

# THE SCHOOL ON THE ZUGERBERG

DR MAX HUSMANN  
AND THE FOUNDING OF  
INSTITUT MONTANA ZUGERBERG



**Sara Randell**



**In Celebration of Two Anniversaries**  
90 years - Institut Montana Zugerberg  
70 years - Foundation Max Husmann Montana Zugerberg



This publication was instigated and published by the Foundation Max  
Husmann Montana Zugerberg. Dr Max Husmann established the  
foundation in 1946. The foundation shall secure the development of the  
school according to the ideals set out by the founder.



# Introduction

On May 3rd 1926, the “Montana-Bergschule”, as the school was called at the time, opened its doors to a handful of boys of different nationalities. It was housed in an elegant but fading building with spectacular views over the town of Zug to the mountains beyond the lake. Over the next decade, Montana would grow and develop into a well-known boarding-school offering a forward thinking curriculum and state of the art facilities, and set in a beautiful location.

The founder of our school, Dr Max Husmann, was an immigrant to Switzerland from the Ukraine. The Husmann family had to escape their country because of political unrest that threatened lives as well as homes. Max Husmann lived through the carnage of World War I and the hardship of the post-war era, but these devastating experiences would become the roots of his vision – that education has the power to help create a more peaceful world.

The ethos of the school on the mountain derived from the principles and passions of its founder. He called it his Lebenswerk (life work), his liebstes Kind (beloved child). The aspiration to help the world become a more peaceful place in which human beings from different countries, religions and political systems, would live in harmony, is a theme that runs through Max Husmann’s life and

work. He believed that an international education was the key to helping a new generation of young people grow into adults with an intelligent commitment to this goal.

The three pillars of our school's founding philosophy, established 90 years ago – Individualism, Internationality and Integration – were diametrically opposed to the European Zeitgeist of the 1920s. Putting these three words into the context of that period allows us to understand their deeper meaning and the real significance of the values they embody.

- Promoting Individualism whilst Collectivism was spreading rapidly across Europe
- Envisaging an International community while, every day, Nationalism was becoming more militant
- Fostering Integration whilst Discrimination was being persuasively promoted and put cruelly into practice

Today, 90 years later, one can still appreciate the foresight of these principles. Belief in the power of an International Education that promotes Integration while valuing the Individual is at the very heart of Institut Montana Zugerberg. It encapsulates its spirit and remains the core of its educational mission.

The following exposé gives a short but comprehensive introduction to the vision of Dr Max Husmann, his educational ethos and the beginnings of Institut Montana. Yet Husmann also put his beliefs and convictions into action outside the school gates. He played a decisive role in the Operation called Sunrise (sometimes Crossword) which would shorten the 2nd World War in Northern Italy in the Spring of 1945. Our final section will highlight his remarkable achievement as a peacemaker.

Institut Montana and the Foundation Max Husmann Montana Zugerberg would like to express our sincerest thanks to Sara Randell for her contribution to bringing the decisive period of the school - the founding years - to light for this 90 year jubilee and for the years to come.

**Alexander Biner**

Chairman Institut Montana Zugerberg AG

Chairman Foundation Max Husmann Montana Zugerberg



# An Educator with a Vision

## ORIGINS

**M**ax Husmann was born in the Ukraine in 1888 into a Jewish Russian background. In 1899, the family came to Switzerland and settled in Zurich. The young Max Husmann was academically talented, gaining a place at Zurich's Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) to study mathematics and going on to earn a doctorate at the University of Zurich. After University studies, he set up the "Privatschule Dr Max Husmann" which then merged with the Institut Minerva. By now Husmann had developed his thinking about education and what he wanted to achieve. He explained later that, during the Zurich years, he seriously considered the "physiological and psychological" needs of his students as they grew and prepared to face the world. He needed a site that would allow him to put his theories into practice, and when the old Hotel Schönfels on the Zugerberg was offered for sale, he grasped the opportunity. Institut Montana was born.

Economic recession spread from North America towards Europe in the 1930s and yet the Institut Montana grew. Student numbers

increased and new accommodation was needed. Zugerberg was home to another hotel that had become a college, and Montana's acquisition of the Felsenegg in 1937 demonstrates the extent to which Husmann's dream school was already providing what many parents wanted for their sons. Energetic investment in infrastructure resulted in high quality facilities. Enthusiastic teaching staff were hired, sports grounds created, a swimming pool dug, science laboratories equipped, and workshops fitted out with state-of-the-art tools. The promotional materials of the time celebrate the sophistication of domestic arrangements. A modern kitchen with dishwashers and its own laundry. An elegant dining room, comfortable bedrooms with plenty of washing facilities and pool tables to keep the boys busy in their spare time. The dining room even had a screen for showing films and a wireless for communal listening to radio broadcasts. By 1938 there were almost three hundred boys on the school roll. Institut Montana was a serious educational establishment that offered a new version of what a school might be.

#### CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL ADVANCES

Important developments were changing the educational landscape at the beginning of the twentieth century and Husmann's thinking and aspirations as he set up Montana belong in this context. Memories of a World War were recent, and many of these educators shared a belief that they could guide a future generation of influential men (and sometimes women) who would possess the intelligence and human characteristics to avert another outbreak of conflict. It was a goal that Husmann nurtured and that guided the organising principles of his school. At the same time, this new wave of educational thinking embraced the changing concepts of childhood that helped shape school development



**VORALPINES KNABEN-INSTITUT FELSENEGG ZUGERBERG** (Schweiz)

1000 METER ÜBER MEER

GEGRÜNDET 1903

VOM STAAT ANERKANT

TELEGR: FELSENEGG ZUG

TELEFON: ZUG NR. 168

*Dirktion: P. Hug-Huber und Lic. W. Schweizer-Hug*

The Grand Hotel Schönfels and the Institut Felsenegg were acquired to create Institut Montana



View of Institut Montana Zugerberg looking eastward  
(lower left) Grosses Haus, Chalet, Zugerbergbahn  
(lower right) Felsenegg

at the beginning of the twentieth century. These ideas challenged a previously narrow interpretation of curriculum as limited to the 3Rs and reading the classics, and sought alternatives to authoritarian, collective teaching methods confined to rows of desks where pupils recited memorised lessons.

Two Swiss educational theorists had a profound influence on practitioners such as Husmann.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) believed that humans are by nature good, it is society's institutions that corrupt them. His view of childhood saw children as vulnerable and entitled to freedom and happiness. Because people develop through a series of life stages, different forms of education may be appropriate to each. Education needs to be individualised, what is to be learned should be determined by an understanding of the person's nature at each stage of their development.

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1747-1827) took up Rousseau's ideas and explored their implementation in real schools. He was deeply concerned by social justice and believed that education was key to its achievement. Children should not be given ready-made answers but should arrive at solutions themselves, so it is essential to cultivate their powers of seeing, judging and reasoning. The objective of the teacher is to educate the whole child, to keep in equilibrium three elements – hands, heart and head. A hallmark of the Pestalozzi method is care for the child and a spirit of kindness ruled in Pestalozzi's schools. His abolition of flogging, an act that was remarkable for the time, epitomises the sense of respect that he held was essential. Pestalozzi believed that it was impossible to expect the child to learn properly without the instructor showing care and respect, love even. The writings of this Swiss

educationalist, especially his book “How Gertrude Teaches her Children”, were influential at the time Montana was founded, and quoted by Husmann and members of his staff such as Huldreich Sauerwein.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw a wave of educational innovation that would transform the organisation of schools. In Germany, Georg Kerschensteiner’s work helped broaden the range of education available and Country Home Schools (Landerziehungsheime) were spreading independent boarding schools across the countryside as an alternative to the state system. From Italy, Maria Montessori had gained worldwide recognition by 1912; in England the New Education Fellowship was set up in 1921 as a forum for progressive educationalists. 1921 also saw the beginning of the career of A.S. Neill when he opened his first school near Dresden in Germany. In 1923 it moved to the south of England and became Summerhill, still one of the more controversial establishments. First in Germany, then Britain, Kurt Hahn aspired to educate future leaders as responsible citizens by addressing the challenges he defined as confronting modern youth. Hahn pursued his educational vision founding a school in a remote part of Scotland, close by a stormy sea - Gordonstoun. Like Husmann, Hahn held a vision of an international education that would guide young people away from prejudices based on race or religion and towards re-building a better world after one war so forming a generation which would work together to avoid another.

## MAX HUSMANN – “IDEAS ARE MEANT TO BE REALISED”

Max Husmann used this phrase in many of the pieces he wrote about setting up his school, and it was quoted by others as his motto.

Husmann was a pragmatist. He did not structure his school on a particular educational philosophy, preferring organic development that would come from practice. The following description of the principles on which school policy and organisation were based derives from the wealth of resources stored in the archives of Institut Montana. We start with the notions of Individualism, Internationality and Integration, the guiding principles that Husmann, conceptually, carved into the bricks and mortar of his school. The subsequent sections are themed according to a textual analysis of early Montana’s printed materials.

