31.08.97 Centennial Jubilee of the 1st Zionist Congress in Basle: Address by Mrs Judith Stamm, Speaker of the National Council, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the first Zionist Congress, Basle, 31th August 1997 ([German only](#))
- 1.-4.09.97 Visit of a Knesset delegation to Switzerland
- 10.09.97 Israel publishes a list of 10'000 names of owners of unclaimed assets
- 11.09.97 The Committee for Legal Affairs of the Council of State postpones the decision whether to create a legal foundation for a Holocaust Fund until the decision of the National Council in its autumn session. The Committee proposes to take no action on the parliamentary initiative of the Committee for Legal Affairs of the National Council on the consequences of the application of the right to supply information to the Expert Commission on Switzerland-World War II, since the proposed supplements are superfluous
- 15.09.97 The Executive Board of the Holocaust Fund met without the Jewish members. Due to the lack of requests from organisations which represent the interests of the victims of the Nazis, no decision concerning definite contributions could be taken
- 17.09.97 Benjamin Meed is elected by the Federal Council to the Executive Board of the Special Fund for Holocaust Victims. Meed, a Holocaust survivor and president of the "American Gathering/Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors", replaces the president of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), Edgar Bronfman
- 17./18.09.97 Jewish organizations supply first lists with the names of needy persons in Eastern Europe who should receive contribution from the Special Fund for Holocaust Victims
- 23.09.97 A Jewish Holocaust victim (Hans Weinberg - alias Eli Carmel), who was deported to Germany from Basel in 1939, receives compensation in the sum of 50,000 francs from the government of Basel. The president of Basel, Ueli Vischer, apologizes to Weinberg, who is now 81, for his suffering.
- 24.09.97 National Council passes a motion to improve the legal protection for witnesses testifying before the Expert Commission Switzerland - World War II (Bergier Commission) by a vote of 98 to 9.

- 29.09.97 The National Bank of Switzerland should have the authority to transfer 100 million Swiss Francs to the Holocaust Fund without any extraordinary legal authorization. The National Council decides to take no action on the corresponding extraordinary legislation by a vote of 131 to 38.
- 01.10.97 Criminal proceedings against the former security guard Christoph Meili as well as the proceedings against the person responsible for the destruction of documents at the Union Bank of Switzerland, the firm's archivist Erwin Haggenmüller, are dropped.
- 07.10.97 The National Bank of Switzerland can transfer funds to the Holocaust Fund without extraordinary legal authorization. The Council of States agrees with the decision of the National Council by a vote of 22 to 16.  
The Council of States holds additional legal protection for witnesses testifying before the Expert Commission Switzerland - World War II (Bergier Commission) for unnecessary. By a vote of 35 to 7 it decides to take no action on the corresponding motion of the National Council.  
The International Committee of the Red Cross apologizes in Israel for its silence on the mass murder of Jews by the National Socialists.  
In a new report the Jewish World Congress speaks of 4.4 billion dollars (in current value) of gold stolen by the Nazis which entered Switzerland, much more than previously assumed. This would be 2-3 billion more than Switzerland paid in reparations. The Task Force Switzerland - World War II rejects all demands in connection with the Washington Accord decisively.
- 10.10.97 Alan G. Hevesi, the Comptroller of New York City, excluded the UBS (Union Bank of Switzerland) from a syndicate which the bank had originally led for the disposition of a city loan. The US State Department described the sanctions as counter productive.
- 14.10.97 It becomes known that the US State of California stopped officially dealing with Swiss banks in the summer.
- 21.10.97 The Committee of Legal Affairs of the National Council decisively rejects attempts to curtail or hinder the work of the "Bergier Commission" through the refusal of the necessary financial means. ([Press Release: German Version](#) / [French Version](#))
- 28.10.97 The Committee of Legal Affairs of the National Council moves with a vote of 18 to 4 to continue to support the resolution of the National Council concerning consequences of testimony before the Expert Commission Switzerland - World War II. Press Release: [German Version](#) , [French Version](#)

- 29.10.97 The Bankers Association publishes two new lists of unclaimed assets. They contain the names of approximately 11'000 Swiss and 3'700 foreign account holders. ([www.dormantaccounts.ch](http://www.dormantaccounts.ch))
- 31.10.97 [Solidarity Fund](#): two working groups under the direction of Ulrich Bremi and Hermann Fehr present their final Report.  
 - Report of the Working Group "Funding and Assets Management"  
 - Report of the Working Group "Fund Activities"  
 The board of directors of the Swiss National Bank decides to transfer 100 million francs to the Special Fund for Holocaust Victims on November 3, 1997.
- 10.11.97 The Special Fund for Holocaust Victims transferred the first 15 million francs to the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) for the support of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Eastern Europe
- 15.11.97 During her official visit in Bern the US Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright praised Swiss efforts towards coming to terms with the Nazi period and assured the Federal Council of a constructive stance of the US government during the discussion of remaining differences.
- 18.11.97 The first distribution from the Special Fund is made to Holocaust Survivors in Riga (Latvia)
- 19.11.97 The Banking Subcommittee of the Knesset demands that Israeli banks publish the names of account holders of unclaimed assets by the end of the year
- 16.- A delegation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Council of States visits Israel. Press Release: [German Version](#) , [French Version](#)
- 20.11.97
- 21.11.97 The World Jewish Congress proposes a "lump sum" solution
- 01.12.97 The "Bergier-Commission" publishes a statistical overview of gold-trade
- 01.12.97 The World Jewish Congress (WJC) demands from Switzerland billions in payments to Holocaust Victims
- 2.-4.12.97 International Conference in London on gold looted by the Nazis
- 02.12.97 Great Britain, the United States and France announce the Foundation of an International Fund for Needy Holocaust Victims
- 04.12.97 The US State of California will recall its moratorium against Swiss banks for a preliminary period of three months
- 05.12.97 The Swiss Federal Archives publishes a study of the activities of three Swiss subsidiaries in Nazi Germany
- 08.12.97 "Conference on Dormant Swiss Bank Accounts, Missing Assets and Local Initiatives" / [New York City Comptroller](#)  
 Legal Protection (OR Immunity) for witnesses before the Bergier Commission: the National Council adheres to its previous resolution by 97 votes to 55

