

Using the survey of Switzerland, accomplished between 1832 and 1865 under the direction of General Guillaume-Henri Dufour, as an organizing motif, David Gugerli and Daniel Speich have examined the political landscape of the time. They use the history of cartography to demonstrate wider sociohistorical connections. The work of surveying Switzerland ran parallel to the establishment of the Swiss federal state. The initial production of the so-called Dufour map took place during the structure-forming phase of Swiss liberalism, between 1830 and 1848. Dufour experienced the birth pains of the state in many ways: for a long time he did not even have an office for his activity in national mapping, and he suffered perpetually from inadequate financial support and had to watch as some of his best engineers moved away to take on better-paid work elsewhere.

It was decisive for the success of the survey that in the first half of the nineteenth century Switzerland developed from being a loose confederation of sovereign cantons to become the Swiss federal state. The high praise this successful mapping work received was similarly vital for the strengthening of the state in the second half of the nineteenth century, during the flowering of nationalism. The topographic map of Switzerland (1:100,000), the so-called *Dufourkarte*, received international prizes and served both within Switzerland and abroad as an identification symbol and an advertising medium for the nation. The controversy over place-names was overcome, and a national nomenclature and a uniform topographic language were established. Thus the regional map became an instrument of the power of the state as well.

During the Helvetian civil war, on the threshold of the new federal state of 1848, maps played an important auxiliary role. Unfortunately, Dufour's maps were available only for certain regions at that time. In the Canton of Lucerne, where fierce fighting took place, the actual surveying did not begin until some years later, in 1853. Gugerli and Speich describe Dufour as a *Gralshueter*—the shepherd of the grail of Swiss federal survey data—because of his disciplined approach to the collection and use of data and his careful minutes and reporting. The use of shaded hatchings to represent the topographical features of Switzerland enhanced the sharpness of the “plastic shape on paper” and particularly contributed to the success of the work.

The book's title page, which depicts Dufour's hand pointing to his map, provides an effective figurative entrance to the work. Readers who expect a standard history of the Dufour maps will

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be disappointed. The maps are not the object of the investigation; rather, the focus is on the political era. This emphasis also accounts for the unusually meager portion of illustrations. Only the chapter on “perspective change” addresses three concrete aspects of the mapping work: When was the effective beginning of this work? What were the surveying procedures? How did the data processing take place following the base measurement in the big plain, the “Grosses Moos”?

The work gathers momentum, and the authors are not hesitant in creating new expressions. Gugerli and Speich do not always differentiate between topographic and surveying work. Here and there a source is perhaps somewhat too strongly relied upon in order to support the authors’ opinion—for example, in the quotations from *Das Buch vom General Dufour für das Volk bearbeitet*, by Walter Senn-Barbieux (1878). In general, an immense amount of archival work has been convincingly integrated here. The French quotations are left in the original language, which gives a personal feeling for the whole enterprise and a sense of the nineteenth century in general. Translations can be found in the footnotes. In the last chapter it is noted that “each book has its history”; one might ask how this book will be read in a hundred years. How does it reflect the spirit of our time? *Topografien der Nation* illuminates the era of the Dufour maps in many aspects; it is a profound book that is well worth reading.

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