## NATIONAL EDUCATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The notion of Internationality, when put into practice, translates into a school with a clear political idea about what education should achieve. It was explained in a speech delivered by a Montana teacher and close collaborator with Husmann, Huldreich Sauerwein, at a conference for Public School Masters at Harrow, England, in 1938:

*... In the first place we must have practical action and untiring work, in order to educate the younger generation to that knowledge and consciousness of the world which will enable it to solve the problems of the future.*



THE EMBLEM OF  
**INSTITUT MONTANA**  
IS THE SYMBOL FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG MEN  
FROM ALL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD  
TOWARD MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING  
AND CO-OPERATION



Max Husmann with Huldreich Sauerwein in 1939

Sauerwein used this speech to describe Husmann's beliefs and the broad social and political goals he hoped that education could achieve. The idea that a school should bring together young people of different nationalities, from different cultures, speaking different languages, was a keystone to Max Husmann's mission as an educator. He believed that an international education would be the means by which human beings learn to accept each other, whatever their differences. Sauerwein's speech explained the model that had been adopted on the Zugerberg, where the academic life of the school was divided into Sections teaching national curricula but where daily life was shared. The youth of different countries were brought together in a community capable of promoting creative work and real friendship while staying true to the national roots that would shape their future commitments and opportunities.

These ideas were being put into practice on the Zugerberg at a time when, across Europe, a militant form of nationalism was starting to create the conditions for renewed conflict. The mission to teach the next generation to think and to reflect rather than become victims of propaganda was, to this new wave of educators, crucial.

#### INTEGRATION NOT DISCRIMINATION

The principle of Integration and the aspiration to build a society where human beings understand how to appreciate each other's differences, then becomes imperative. The Montana model of an International Education was about encouraging young people, before they became adults whose prejudices are entrenched, to accept other cultures. This did not mean, however, at the expense of their own heritage. When explaining the school's organisation,



Husmann with staff and students in 1927

Husmann always stressed that it is essential to hold the values of the country that was your birthplace in respect, only then can those of other nations be fully appreciated. The system of Sections was more than about ensuring that a pupil achieved academic qualifications of his own country, it was central to his understanding of his own heritage.

At the same time, if those young people were growing and learning in a school where they made close and lasting friendships with peers from around the world, they would learn how to participate in a properly integrated society. To this end, Montana welcomed children from any religious background. The possession and practice of any faith did not have to imply a non-acceptance of other religions, or denominations in the case of the splits within the Christian tradition. They would even have opportunities to pray with each other.

The early Montana model of school organisation assigned boys to groups of six to eight students, that co-existed with the Sections. Each group would include several nationalities, and its functions ranged across non-academic activities. Some were domestic – they would sleep in the same part of the school and they would dine together. They would celebrate events of cultural importance and they would attend extra-curricular history lectures that toned down the nationalistic notions that often then shaped that subject. They would also worship together.

Institut Montana was consciously fostering measures to encourage an integrated society at a time when discrimination was being used as a political tool to promote division. As Max Husmann wrote when looking back on the school's first 25 years:

*The Montana student perceives that we can learn from each other, that everyone possesses certain positive values, that the art of life lies in living harmoniously together, in combining various opinions and points of view, in mutual recognition of and consideration for others.*

## A FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

From its early years, the organisation of teaching at Montana was structured to see each young person as an individual. Every student had strengths, weaknesses and even developmental needs that needed to be catered for. This approach requires more work on a one-to-one basis than the traditional classroom model more often practiced at the time. Dr Josef Ostermayer, Husmann's successor as Director of Montana, described how the school's founder excelled at personal contact, favouring proper conversation over addressing a large audience, with a special talent for explaining difficult problems in mathematics.

Small teaching groups were arranged by ability according to subject – a boy might be advanced in French while behind in arithmetic. The organisation of the school recognised that some children grow more quickly in some areas than others, and explained differences in attainment in those terms. This is a theory of learning that was unconventional at the time when success or failure was understood as a question of pure ability rather than rate of development. At Montana, parents were assured, with careful supervision and individualised teaching, all boys would work to their full capacity.

School policy recognised a connection between belief in ability and success. For example, the accepted practice of making a boy who had not performed up to standard repeat the year was



Husmann with students in 1936

rejected with the argument that the outcome would be humiliating and have a negative effect on performance. Instead, he would be given special tuition on the weak points that were assessed to be holding him back.