- 10.12.97 The National Council approves 1.1 million francs for the secretariat of the Holocaust-Fund by 102 to 52 votes. The Council of States had approved this amount without discussion
- 11.12.97 The National Council approves an additional credit of 17 million francs for the Bergier Commission, within the scope of the requested amount, by 112 votes to 37. The Council of States approved the credit on 3 December without opposition.
- 18.12.97 23 Albanian Survivors of the Holocaust received each 1'000 francs from the Special Fund; the first non-jewish Holocaust Victims to do so
- 22.12.97 The report "L'honneur perdu de la Suisse" shown on Swiss French television violated the conditions of its concession according to the Independent Grievance Commission (UBI).  
On the other hand the BBC documentary "Nazigold und Judengeld" shown on Swiss German Television did not violate broadcast-rights because it was suitably imbedded
- 24.12.97 The three large Swiss Banks assume distribution costs for the Special Fund for the Holocaust-Victims up to 15 million francs

## Detailed Overview of Events 1998

- 13.01.1998 The Simon Wiesenthal Centre publishes a study about Internment-Camps for refugees in Switzerland. The study maintains that the people were forced to work like slaves behind barbed wire. - The Task-Force immediately denies the accusations  
The former watchman Christoph Meili sues the UBS for 2,56 billion dollars (almost 3,8 billion francs)
- 21.01.1998 The offices of the Special Fund approve payments to homosexual victims of the Nazis for the first time
- 28.01.1998 Two bills are submitted in the US House of Representatives which would force European insurance companies to pay benefits to victims of the Nazis. [link: <http://thomas.loc.gov/> "Search by Bill Number": H. R. 3121]
- 01.02.1998 Understate Secretary Eizenstat announces investigations about the whereabouts of Holocaust assets in the USA
- 05.02.1998 US-Senator D'Amato asks the US-authorities to temporarily block the merger of the Swiss Bank Corporation (SBC) and the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) in the United States. ([Press Release](#))

- 06.02.1998 The "Jubilee-Fund Switzerland 98" founded by Christoph Blocher isn't followed through as there was not enough response
- 09.02.1998 Approximately 600 former refugees declare their gratitude for being granted asylum in Switzerland (NZZ 9.2.1998)
- 12.02.1998 Hearing of the [Banking Committee of the US House of Representatives](#) on looted assets and insurance policies
- 16.02.1998 Basler and Winterthur insurances deny US Insurance Authorities access to their archives
- 19.02.1998 The Federal Council denies compensation based on legal grounds to the former Jewish refugee Charles Sonabend. Press Release : [german](#), [french](#)
- 03.03.1998 The Council of States confirms its decision by a vote of 29 to 4 not to consider the question of legal protection for persons testifying before the Bergier Commission. As a consequence, the Parliamentary Initiative is removed from the agenda
- 04.03.1998 A Swedish Government Commission publishes a report and a list of 649 names of holders of accounts with unclaimed assets
- 10.03.1998 The president of the World Jewish Congress declares in an [interview](#): "If the Swiss are going to keep digging their heels in, then I'll have to ask all the U.S. shareholders to suspend their dealings with the Swiss". "It's coming to a point where it has to resolve itself or it has to be total war."
- 16.03.1998 During the question hour in the National Council Federal President Cotti characterizes the statement of Edgar Bronfman as highly astonishing, shocking and out of place
- 18.03.1998 In Parliament, an interpellation from the Radical Faction raises the question of countermeasures in the case of a boycott of Swiss Banks by States of the U.S.A. On 19.3.98 the Liberal Faction introduces a similar motion.  
For the first time Gypsies receive compensation from the Special Fund for Holocaust Victims ([Press Release](#))
- 26.03.1998 The Swiss and American governments consider the calls for sanctions and boycotts in the U.S.A. "unjustified and counterproductive". In a joint statement the Swiss Federal Council and the government of the U.S.A. call for cooperation in the sense of moderation. ([Joint Swiss-American Statement on Sanctions](#))

The financial authorities of several states and cities of the U.S.A. decide for the time being not to impose sanctions against the major banks of Switzerland. The "Moratorium", which was to expire at the end of March, is extended through 1 May. In a letter the three major banks of Switzerland had informed the General Secretary of the WJC, Israel Singer, that in discussions with the WJC and the attorneys of Holocaust Survivors they had offered to work towards an "honorable and moral" solution

01.04.1998 The US Congress, with the support of the White House, intends to institute a "Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets". The commission should submit its report and recommendation to President Clinton by 31 December 1999 ([Press Release](#)) (["http://thomas.loc.gov/"](http://thomas.loc.gov/) indicate by "Search by Bill Number": H.R.3662)

03.04.1998 The British Government intends to compensate Jewish Holocaust Victims who brought their assets to Britain to save them from confiscation from the Nazis during the Second World War and who never saw their assets again.

