

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

JUNE 2012 / NO.3



**Mountaineering:
The lure of the peaks**

**Spatial planning in
Switzerland: Concrete
replacing countryside**

**Analysis:
Voting behaviour
of the Swiss abroad**





Pre-Alps Express, Central Switzerland

The charm of the Pre-Alps.

The Pre-Alps Express (Voralpen-Express) will take you on a romantic journey along the water and the gentle slopes of the Pre-Alps.

The Pre-Alps Express connects Lake Constance to Lucerne via St.Gallen in 2 hours 45 minutes. This 149-km pre-Alpine cross-country link is not a journey made up of superlatives, more a pastoral route that will let you admire the landscapes of the Toggenburg, the shores of Lake Zürich and the Rothenthurm marshes. It will show you the charm of the Pre-Alps, of rocks hidden behind gentle hills and coniferous forests. Along the route, make a stop to stroll around Rapperswil and breathe in the scent of its roses or admire the historic treasures of St.Gallen.

Green views

As far as the eye can see in spring and summer, the entire route of the Pre-Alps Express is dominated by green. The green of the pastures of Toggenburg, the vineyards at the tip of Lake Zürich and the highland forests. Escape on an unforgettable journey in the summer season.

Register at MySwitzerland.com/aso by 31 July 2012 and win 2 nights for 2 people at Hotel Einstein**** in St.Gallen.

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **X42451**

Wild fauna

Stop off at the Animal Park Goldau, where over 90 species of animals from the Alps and Europe live in a magnificent setting. In an area covering more than 34 hectares, children and adults alike can admire bears, stags, lynx and birds of prey close-up in their natural habitat.



Tip 1

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **A36173**

Life in a castle

Rapperswil, on the edge of Lake Zürich, invites you to discover the charming alleys of its old town and the thousands of roses decorating its gardens. The castle, with its Polish museum, gives you an outstanding view of the Glarus Alps.



Tip 2

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **A41726**

1400 years of history

St.Gallen, part of the old town of which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, celebrates the 1400th anniversary of its foundation this year. A unique opportunity to take advantage of a cultural programme and exceptional holiday offers.



Tip 3

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **A28406**

A collaboration between Switzerland Tourism and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)



Auslandsschweizer-Organisation
Organisation des Suisses de l'étranger
Organizzazione degli Svizzeri all'estero
Organisaziun dals Svizzers a l'ester

Switzerland Tourism.
MySwitzerland.com



Sovereignty and cooperation

THE ISSUE OF HOW SWITZERLAND SHOULD IN FUTURE STRUCTURE ITS RELATIONS with other countries in general – tax agreements being one area of interest – and with the European Union in particular is currently causing controversy at home. During a visit to Brussels made by Swiss President Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter at the end of March, José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission, told the Swiss in no uncertain terms that Switzerland was severely testing the EU's patience.

Barroso, who is very familiar with Switzerland and the Swiss having studied in Geneva, must have known that his words would not go down well with many Swiss politicians or in the media. This indeed turned out to be the case. The demand from Brussels for Switzerland to adopt new EU legislation automatically and to accept superordinate authorities for arbitration and supervision in the event of disputes if it wishes to participate in the EU single market in future has met with huge opposition in Switzerland. This situation is extremely unpleasant for the Swiss government. It is concerned not so much about the EU's demands as about the unavoidable debate about participation and integration in the EU. This will prove highly challenging for the Federal Council on the domestic front. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) has been painting a gloomy picture for some time,

suggesting that Switzerland will perish within the foreseeable future if it loses its complete independence and sovereignty.

However, fallacies are being proliferated and facts overlooked in this debate. Switzerland cannot decide its destiny independently, not in the world and certainly not in Europe. Our sovereignty has long been restricted as there are countless agreements – air traffic, Schengen/Dublin and public procurement, to name but a few – where EU law is already adopted. These have given rise to very few problems and it would be no different if Switzerland adopted

applicable European Union law in the EU single market. If Switzerland refuses to accept this, tremendous damage could be done to the economy. Switzerland and our relations with other states would certainly benefit from a little less of the special case charade and a little more sovereign willingness to cooperate – sovereign here in the sense of wise and well considered.