However, the development of the school was indeed a work in progress. The system of “elasticity” in class organisation had to change when the pursuit of international education led to the adoption of nationally recognised examinations. It was no longer practical to be quite so flexible in the assignment of classes according to ability across a range of school subjects.

#### DEVELOPING COGNITION AND BUILDING CHARACTER

Along with small teaching groups, instruction in how to think clearly was prioritised by the new school on the Zugerberg, over and above the systematic learning of facts that still dominated classroom methodology. Throughout Montana literature we find an emphasis on teaching skills of analysis – *“We aim in our methods at developing the reasoning powers.”*

This went beyond the purely academic and was incorporated in the other area of education that concerned this generation of progressive teachers – encouraging moral strength. When Husmann addressed the subject, he focused on the mind. In a short paragraph in his piece written for the school’s ten year anniversary he covered a lot of ground, emphasising the powers of analysis the boys were expected to use to understand a complex principle of rights and responsibilities, along with the ability to focus and how to be efficiently practical.



Brochure photos depicting student life in 1950

*A boy's moral strength is best developed by imbuing his mind with a sense of duty, and as a correlative, with a consciousness of his rights. The cultivation of will-power by concentration and the daily pursuit of efficiency in the performance of every task are fruitful in character building.*

Another exercise of the mind was craftsmanship. From its earliest days a Montana education included what was called at the time “Manual Training.” This fits with the reassessment of the whole school curriculum that was gathering force in Europe at the time, broadening the areas of expertise and knowledge that were agreed to be important. It was taken seriously at Montana. Impressive investment in work-rooms produced facilities not only for carpentry but modern technology. Boys could learn how to take apart and put together a telephone. School was moving on a long way from the years, in the 1930s still so recent, when a restricted curriculum focussed obsessively on the Classics.

## ETHICS AND REGULATIONS

The institution of the school faces a dilemma. How do you teach the skill to make moral judgements at the same time as ensuring that the behavioural norms of a community are adhered to? The answer is in a system of discipline that sets out to guide more than to punish. There are contrasting versions of this system, but Montana's literature refers frequently to the model suggested by Pestalozzi, Sauerwein called him – *“one of the most important experts on educational matters”*.

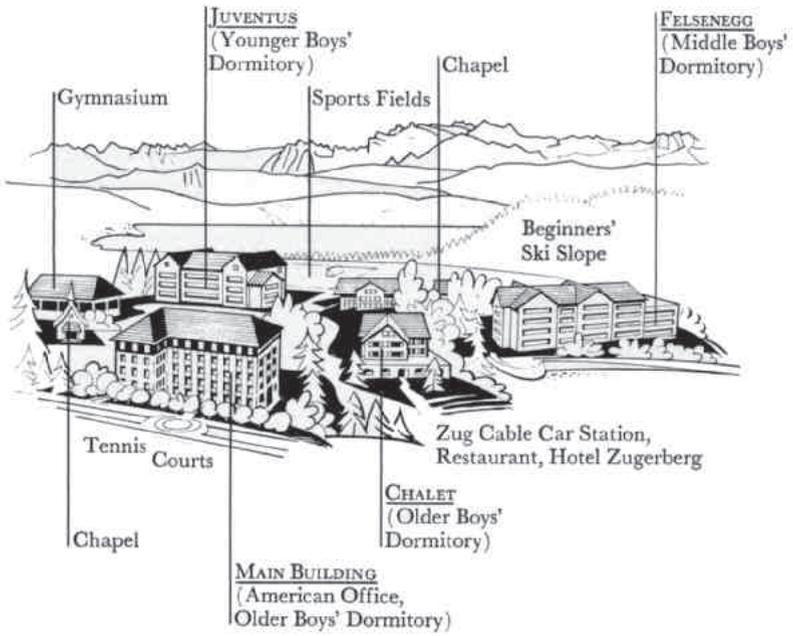
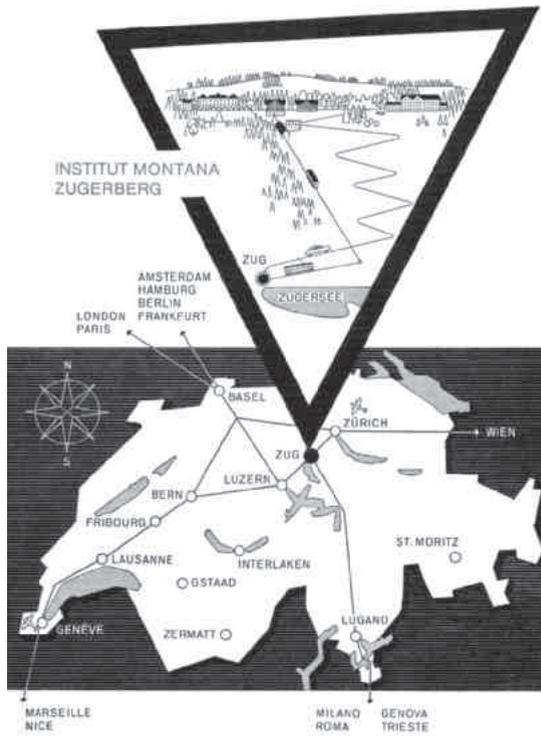
Pestalozzi defined obedience as one of the basic moral emotions but he did not see this as unquestioning adherence to a rule book. For him, it meant obedience to one's conscience, freed from selfishness. Husmann was passionately against blind obedience