08.04.1998 All 16 members of the International Arbitration Committee which is to render judgement on claims to unclaimed assets in Swiss banks have been chosen. Chair of the Committee is the Zurich law professor Hans-Michael Riemer.

09.04.1998 In San Francisco, insurance officials of American States and representatives of four large insurance companies, including "Zurich" Insurance, agreed to cooperate in finding a solution to the problem of "Unclaimed Policies". An international commission will be created for the purpose.

17.04.1998 Hans Kaufmann of the Bank Bär estimates the total costs for the search for unclaimed assets in Swiss banks at approximately one billion francs. This includes the contribution of 200 million to the Special Fund for Holocaust Victims.

27.04.1998 Meeting between Swiss Banks, the World Jewish Congress and the lawyers of the class actions suit with Stuart Eizenstat as mediator to find a comprehensive solution. The background information on the discussion was published in the NZZ ([Neue Zürcher Zeitung](#)) on 25.4.98.

04.05.1998 The Holocaust Survivor Estelle Sapir reaches a settlement with Credit Suisse concerning her claims for unclaimed assets.

05.05.1998 The Executive Council of the Canton of St-Gall approves a credit of 1.3 million francs for the establishment of a Paul Grüninger Foundation.

- 07.05.1998 A Contact Office (Anlaufstelle) for Holocaust Survivors is established in Switzerland. It provides representation to persons who make claims on money from the Special Fund to the responsible restitution organisation WJRO.
- 12.05.1998 The administration of the Special Fund for Victims of the Holocaust clarifies the modalities of the distribution of money to former "political prisoners" and victims of the Nazis in the U.S.A. A total of approximately 60 million Francs will be released. The General Secretary of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), Israel Singer, participates in a session of the Foreign Affairs Commission (FAC) of the National Council
- 14.05.1998 According to an investigation of the Federal Department of Culture, the art objects which came into Switzerland between 1933 and 1945 and which are property of the Federal government are not of doubtful origin.  
The British government issues an appeal to register to persons with claims to assets which were confiscated during the war and not returned afterwards ([www.enemyproperty.gov.uk](http://www.enemyproperty.gov.uk)).
- 18.05.1998 The Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declares Israel's appreciation for the steps Switzerland and the Swiss government have taken towards a search for the truth and towards the restoration of justice for survivors of the Holocaust and their descendents.  
US-President Bill Clinton acknowledges the Swiss efforts in investigating the role of the country during the Nazi era and opposes threats of boycotts against Switzerland.  
The House of Representatives of the US State of New Jersey is the first legislature to approve a boycott against Swiss banks.
- 25.05.1998 Publication of the first interim report of the "Bergier-Commission" ("Switzerland and Gold Transactions in World War II") Internet-Publication: [www.uek.ch](http://www.uek.ch). Position of the [Federal Council](#) and the [National Bank](#).
- 02.06.1998 Publication of the second "[Eizenstat Report](#)" ("U.S. and Allied Wartime and Postwar Relations and Negotiations With Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey on Looted Gold and German External Assets [...]"). [Declaration of the Federal Council](#)
- 03.06.1998 A further joint action suit for billions of dollars has been filed in New York by Holocaust victims. It is directed against the Deutsche Bank and the Dresdner Bank.
- 08.06.1998 Possible reactions to boycott measures in the USA are debated in the Council of States.

The Federal Reserve Board (Fed) of the USA approves the merger of the Bankgesellschaft and the Bankverein to form the UBS ([Press Release](#))

- 09.06.1998 The study "[A Survey of Nazi and Pro-Nazi Groups in Switzerland: 1930-1945](#)" published by the Simon-Wiesenthal-Centre in Los Angeles is heavily criticized in Switzerland and in other countries.
- 18.06.1998 [Comments of the National Bank](#) on the Gold Report of the Bergier Commission.
- 19.06.1998 The three large Swiss banks confirm that they have offered 600 million dollars in the joint action suit negotiations. ([Press Release](#))
- 23.06.1998 The legal foundations for the "Solidarity Fund Switzerland" are released by the Federal Council for hearings (until mid-September).  
The Federal Council denies the demand for compensation of former Jewish refugee and Holocaust survivor Joseph Spring. Press release [german](#), [french](#). ([Dokumentation WoZ](#))
- 24.06.1998 According to a report in the "Beobachter", authorities and police prevented hundreds of Swiss from returning to Switzerland from foreign countries during World War II.
- 26.06.1998 The Norwegian Parliament resolves to make \$60 million available to the Jewish community and the Jewish people for Holocaust survivors. ([Report](#))
- 30.06.1998 The joint action suit against the National Bank of Switzerland (SNB), which was announced formerly, is filed in the US Court in the name of five Holocaust victims. ([Position of the SNB on 3. April 1998](#))  
The foundation of the "Working Group "Real-Life History" (Arbeitskreis Gelebte Geschichte -- AGG) is announced; the AGG intends to emphasize the "Real-Life-History" of actual witnesses.
- 01.07.1998 In California four Holocaust survivors file a claim against the three major Swiss banks.
- 02.07.1998 The US-finance officials assembled in the «[Hevesi-Committee](#)» lift the moratorium on boycotts against the major Swiss banks. Decisions concerning boycotts are left to the individual states and cities. In New York and other states, sanctions should be applied progressively. The Federal Council expects the US government to prevent such sanctions in fulfillment of its international obligations. ([Position of the Federal Council](#))