The focal topic in this issue has something to do with our unique position in Europe and much to do with our prosperity. It concerns spatial planning, urban sprawl, mobility, conservation and the protection of our cultural heritage. It is also about the issue of whether Switzerland will soon have a single agglomeration stretching from Geneva to Romanshorn and whether something of the original Swiss idyll can be preserved through new ideas.

Finally, dear readers, I would once again like to encourage you to sign the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad's petition on e-voting, the right to participate in elections and referenda electronically. E-voting is extremely important for the Swiss abroad as it makes their participation in Switzerland's political decision-making much easier. The petition can be signed at www.petition.aso.ch. The signatures will be presented to the Federal Council at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in August.

BARBARA ENGEL



5

Mailbag

5

Books: Pedro Lenz and his goalie

7

Images: The chaos of the "messies" – a film about obsessive collectors

8

Switzerland, a vast building site – is the countryside set to disappear?

12

The Rigi – a mountain with an illustrious past and an uncertain future

14

The Swiss abroad and their voting behaviour

16

The new foreign policy – an analysis

Regional news

17

Jean-Jacques Rousseau – celebrating a philosopher

20

Sapperlot – hearing, seeing and understanding Swiss dialect

22

Mountaineering – people have been conquering the summits for centuries

25

OSA news

27

Notes from Parliament

30

Little gems

31

Echo

Cover photo: Mountaineers on the Eiger's Mittellegi Ridge. Photo: Thomas Ulrich / Keystone

IMPRINT: "Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss abroad, is in its 39th year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 395 000, including 135 000 electronic copies. Regional news appears four times a year.

The ordering parties are fully responsible for the content of advertisements and promotional inserts. These contents do not necessarily represent the opinion of either the editorial office or the publisher.

■ EDITORS: Barbara Engel (BE), Editor-in-Chief; René Lenzen (RL); Alain Wey (AW); Marc Lettau (MUL); Manuel Gnos (MAG); Jean-François Lichtenstern (JFL), responsible for "Notes from Parliament", Service for the Swiss Abroad, FDFA, CH-3003 Berne Translation: CLS Communication AG ■ LAYOUT: Herzog Design, Zurich ■ POSTAL ADDRESS: Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Tel.: +41 31 356 61 10, Fax: +41 31 356 61 01, Postal account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. ■ E-MAIL: revue@aso.ch ■ PRINT: Swissprinters St. Gallen AG, CH-9001 St. Gallen. ■ CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please advise your local embassy or consulate. Do not write to Berne. ■ All Swiss abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation receive the magazine free of charge. Anyone else can subscribe to the magazine for an annual fee (Switzerland: CHF 30 / abroad: CHF 50). Subscribers are sent the magazine direct from Berne. ■ INTERNET: www.revue.ch Copy deadline for this edition: 02.04.12

International Health Insurance

- Based on Swiss standards
- Lifelong private medical treatment
- Worldwide free choice of doctor and clinic

+ Especially for Swiss citizens abroad:

Possibility of a free vesting without a new medical examination!

Exclusively for you and only at ASN



Contact us!

Tel: +41 (0)43 399 89 89

www.asn.ch

ASN AG
Bederstrasse 51
CH-8027 Zurich
info@asn.ch



We'll take you to Switzerland at the click of a mouse.

Information. News. Background reports. Analysis. From Switzerland, about Switzerland. Multimedia, interactive and up to date in 9 languages. swissinfo.ch



swissinfo.ch
SWISS NEWS, WORLD WIDE

Official commemorative coin 2012

100 years of Pro Juventute

For the past 100 years, Pro Juventute has been providing help to children, young people and their parents in Switzerland with a helpline number 147, popular letters to parents and many other services. Swissmint is issuing a gold commemorative coin to celebrate the centenary. The gold coin will certainly be a secure investment as a christening gift or collection item. Available from banks, coin dealers and www.swissmint.ch.



+ Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Swissmint

Limited edition. Order now: www.swissmint.ch

I should like to place an order for the following item plus shipping costs payable in advance:

| Quantity | Quality | Price per coin |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 100 years of Pro Juventute 50 franc gold coin, gold 0,900, 11,29 g, Ø 25 mm Proof coin in presentation case | CHF 580.– no VAT |
| <i>Prices subject to change</i> | | |

Name: _____ First name: _____

Address: _____ Town/postcode: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Send voucher to Federal Mint Swissmint,
Bernastrasse 28, CH-3003 Bern.

Behind bars

I am 20 years old and have been in prison for just under 15 months. I am sitting in a young offenders' institution for a transgression I committed in Bavaria. I received a prison sentence of three years and nine months for grievous bodily harm, and rightly so! I have made one huge mistake in my life, which unfortunately cannot be reversed. I have never been to prison in Switzerland, my homeland, never been charged with anything before in my life, nada! And then something like this happens.

I have learned my lesson and am looking positively to the future. The young offenders' institutions in Switzerland are not like those in Germany. As far as I know, there are only reform centres – without barbed wire and walls. You can do apprenticeships. In this prison many of the inmates but also the wardens and other people are interested in me and, above all, in Switzerland. They want to know what the wages are like and that sort of thing.

I also finally managed to get a job a few months ago. I earn EUR 1.70 an hour. My cell (8 m²) is covered with pictures of the Alps, Swiss crosses and photos of Toggenburg, my home.

I have not written my letter because I am looking for sympathy. I would like to receive letters, or even read readers' letters, from people who are behind bars in Germany.

MARCO BÖHI,
EBRACH, GERMANY

Not a nation of "heartless" officials

I read Esther Zuger's letter in the November issue of "Swiss Review" on security checks at Zurich airport. I am really sorry that this couple's final memory of our lovely country

was such a negative one. We can safely say that it is not the uniform that makes the person, but the person who gives the uniform its lustre through their behaviour. However, Switzerland is not a nation of "heartless" officials. This is my experience.

On 25 November 2011, my mother from Basel died unexpectedly on a journey to Switzerland. I, who am her only child, live in Spain. When I arrived at the office of inheritance in Basel, I was immediately greeted with compassion and received lots of support. The certificate of inheritance, the most important document in such cases, arrived within two weeks. I was then able to settle invoices that I would have struggled to pay with my Spanish income. This was necessary as I had to collect my mother from the hospital in Thun and transfer her to Basel. I found everyone to be compassionate and respectful and everything was dealt with swiftly. I felt well respected and well supported at all times as a Swiss citizen abroad.

I am looking forward to the day when I, as a dual citizen of Switzerland and the UK, return to my home country of Switzerland.

ANDREW SANDILANDS,
BARCELONA, SPAIN

Summary of the Hildebrand case

The saying "a leopard never changes its spots" is true of the experienced hedge fund manager Hildebrand. It seems to me that you are attributing too much importance to the Bernese schemers from the worlds of politics and the media in the Hildebrand case. Of course, the manner in which the leaks occurred should be investigated but the complaints were certainly not

AS A CHILD, HE BELIEVED HE WAS DUTCH FOOTBALLER JOHAN CRUYFF. His hero. But everyone calls him "the goalie". A role he takes on for want of anything better. In his village, he is looked upon as an outsider, a loser. A lesson he learns well. "Der goalie bin ig." ("I'm the goalie.") It is almost his litany.

The "goalie" comes from the imagination of Berne-based poet Pedro Lenz. His novel, written in dialect, tells the story of a junkie returning to his village after being released from prison. Attempting to rebuild his life, he falls in love with Regi, finds a job and has to reconcile himself to ordinary life. "But nobody knows how long such a start lasts and if it even is a start at all." This is the moroseness of small-town life, with its drop-outs and losers, set against the backdrop of vibrant sound.