that forbade thought, as shall become clear when we reach the war years. At Montana when someone was found guilty of being an idler in class, it was not a punishment that would bring him around but discussion and friendly persuasion... and the threat of missing games.

#### A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ON A MOUNTAIN

By the end of the 1920s, several residential schools had sprung up in Switzerland and Germany. On the one side, the idea of the city as a problematic environment for the younger generation drove such schools away from its potentially pernicious influences. On the other, the health giving benefits of the countryside drew them towards lakes, mountains and forests. Husmann's account of the benefits of boarding was not critical of the city in its own right, but expressed a concern about its effect on the young person. He understood, he wrote, that families needed to live in cities, but - *Mind and body must be trained and educated in close contact with Nature and her secrets*. He also wrote a piece in French, reprinted in several of Montana's brochures and pamphlets, in which he explored the benefits of a residential school within the context of the modern family. The traditional family, he wrote, where both parents had daily contact with their children, provided a correctly nurturing balance. Modern life, however, required the father to be absent for much of the time, upsetting the balance and, often, harming the child's development.

The Zugerberg was the perfect location for Max Husmann's school, the one, he said, for which he searched to realise his vision. In the mountains but not too high so the climate would be mild and gentle and often warmed by sunshine when the lake below was draped with mist.



Illustrations from Montana brochures, circa 1950s & 60s

Residential schools in the countryside characterise the English Public Boarding School system, and there were specific aspects of the English Boarding school that Husmann chose to adopt but others that he did not. Montana took on the “House” system that divides a school into units, partly as an organising strategy and partly for galvanizing friendly rivalry on the sports field. In the 1920s and 1930s, this was established with a clear nod to classic tradition, with Houses called Athena, Sparta, Olympia, Thebes. The house system, however, would not be allowed to encroach on the cultivation of individuality or instigate bullying. The very mention in a school brochure of the bullying issue, that generally was silently understood to exist but rarely publicised, suggests that Husmann had reservations about some aspects of the English Public School. Montana’s publicity material from the time assures the prospective parent that the boys will be accommodated in single or double rooms, so the old style dormitory was not part of the regime. There is never any mention of school uniform, beyond the stipulation that boys were expected to look smartly dressed, and old films show no wearing of uniform except for when participating in sports. Husmann was picking and choosing among the aspects of the English School system he chose would fit his vision of educating, and rejecting those that did not.

One activity deeply grounded in the English Public school version of education and adopted by Montana was playing organised games. Quickly, the school had built a football pitch, tennis courts and, remarkably, courts for Eton-5s. For Husmann, this part of school life was not simply about physical exercise. All these games involved strategy that challenged the mental capacity, as well as providing a stage where friendly competition could be acted out and a sense of “fair play” imbued.

Husmann's idea of the boarding school was less about fostering tradition than creating a space where his particular educational aspirations – young people who could think intelligently and responsibly in a mutually supportive international environment – could be worked towards. The key benefit Husmann assigned to a residential school was encapsulated in his dream of “Zusammenleben” about relationships between the teachers and their pupils, when he wrote:

*By daily companionship the masters are regarded not as pedagogues, but as the boys' counsellors, guides and friends.*

Thus, educators could better understand the special needs of each pupil.