- 03.07.1998 The "Swiss Democratic" party calls for a boycott of "all American and Jewish goods, restaurants and vacation arrangements". ([original text](#)) On 7.7. the appeal is changed to "US-Jewish" in the internet.
- 04.07.1998 Charges of violations of the Antiracism Article are filed against the central president of the "Swiss Democrats", [Rudolf Keller](#) (See call for boycott of 3.7.).
- 22.07.1998 In a personal letter to US President Bill Clinton, the President of the Confederation Flavio Cotti expresses the expectation that the US-President and his administration act decisively against sanctions. Press release: [german](#), [french](#)  
Hearing of the Banking Committee of the US-Senate on: Swiss banks and the Washington Treaty of 1946. The Swiss government declines to participate. ([Press release](#)) ([Testimony in the hearing](#))
- 31.07.1998 Independent Historical Commission presents its report on the history of "Deutsche Bank" in the period of National Socialism ([Press release: german](#))
- 12./13.8.1998 Major Swiss banks, US joint action plaintiffs and Jewish organizations have arrived at a comprehensive settlement in the amount of 1.25 billion (US) dollars. With this agreement the demands on the Swiss government as well as Christoph Meili's suit against the UBS are no longer valid. Only insurance companies are excluded from the settlement. The banks assume "that other Swiss businesses and institutions will participate in financing the settlement". ([Press release CS/UBS](#)), ([detailed informations NZZ: german](#)) ([Transcript of Settlement](#))
- 13.8.1998 Mr. Ernst Leuenberger and Mr. Ulrich Zimmerli, respectively president of the National Council and of the Council of States have learnt with great interest of the conclusion of the global agreement between the Swiss banks and the authors of the collective claims in the USA. (Press release : [german](#), [french](#))
- 14.08.1998 Zurich Insurance reaches an agreement with the US insurance regulators: an international commission is to clear up open questions within two years. ([Press release: german](#))
- 19.08.1998 The Federal Council expresses understanding for the settlement of the major banks with the plaintiffs in the USA. However the Swiss government is not part of this settlement and will not participate financially. The Swiss National Bank will decide autonomously.

- 19./20.08.1998 The Italian insurance company Assicurazioni Generali reaches a settlement in the amount of 100 million dollars with the attorneys of the Jewish joint action plaintiffs and the World Jewish Restitution Organization.
- 21.08.1998 The board of the Swiss National Bank decides not to contribute to the costs of the settlement between the Swiss banks and representatives of the class action suits. ([Press release](#))
- 25.08.1998 Various European insurance companies, including Wintherthur and Basler, have reached an agreement with US-insurance regulatory authorities and Jewish organizations on a common procedure for clarification and settlement of open claims on insurance policies. ([Press release](#))
- 27.08.1998 The strategy of the Federal Council finds broad support in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council. Press release: [german](#)
- 21.09.1998 The agreement for the settlement between the insurance company Generali and the joint action plaintiffs could not be reached.
- 24.09.1998 Publication of a first [activity report](#) of the "Volcker Commission". (Overview of the Bankers' Union [[Bankiervereinigung](#)])
- 07.10.1998 The Federal Court denies a complaint against the "Nazigold und Judengeld" broadcast of the BBC coproduction, primarily on formal grounds.
- 10.10.1998 The Bergier Commission responds to criticism of its gold-interim report ([NZZ, 10.10.98](#)), particularly the article by Jean-Christian Lambelet ([NZZ, 31.7.98](#))
- 28.10.1998 The interim report of the Bergier-Commission on gold transactions as an easily readable summary shall be distributed free of cost. ([Press Release](#))
- 05.11.1998 The Austrian National Council approves the [Federal Law on the Return of Art Objects from the Austrian Federal Museum and Collections](#)
- 09.11.1998 The Judiciary Committee of the National Council approves 14 to 7 a motion to suspend the immunity of [National Councillor Rudolf Keller](#) . A court should decide whether his call of 3 July 1998 to boycott Jewish goods, restaurants and vacation arrangements violated the Antiracism Law. Press Release sda: [german](#), [french](#)

