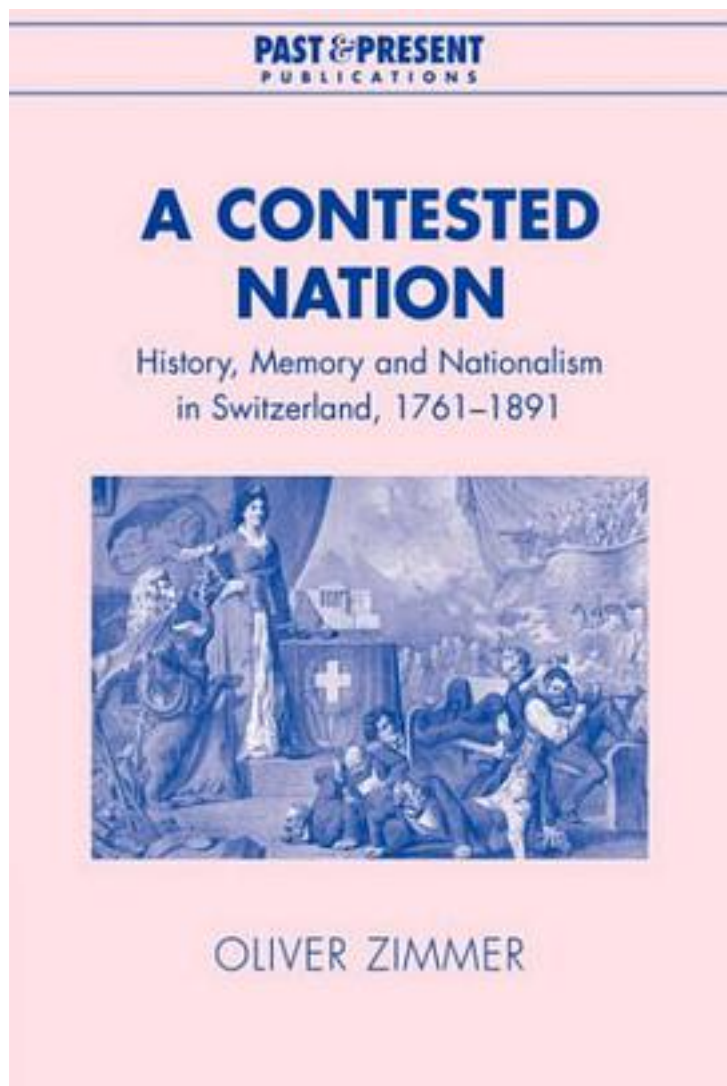


A Contested Nation



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This book examines the ways in which the Swiss defined their national identity in the long nineteenth century, in the face of a changing domestic and international background. Its narrative begins in 1761, when the first Swiss patriotic society of national significance was founded, and ends in 1891, when the Swiss celebrated their 600-year existence as a nation in a monumental national festival. While conceding that the creation of a nation-state in 1848 marked a watershed in the history of Swiss nation-formation, the author does not focus one-sidedly - as many others have done - on the activities of the nationalizing state. Instead, he attributes a key role to the competitive and contentious struggles over the shaping of public institutions and over the symbolic representation of the nation. These struggles, to which the nation-state and civil society contributed in equal measure, were framed increasingly along national lines.

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