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EDUCATION

These schools of the 1920s embraced the mission of preparing the young men who would be the leaders of tomorrow for the responsibilities they would undertake. The speech delivered by Sauerwein at Harrow outlined the ravages World War I had wrought on spirituality and the need to educate a generation to heal those wounds and rekindle a sense of humanity. This could be achieved, he asserted, by a Montana style of education, that would send out to the world an élite, a “*group of friendly people*”, who could speak foreign languages, understand foreign manners and culture and who would be able to get along with anyone. He concluded:

*If Montana College, in a modest way, can have contributed to the pacification of our old Continent through the realisation of national education in*



(top) Outdoor classroom in Summer  
(bottom) Dining Hall in 1927 with Husmann seated at the head of the left hand table

*an international school, we shall be only too proud of our contribution to the world.*

But it was January 1938.

The next big war was imminent, attempts at pacification across Europe were on the verge of breaking down. However, the wish expressed in these strangely prescient words would, in a way, be fulfilled. In a few years' time, the founder and director of the College would, indeed, make an important contribution to the pacification of Europe.

#### THE SPIRIT OF MONTANA

A picture has emerged from our overview of the founding of Montana. It is one that sees education as the development of the whole person. It understands knowledge as a vehicle, the acquisition of which teaches clear thinking. The skill of thinking guides the ability to identify right and wrong and the development of a moral compass. This ethical framework helps the young person to embrace his responsibilities towards society and towards his fellow human beings. These are important skills that, for Max Husmann, were not just lessons in a classroom. When he became caught up in the secret Operation that would help bring the 2nd World War to an end, they were put into action.



(left to right) Major Max Waibel, Dr Max Husmann, Baron Luigi Parrilli

# From Educator to Peacemaker

## THE WAR YEARS

By the end of the 1930s, Insitut Montana was flourishing but war would change that. Students were unable to travel, money for fees could not be transferred, teachers called away to fight for their countries, school buildings requisitioned for military use. Montana struggled on with a tenacious spirit that would reflect the determination of its founder. The student body bridged religious and national divides, making its political position precarious during this period of tension and conflict. While across Europe political differences and racial tensions spread distrust and hatred, fanning hungry flames of anti-Semitism, the school on the Zugerberg provided a haven. Reflecting later on the war years, Günther Müller, a Jewish student from Germany, remembered how the school maintained *“an atmosphere of unconditional tolerance, in an international community”*.

The war was more than a professional calamity for Husmann. It was a chaotic and tragic assault on the humanitarian principles

that had guided his vision and model of education. While Europe burned he could have stayed in the safety of his school on the Zugerberg and yet he chose to risk his life and devote time to working towards a negotiated surrender that would cease the fighting. His choice might have been partly inspired by commitment to his adopted country; anarchy in northern Italy would have been a disaster for the Swiss. However, Husmann's motives probably ran deeper than this. As the organisation of his school demonstrated, he believed in a humanitarian world where friction between nations that led to brutal war should be avoided at all costs.

#### OPERATION SUNRISE

Spring 1945. The Second World War has wrought turmoil across Europe. Germany is on the verge of defeat.

The Anglo-American invasion of Italy from the south in 1943 left German occupation in tatters, but even as Allied forces pushed their way north and conditions for the population turned catastrophic, fighting continued. German troops were instructed to hold tight onto the economically and strategically valuable north. If they were forced to abandon they would retreat scorching the earth as they left, rendering the region powerless by destroying everything in the wake of the departing army.

Operation Sunrise was a covert initiative to bring an end to conflict in Italy that was dragging, meaninglessly, on. It was mediated out of Switzerland with the collaboration a Major in the Swiss Intelligence Service, Max Waibel, and the owner of the school on the Zugerberg, Max Husmann.