- 12.11.1998 6 European Insurance Firms assure an increase of \$ 90 million in the resources of a Holocaust Fund. The former US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger will chair the international commission, which will investigate the claims of Holocaust victims.
- 17.11.1998 [The Knesset, the Israeli Parliament](#) honors eight men for their activities towards the restoration of Jewish property: Edgar Bronfman, Stuart Eizenstat, Alfonse D'Amato, Alan Hevesi, Avraham Burg, Israel Singer, Zvi Barak und Bobby Brown. Prime Minister Netanyahu, who conferred the awards on the honorees, acknowledged himself the Swiss efforts.
- 18.11.1998 In spite of annoyance over the Israeli award ceremony the Federal Council goes ahead with the visit of Prime Minister Netanyahu in Switzerland planned for 25.11. (Declaration of the Vice-Chancellor: [german](#), [french](#))
- 21.11.1998 Jewish Organizations and the Israeli Government agree on a plan for the distribution of the 1.25 billion \$ (US) from the major banks.
- 23.11.1998 In accord with the agreement of 12./13.9.98, the major Swiss banks transfer a first payment of 250 million \$ to a frozen account.
- 24.11.1998 Israel's head of government Netanyahu cancels his visit to Switzerland on short notice.
- 30.11.-  
3.12.1998 International Conference in Washington on goods stolen by the Nazis ([US Department of State](#)). More than 40 countries agree on non-binding guidelines for the search for and return of stolen art. - The "Bergier-Commission" publishes short reports on the subjects of gold, insurance and refugees.
- 11.12.1998 The study "Looted Art - Theft of Art: Switzerland and Trade with Stolen Art Objects at the Time of the Second World War", by Thomas Buomberger, will be published. ([Press release](#))  
The Holocaust Special Fund expands the group of "political" survivors of concentration camps to receive benefits.
- 18.12.1998 The National Council removes the parliamentary immunity of [National Councilor Rudolf Keller \(D, BL\)](#) by a vote of 94 to 45. (See the entries from 3. und 4.7.98.)

## Detailed Overview of Events 1999

- 18.01.1999 Publication of a [List of approximately 500 names](#), primarily those of persons in Eastern Europe whose accounts in Switzerland were confiscated and transferred to humanitarian organizations. (Press release)
- 22.01.1999 Attorneys for the major Swiss banks, the joint action suit plaintiffs as well as representatives of Jewish organizations reach agreement on the definitive joint action suit settlement contract.
- 26.01.1999 The contact office "Stolen Art" in the Federal Office for Culture begins operations. (Press release: Contact: [andrea.rascher@bak.admin.ch](mailto:andrea.rascher@bak.admin.ch)).
- 30.01.1999 In a joint statement the Federal Council and the US government confirm their will to strengthen and deepen their relations in political, economic and cultural areas. (Declaration)
- End The Volcker Commission sets the accumulated interests of the  
January unclaimed assets at 10 times its original value.  
1999
- 09.02.1999 A Swiss parliamentary delegation appraised its USA visit as the beginning of a new chapter in joint relations and asks for regular contacts. Press Agency release : [german](#), [french](#)
- 16.02.1999 12 German Firms announce the establishment of a foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility und Future" for the benefit of victims of National Socialism. The German Chancellor pledges accompaniment by the German federal government.
- 01.03.1999 The Council of States, in contrast to the National Council, resolves not to suspend the parliamentary immunity of [National Councillor Rudolf Keller](#) (SD, BL) by a vote of 27 to 15. (See entries of 3.7.98 and 4.7.98.)
- 11.03.1999 The Norwegian Parliament resolves "to grant compensation to the survivors, as well as to the Jewish community and the Jewish people." (in the amount of \$60 million) (see entry of 26.6.98) ([Address of the Prime Minister in Yad Vashem](#))
- 15.03.1999 The Federal Council issues a resolution making the guidelines concerning the handling of confidential information by the Independent Expert Commission UEK more precise. ([Press release: german version only](#))
- 24.03.1999 [The French Banking Association "Association française des banques" \(AFB\)](#) declares its willingness to compensate Jewish victims of the Nazis.
- 25.03.1999 The (Swiss) National Bank publishes the study "The Currency Politics Background of the Gold Transactions of the Swiss National Bank During World War II" by Vincent Crettol und Patrick Halbeisen. ([Press release and study](#))

