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Basic biographical data

Name:	Heinrich Buchbinder
Other names (byname, pseud. etc.):	- - -
Date and place of birth:	February 6, 1919, Zürich (Switzerland)
Date and place of death:	December 11, 1999, Schinznach-Dorf (Switzerland)
Nationality:	Swiss
Occupations, careers, etc.:	Chiropractor, politician
Time of activity in Trotskyist movement:	ca. 1940 - ca. 1963

Biographical sketch

Heinrich Buchbinder, Swiss citizen of Jewish origin, was born in Zürich (Switzerland) as son of Boruch Buchbinder and his wife Balbina Berta (maiden name: Davidsohn). He was married three times: 1942 he married Walli Haab, 1952 Klara Müller and 1969 Chantal Ziegler.

He began studying medicine but eventually gave it up. Later he became a chiropractor and for decades he worked as a counselor with the *Schweizerische Chiropraktoren-Gesellschaft (Swiss Society of Chiropractors)*. For many years he held the position of a vice president of the *European Federation of Pro Chiropractic Associations*. From 1977-1992 he was editor of *Schweizerische Krankenkassen-Zeitung*. During the 1940s and 1950s Buchbinder was active in the Swiss Trotskyist movement which for several years consisted of few people only and which had to operate clandestinely or half-legally for many years. Contacts with the *Fourth International* had been interrupted in 1939 and could be re-established only in 1945. In October of this year Buchbinder became a member of the *European Executive Committee* of the *Fourth International*; he participated in the first international conference of the *FI* after the Second World War held at Paris in March 1946 and was elected to *FI's* newly formed *International Executive Committee*. When the Fourth International split in 1953, Buchbinder sided with the *International Committee of the Fourth International* launched by Cannon, Healy and Bleibtreu. The Swiss Trotskyist group, *Marxistische*

Aktion der Schweiz (MAS, Marxist Action of Switzerland), remained almost invisible to the public but their members were quite active in so-called 'front organizations' or tried to get control over other small groups on the left, e.g. *Proletarische Aktion (PA, Proletarian Action)*, or *Sozialistischer Arbeiterbund (SAB, Socialist Workers' League)*. During the late 1950s and the 1960s some of the elder Swiss Trotskyists dropped from politics or at least from Trotskyism or they joined the ranks of the reformist *SPS (Sozialdemokratische Partei der Schweiz, Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland)* while younger people hardly could be recruited in face of a political context not very favourable to the socialist movement in general. Thus, by the time of the re-unification congress of the Fourth International (1963) both the *MAS* as well as the *SAB* factually did no longer exist as functioning organizations. In the late 1950s Heinrich Buchbinder and his comrades supported the anticolonial struggle of the Algerian people and they launched a campaign against nuclear weapons in Switzerland which culminated in a referendum held in 1962 which was supported by one third of the voters. When it came to a revival of Swiss Trotskyism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Buchbinder did not participate in this process since he did no longer considered himself a Trotskyist. But he maintained a great variety of political activities and of international relations. As an obituary stated: the former Trotskyist had become a "chastened" socialist and an entertaining cosmopolite. As a "late starter" he became a member of the *SPS* and eventually their delegate to the *Socialist International*. Furthermore he enjoyed the reputation of a distinguished expert with regard to health policy issues and questions of national and international security, arms control, etc., themes about which he published articles and brochures, too. He was a member of *SPS's* Military Commission in the 1970s, and from 1977 to 1993 he was *SPS* deputy in the *Großrat* of Aargau, the regional parliament of the *Kanton Aargau*. Buchbinder died at his home in Schinznach-Dorf on December 11, 1999.

Selective bibliography *

- ***Selective bibliography: Books authored by Buchbinder***

Landesverteidigung im Atomzeitalter. - Zürich : Schweizerische Bewegung gegen Atomare Aufrüstung, 1966. - 81 pp.

- ***Selective bibliography: Books, pamphlets and journals to which Buchbinder contributed***

Das Arbeiterwort (Zürich) <TSB 0043>

Grenzerfahrungen (Aarau)

Die Herausforderung der Zukunft : zur Sicherheit der Schweiz / Beitr. von Heinrich Buchbinder [et al.] Hrsg. und eingel. von Curt Gasteyger. - Überarb. und erg. Ausg. - [Zürich] : Chance Schweiz, 1984. - 133 pp.

SDI : Informationen und Analysen zur strategischen Verteidigungsinitiative der USA ; Referate zu einem brennenden Thema / Josef Feldmann [et al.] - Zürich : SAD, 1986. - 113 pp. - (Schriften der SAD ; 22)

La sécurité de la Suisse : les défis de l'avenir / textes réunis par Curt Gasteyger. Contributions de Klaus Jacobi [et al.] - Genève : Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales, 1983. - 125 pp.

* TSB item numbers (e.g. <TSB 0716>) refer to Lubitz/Trotskyist Serials Bibliography, München [etc.], 1993 which is out of print but now available as a PDF file within the framework of oufTrotskyanaNet. In TSB you can find detailed descriptions concerning the respective Trotskyist papers, journals, bulletins and the like.

- ***Selective bibliography: Literature about Buchbinder***

Brian, Sarah: Buchbinder, Rudolf, in: *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, Bd. 2, Basel, 2003, p.776. [Biographical sketch]

Widmer, Hans-Peter: Sicherheitspolitiker und Weltenbürger : zum Tod von Heinrich Buchbinder, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 1999 (Dec.13), p.9. [Obituary]

Note: Some more informations about Belleville are likely to be found in some of the books, pamphlets, university works and articles listed in the relevant chapters of our *Trotsky Bibliography*, 3. ed., München [etc.], 1999, e.g. in chapter 7.5.17.

W. Lubitz, rev. Aug. 2005

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