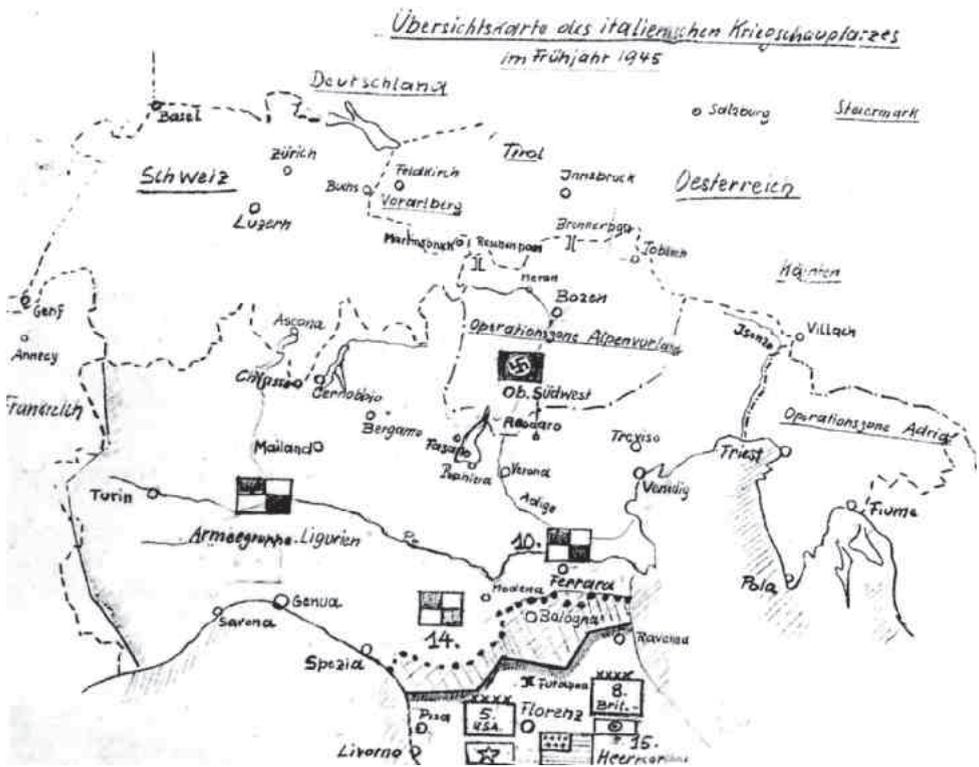
Luigi Parrilli, an Italian business man who had sent his late brother's son to school at Montana, contacted Husmann. He had information that certain high ranking German officers, in particular Obergruppenführer Karl Wolff, head of the SS in Italy, were considering negotiating a separate surrender of the German forces under their command. Although Husmann had business interests in Italy, the schoolteacher was no politician or military chief, his actual influence was limited. Yet he had contacts to bring people with influence together and he had skills he would use to help them understand that the fighting had to stop. Parrilli and Husmann became civilian participants in a scheme of military and political importance. The both expended time and energy and risked their lives to see the war end.

Husmann brought more to the scheme than just his connections. He possessed the organisational skills that were necessary to make complicated and often clandestine arrangements happen. He drove his car to assignments at all times of day and night. He arranged reservations in curtained off carriages for discrete train travel, and private dining rooms for secret meetings. He opened the doors to his home to provide security for high-ranking Nazi soldiers in pursuit of a negotiated peace. He persuaded the German negotiators – the ones who, as losers, needed persuading – that there were viable alternatives to continuing the war.

In a fraught discussion on a train crossing the Alps, Karl Wolff brought up a crucial question about loyalty. What about the importance of obedience and the vows a German soldier had made to his Führer? This gave Husmann the opportunity to ask whether obedience forbade thought and whether men in high positions should not think about their orders. He argued that Wolff already saw the war as lost and that to continue would be useless to the



(left to right) Dr Max Husmann, Major Max Waibel, Baron Luigi Parrilli



(top) Sketch map attached by Max Waibel to his report on Operation Sunrise showing the situation on the Italian front in April 1945  
(bottom) Obergruppenführer Karl Wolff

German people, it would only bring them more suffering as well as the economic destruction of their homeland.

Husmann had identified a crucial dilemma and used it to argue for a surrender. By bringing an end to the combat, someone like Karl Wolff would actually serve the German people and their homeland. Perhaps notions of making history or protecting themselves did creep into this position and maybe Husmann allowed it to. Yet it achieved the goal of bringing together emissaries from opposing sides in a war with the idea that some sort of co-operation was possible. Max Waibel recognised this skill when he wrote of Husmann's *"rare ability to enter the mind of his interlocutor."* Through words, Husmann created a situation where men facing a desperate dilemma could see their options clearly. Powers of analysis and of lucid explanation were central, we heard from Ostermayer, to Husmann's style of teaching. During Operation Sunrise he had to carry those powers well beyond the classroom. These were also skills that he aspired to teach - intelligent analysis by rallying the facts of the matter, explaining the issue clearly and then reaching a well-founded, solid goal.

#### AFTER THE WAR

Throughout the course of Operation Sunrise, Max Husmann displayed a special talent for staying resilient. Even when turbulent events threatened to derail the Operation at critical moments, even when he might face personal danger, he maintained focus. This strength would be necessary in the post-war years, when Operation Sunrise became a politically delicate subject that the Swiss government preferred to veil in secrecy. The Confederation's commitment to neutrality might have been

compromised by aspects of the Operation, and its participants were subject to scrutiny.