- 31.03.1999 The Federal Council has reached a decision to dissolve the "Task Force Switzerland - World War II" at the end of March 1999.
- 14.04.1999 The Federal Council would like to initiate uncomplicated application procedures for former refugees, who were interned during World War II and whose compulsorily managed accounts and deposits were never recalled, to have their balance paid out. Press release : [german](#), [french](#)
- 24.04.1999 The National Council confirms its decision to suspend the immunity of National Councillor Keller.
- 30.04.1999 A short version of the Interim Gold Report for the Bergier Commission is issued free of charge in 5 languages. ([www.uek.ch](http://www.uek.ch))
- 16.06.1999 The Council of States renews its decision, not to suspend the immunity of National Councillor Keller. Since the National Council and the Council of States could not reach agreement, immunity will definitely not be suspended in this case. - The Commission for Legal Matters of the Council of States plans to examine the question of immunity in general. Press Release: [german](#), [french](#)
- 16.06.1999 The president of the "Radgenossenschaft der Landstrasse" (...Sinti/Roma...), Robert Huber, is stepping down from the Advisory Board of the Special Fund for Holocaust Victims in protest.
- End of June 1999 Advertisements directed at victims and survivors of the Holocaust appear in 500 newspapers in 40 countries. Those addressed are informed of the conditions under which they can apply for compensation from the settlement of 1.25 billion (US) dollars paid by the large Swiss banks. Informations: [www.swissbankclaims.com](http://www.swissbankclaims.com)
- 04.08.1999 The Portuguese Investigatory Commission comes to the conclusion in its report that there are no legal, political or moral grounds to revise the previous agreement with the Allies in the matter of Nazi gold.
- 11.08.1999 US President Clinton honors the president of the Jewish World Congress (WJC), Edgar Bronfman with the highest civilian award of the government, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. ([White House, Remarks by the President](#))
- 07.10.1999 In negotiations on compensation for slave labor in the Third Reich the German side has offered \$3.3 billion (US). Representatives of Jewish organizations had put damages at \$20 billion. Negotiations have been adjourned until the middle of November.
- 14.10.1999 A Jewish community honors the Swiss who helped the Jews during the Holocaust in Los Angeles. Ambassador Thomas Borer accepts the first award of the Carl Lutz Memorial Prize.

- 14.10.1999 In an interim report "The Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the US" criticizes the flagrantly false behaviour of the USA with regard to the so-called "Hungarian Gold Train" ([Press release and report](#))
- 05.11.1999 The Swiss Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust/Shoa transfers CHF 2'000.-- to each of 25 victims of the forced sterilization program of the Nazi regime. (c.f. [Parliamentary Initiative of von Felten: Forced Sterilization. Compensation of the Victims](#))
- 14.11.1999 The final report of the Argentinian Government Committee for the investigation of the Nazi activities in Argentina is published ([Homepage](#))
- 06.12.1999 Publication of the final report of the "[Volcker Commission](#)". [Presentation](#) to the Banking Committee of the US House of Representatives.  
Positions: Federal Council [german](#), [french](#), [Swiss Federal Banking Commission](#), [Swiss Bankers' Association](#)
- 10.12.1999 The report of the Bergier Commission "Switzerland and Refugees in the Nazi Era and 4 appendices are published. ([Full text of the reports](#))  
[Declaration by the Federal Council.](#)
- 15.12.1999 Berlin: Agreement is reached in the question of compensation for slave laborers in the Third Reich. The firms brought together in the "German Industry Foundations Initiative" (Stiftungsinitiative der deutschen Wirtschaft) and public funds will each provide one half of the 10 billion (US) Marks agreed on. ([Deutsche Bundesregierung](#))

## Detailed Overview of Events 2000

- 19.01.2000 The Federal Council has appointed the law professor Daniel Thürer a member of the Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland - Second World War. Prof.Thürer replaces Joseph Voyame, who has announced his resignation at the end of January.([Presse release, german](#))
- 21.01.2000 The Federal Supreme Court rejects the suit for compensation brought by the Jewish refugee Joseph Spring. Simultaneously the plaintiff is awarded legal costs in the amount of the suit for mental anguish. ([WoZ-Dossier, german](#)) ([NZZ, german](#))
- 26-28.01. 2000 Stockholm-International Forum on the Holocaust ([Homepage](#)).  
[Intervention by Ruth Dreifuss, Federal Councillor](#), Head of the Swiss Federal Departement of Home Affairs, 27.1.

- 03.02.2000The [Swiss Bankers Association](#) announces [new guidelines](#) for handling unclaimed assets which become effective on 1.7.2000.
- 15.02.2000The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims launches a worldwide outreach to unpaid policy claimants ([Homepage](#))
- 17.02.2000In a declaration to the Cantonal Parliament the Governing Council of Geneva expresses its deepest regret for denying entry to refugees during World War II. (Declaration, [french](#))
- 23.02.2000The "[Volcker Commission](#)" meets for the last time and dissolves itself.
- 23.03.2000Germany and all other involved parties have reached agreement on the distribution of 10 billion (US) German Marks to survivors of forced labor under the Nazi regime. 100 million Marks are to come from compensation from Swiss banks. ([Deutsche Bundesregierung](#))
- 30.03.2000The Federal Banking Commission (EBK) has reached a determination to follow both recommendations of the "Volcker Commission" (ICEP). ([Press release](#))
- 13.04.2000Victims of the Nazis file a joint action suit against Austria and several Austrian firms in the amount of 18 billion dollars in New York.
- 14.04.2000Statement of Swiss bishops on the Catholic Church in Switzerland and the Jewish People during World War II and today. ([Homepage Bishops' Conference](#)) ([Press release](#))
- 17.04.2000The Matteoli Commission in France presents its report on the confiscation of Jewish property during the Nazi period. ([Report](#)).
- 08.05.2000British banks publish information on 10,800 unclaimed accounts from World War II on the internet: <http://www.restoreuk.org.uk>
- 17.05.2000The Federal Council releases its message on the Foundation Solidarity Switzerland to Parliament ([Press release, german](#); [Homepage Solidarity Foundation](#))
- 17.05.2000At a reconciliation conference in Vienna government representatives from various countries have determined the amounts of the contributions which Austria's government and economy are willing to pay to the victims of slave labor under the National Socialists.
- 19.05.2000The federal government and the siblings Sonabend have reached an out of court settlement. ([Press release](#))  
On 23 May Federal Councillors Ruth Dreifuss und Kaspar Villiger met the siblings Charles und Sabine Sonabend for a personal interview.

- 16.06.2000 The Jewish community in the Netherlands has reached agreement with the Amsterdam stock exchange (AEX) and the Bankers' Association of the Netherlands on demands for compensation from Holocaust victims (314 million hfl.). - Insurance institutions will contribute 25 million hfl, and the Dutch government 400 million hfl. (NZZ 17.6.00)
- 26.06.2000 The Federal Council desires to strengthen its efforts in the areas of human rights and the prevention of racism. It is prepared in principle to support sensitizing and preventative projects from third parties. ([Press release, german](#))
- 05.07.2000 In the future a central federal office should be informed of any unclaimed assets for which there has been no contact for 10 years. After 50 years and public notification the assets would revert to the government. Hearings on a corresponding bill are in progress. ([Press release and preliminary bill, german](#))
- 06.07.2000 The new "Interest Group Switzerland - World War II" petitions the Federal Council to assess the Bergier Reports in detail and critically. The Interest Group was founded on the initiative of the Working Group Living History. [Arbeitskreis Gelebte Geschichte](#)
- 07.07.2000 The Austrian National Council unanimously approves the establishment of a "reconciliation fund" ("Versöhnungsfonds") for the benefit of the 150,000 surviving victims of the Nazi Regime. Similarly as in Germany, both state and private economy should make contributions to the fund of 6 billion (US) Schillings (700 million Swiss Francs). ([Versöhnungsfonds-Gesetz](#))
- 14.07.2000 The government of France pays compensation to approximately 10,000 descendents of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution in France. (brief information [french-version only](#))
- 26.07.2000 The settlement in the amount of 1.25 billion dollars agreed to on 12 August 1998 by the two major Swiss banks Credit Suisse Group und UBS and the attorneys of approximately 600,000 class action plaintiffs and Jewish organizations is approved by the New York judge Edward Korman. Judge Korman gives both parties seven days to reach agreement on points still open. These deal with compensation of slave laborers who worked for Swiss firms within and outside of Switzerland. ([NZZ dossier](#); [Website: judicial proceedings](#); [Homepage US-Court](#))  
The Federal Council expresses its pleasure at the approval of the settlement agreement. (press release: [german](#), [french](#))
- 04.08.2000 The major Banks UBS and Credit Suisse are prepared to agree to the bank settlement including amendments.



- 09.08.2000 Judge Korman formally orders the banking settlement with Jewish plaintiffs (Final Order and Judgment; (Final Order and Judgment; [Swissbankclaims-Homepage](#))
- 11.09.2000 The "Special Master" Judah Gribetz appointed by presiding judge Edward Korman presents a proposal for the distribution of the 1.25 billion \$. 800 million \$ of the Swiss banking agreement should be used to settle claims arising from unclaimed assets in Swiss banks. The remaining amount should be paid to the other classes of the joint action suits - former slave laborers, refugees denied asylum. ([Swissbankclaims-Homepage](#))
- 17.09.2000 In a petition on the New York judge Edward Korman 37 Swiss firms have asked for protection against suits based on the use of slave laborers under the Nazi regime. ([NZZ-Artikel](#))
- 10.10.2000 The Cantonal Archives of Geneva publishes a report "Les Réfugiés civils et la frontière genevoise durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale" (Coordination: Catherine Santschi). ([Online-Publikation](#))
- 18.10.2000 The American historian Sybil Milton, Vice President of the Bergier Commission, died at the age of 59. ([short portrait](#))
- 22.11.2000 After consideration of the hearing of 20.11 US Judge Edward Korman rules that the distribution plan developed by Master Judah Gribetz can be approved without exception. ([Swissbankclaims-Homepage](#))
- 01.12.2000 The Independent Expert Commission: Switzerland - World War II (UEK) publishes research results on a further group of victims of the national socialist policies of persecution and extermination under the title "Roma, Sinti und Jenische. Schweizerische Zigeunerpolitik zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus" ("Roma and Sinti. Swiss Gypsy Policies during the Period of National Socialism." (([Report; position statement of the Federal Council, german](#)))
- 09.12.2000 The former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board Paul A. Volcker and the "Special Master" Judah Gribetz have been named by Judge Edward Korman to oversee planned payments to survivors of the Holocaust and their descendents.
- 14.12.2000 The National Council approves a Parliamentary Initiative from Paul Rechsteiner. The initiative requires that all records of those convicted because of aid they gave to flight of victims of the Nazi Regime and faschism be cleared. The convictions of Swiss citizens who fought against national socialism and faschism in the Résistance and in the Spanish Civil War are to be included in the corresponding executive order. ([Text und Bericht; Kurzdebatte](#))

- 14.12.2000 The administration of the Special Fund for Victims of the Holocaust has approved the last 3.4 million francs for 4671 Shoah survivors. The Fund has now distributed its funds, in all over 296 million, practically completely.
- 22.12.2000 The Principality of Liechtenstein intends to clarify its role during World War II in collaboration with the Jewish World Congress. The government plans to appoint a commission of historians early in 2001. ([Press release](#))