Husmann was able to rise above this and continue a busy life as a private citizen. The war, inevitably perhaps, changed how he chose to use his time and he would no longer base himself at Montana as a full-time educator. In 1946, he handed over the day-to-day management of the school to Dr Josef Ostermayer. However, Husmann was determined to ensure that the work he had begun on the Zugerberg would continue to make a difference. He set up the Foundation Max Husmann to protect the principles on which he built his school, to guide its future path and ensure it adhered to its obligations.

Even though outside of school management, Husmann continued to take a keen interest in Institut Montana and, until his death in 1965, was in regular contact with Dr Ostermayer. He lived in Rome much of the time and remained involved in activities that were driven by the aspiration to build a society where peace among human beings might be achieved and maintained. He admired the world-wide educational infrastructure the Catholic church had built and believed it could be employed to this end. Towards the end of his life, Husmann was involved in the movement to further the cause of a “Weltsprache”, a common living language through which the world could work together.

## EPILOGUE

In January 1965, Ostermayer visited Husmann in Rome. It would be their last meeting. Ostermayer remembered something Husmann said, encapsulating two sides of Husmann’s thinking – a disappointment with the way human beings could behave but

underneath which still burned his essential confidence in humanity and a belief in the power of learning:

*The world would be so simple if people were honest and fair. But people create complications because they don't trust each other. They must learn to get on with each other, then all will be well. And we must work for that.*

The mission and the goals with which Montana was set up continue to matter as the journey goes on through another century. The principles of Individualism, Internationality, Integration are perhaps more vital than ever in the face of the complex challenges facing the world. Max Husmann was a man with a keen intellect, a solid moral framework, the ability to make a pragmatic assessment of a situation and a remarkable talent for communication. The Spirit of Montana continues to honour his work.



(top) Husmann and his secretary, Berti Keller, in 1937  
(bottom) Husmann and his wife Beatrice



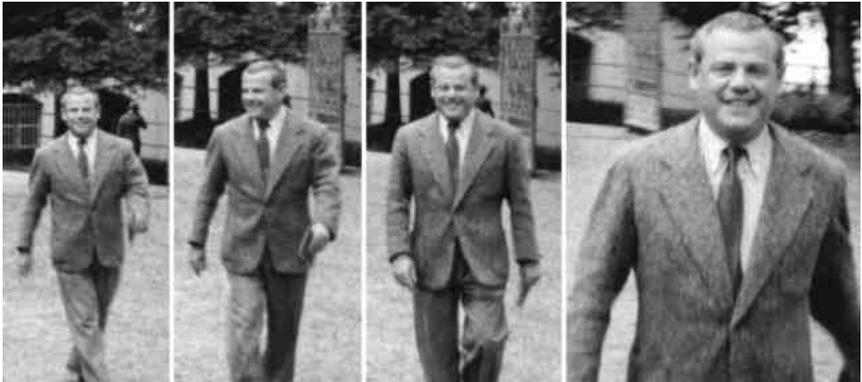
(left) Portrait of Max Husmann in 1956  
(right) Max Husmann died in Rome in 1965 but was  
buried in Zug, Dr Ostermayer pays his respects

## SOURCES

The archive at Montana is rich with resources that have enabled us to put together a picture of the school. In the 1920s and 1930s, Montana produced an abundance of promotional material, explaining for parents the experiences that would greet their sons on the Zugerberg. Each anniversary was celebrated with pamphlets and essays describing school life, and where Husmann would explain his ambitions for a school, the determination devoted to turning the vision into reality and the achievements accomplished in those first years. These are accompanied by a collection of fascinating photographs, some of which are reproduced in this pamphlet.

The school's early materials were, for the time, highly sophisticated. A whole set of cine films still exists telling the story of Montana in a form that conveys so much more than words alone. They are skillfully shot with a naturalistic slant, moving swiftly around scenes full of animation and energy. Across the film strolls the figure of Max Husmann, often smiling or laughing, sometimes deep in lively conversation. The lens pans around, it captures episodes that portray school life as focused but also fun. Then the camera turns to Husmann again, often playing with his dog, sharing a zest for life.

Alongside these, the organisation of the school provides a window into the theory and practice that combined to breathe life into Institut Montana.



Images taken from films made in 1936 and 1938

## THE AUTHOR

Dr Sara Randell developed research skills during her undergraduate years studying history at Oxford University and going on to earn a D.Phil at that University's Department of Education, where she was then engaged as a Research Assistant. She has taught English in schools in France and French in England. She now lives in Switzerland, where she is a freelance researcher and writer, working on a wide range of topics across a variety of publications.

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