## Detailed Overview of Events 2001

- 16.01.2001 The U.S.A. has not sufficiently compensated victims of the Holocaust who were robbed of their possessions by the Nazis for their losses. The US government Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States came to this conclusion in their final report. ([Homepage of the Commission](#))
- 18.01.2001 Austria, representatives of Jewish victims of the Nazis and the U.S.A. sign an agreement on the compensation of victims of the "politics of arianization." Accordingly the Austrian government and economy agree to pay 360 million dollars. ([Dossier in "Der Standard"](#))
- 31.01.2001 Debate in the Austrian National Council over the "Bundesgesetz über den Nationalfonds der Republik Österreich für Opfer des Nationalsozialismus" (Federal Law Concerning the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism). ([Materialien](#))
- 05.02.2001 The Swiss Bankers Association publishes a third list of 21 000 accounts with unclaimed assets which could have belonged to victims of the Holocaust: <http://www.dormantaccounts.ch>
- 14.02.2001 The Federal Council appoints Frau Helen B. Junz to the independent expert commission "Switzerland - World War II". She succeeds Professorin Sybil Milton, who died last fall. ([Press release](#))
- 20.03.2001 The General Secretary of the Bergier Commission, Linus von Castelmur, will step down immediately "by mutual agreement", according to a statement of the Commission on Tuesday evening.
- 29.03.2001 Myrtha Welti, former general secretary of the Swiss People's Party (SVP), will become the new general secretary of the Bergier Commission. She succeeds Linus von Castelmur on April 4.

- 04.04.2001 The US Judge Edward Korman publishes a list of 27 Swiss industry firms participating in the bank settlement on the internet. They are protected against claims arising from employment of forced labor. (<http://www.nyed.uscourts.gov/pub/rulings/cv/1996/96cv4849slo.pdf>)
- 09.04.2001 The Claims Conference as well as the International Organization for Migration have published the names of 6368 refugees who were refused entry into Switzerland during World War II on the internet. These two organizations were appointed to this task by US Judge Edward Korman. ([www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int) or [www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org))
- 22.05.2001 Liechtenstein in World War II: the government establishes an independent commission of historians and a "deliberation and coordination committee". Requirements to maintain documents and insure access to same for companies and banks are planned. ([Press release](#))
- 30.05.2001 The German Federal Assembly conforms the judicial security of companies participating in the Slave Labor Fund. [Deutsche Bundestag](#)
- 30.05.2001 The Federal Council notes the coming closing of the Swiss State Department office "Switzerland - Second World War" ([Press release](#))
- 20.06.2001 The foundation solidaristic Switzerland nears realization. The Council of States approved the corresponding federal law by a vote of 26 to 3. The Gold Initiative of the SVP (Swiss People's Party) was defeated by a vote of 35 to 4. ([Verbal Protocol](#))
- 03.07.2001 The Federal Council has decided that private firms can demand the return of copies of their documents made by the Bergier Commission. ([Press release of the Federal Council](#), [Press release: Statement of the Bergier Commission](#), german)
- 17.07.2001 Payment of the funds from the agreement between the large Swiss banks and Jewish Plaintiffs in the USA begins. Judge Korman released the first 43million dollars for transfer. (Compare articles in the newspaper "[Aufbau](#)" dated [4.7.2001](#) and [19.7.2001](#)).
- 30.08.2001 Publication of the first eight "Studies and Research Contributions" by the "Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland - World War II 'UEK'" ([overview](#)).
- 11.10.2001 The Tribunal for the adjudication of claims to dormant accounts in Zurich has ended its three and a half year effort. It treated 10'000 cases and made awards totaling 65 million Swiss francs.(Homepage: <http://www.crt.ch>).

- 29.10.2001 Publication of the book "Swiss Catholicism 1933-1945, a Culture of Confession between Encapsulation and Solidarity" (Schweizer Katholizismus 1933-1945, Eine Konfessionskultur zwischen Abkapselung und Solidarität)/ Victor Conzemius (ed.), Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 696 p. [Pressemitteilung Katholische Internationale Presseagentur](#)
- 29.11.2001 The [Independent Committee of Experts Switzerland - Second World War](#) presents its next studies to the public in a second press conference.
- 07.12.2001 The Federal Council reached a decision concerning archiving the documents of the Commission of Independent Experts "Switzerland - World War II" ("UEK"). ([Press Release](#))
- 17.12.2001 Die Swiss Bankers Union recommends to its members recovery of document copies from the Commission of Independent Experts and their safekeeping for 30 years. ([Press Release](#))
- 17.12.2001 For the first time former Jewish refugees have seen funds from the \$1.25 billion Bank settlement. 95 persons from 14 countries received together \$77,500.
- 22.03.2002 Last press conference held by the Independent Commission of Experts: Switzerland - Second World War: Publication of the final report / final synthesis and of other separate studies (see full report under [www.uek.ch](http://www.uek.ch)).
- The Federal Council delivers a statement regarding this report ([Press release](#)).
- Until the end of June, a number of events and film showings are planned as part of an exhibition on the "Bergier report" in the "Käfigturm" in the city centre of Berne ([Program](#)).

No further updates foreseen