The novel has had a tremendous impact in German-speaking Switzerland. It was nominated for the 2010 Swiss Book Prize and won the Schiller Prize in 2011. It has already sold over 16,000 copies. Pedro Lenz, accompanied by a musician, also holds regular, popular public readings. "I have the music of the dialect in my head when I write", he says.

Yet, to sum up this work as part of the wave of popularity enjoyed by dialect would be reductive. At 46, Pedro Lenz certainly cannot be accused of provincialism, embracing instead a regional lyricism reminiscent of the musicality of Hemingway. The best parables tell a local story. In Lenz's work, the power of the dialect, its oral character, is woven into a subtle irony. The narrative of the junkie, his predilection for euphemism, reflects the candour he has inherited through his destiny as the "goalie".

"Der goalie bin ig" tells a story that goes way beyond the regional framework to which it could be confined as a result of its use of dialect. Its anti-hero, an observer of a world moving ahead without him, can be found on any street in any backwater region. At the same time, the novel fosters a literary aesthetic that is not bound by the constraints of standard, academic German in much the same way as the work of immigrant writers such as Melinda Nadj Abonji and Catalin Dorian Florescu. Free of

such constraints, the strength of the relationship with the language shines through.

Pedro Lenz says he dreams of helping "bärndütsch" escape from "intellectual reductionism". Poet Raphaël Urweider produced a translation into "standard German" in February 2011. "Der Keeper bin ich" (Bilgerverlag) remains true to the narrator's style. The care taken with rhythm underscores the oral character of the work. However, its success in terms of

copies sold does not match that of "Der Goalie bin ig", due – perhaps – to the fact that some of the musicality has been lost. Following a translation into Italian ("In porta c'ero io", Cappelli, 2011), a French version is set to come out in 2013 (Editions d'en Bas). in a popular voice that will have to steer clear of kitsch if it is to reflect the talent of Pedro Lenz.

ANNE FOURNIER

ANNE FOURNIER is an editor at the Geneva daily "Le Temps"

Pedro Lenz
Der Goalie bin ig
edition spoken script

Reiman
4

unsubstantiated. The point is that as the President of the National Bank, who determines the Swiss franc-dollar exchange rate, you do not speculate with dollars, not even using your wife's account. This sullied Hildebrand's reputation in the world of international finance and made his position untenable. Nothing changes this simple truth even if attempts are subsequently made to take action against the SVP in relation to the matter.

MAX NYFFELER,
MUNICH, GERMANY

General Blatter

It is astonishing how long FIFA has stood for Sepp Blatter's corruption. I have lived in the USA for 50 years and have always followed football with great interest. Blatter himself should have seen how he is dragging FIFA's name through the mud a long time ago.

ROLF PFISTER, ESTERO, USA

Pay attention to health insurance policies

Take care with so-called "visitor insurance policies", which are provided by Swiss insurers.

People planning to travel to Switzerland can take out these health insurance policies, which are valid for up to three months.

However, you had better not fall ill. I took out this kind of policy and promptly fell ill. The general practitioner referred me to the hospital in Herisau. I made an enquiry about the assumption of costs by the insurance company, which was confirmed. A letter from the insurance company then arrived after a week of in-patient treatment and a bill for

10,000 Swiss francs. The costs were not borne on the grounds that I was already ill when I arrived in Switzerland! It may have been the case that the illness already existed at the time of my journey. However, I had no symptoms or complaints until the day I visited the doctor.

The outcome was 400 francs spent on insurance and 10,000 Swiss francs owed to the hospital. Thanks a lot, Zürich Versicherung!

HANS WALTER KUENZLE,
PEDERNALES, DOM. REP.

Advertisements



Mietautos

Gross - Auswahl, 30 Min. ab ZH Airport!
zB. Monatsmiete inkl. 3000Km:

- Chevrolet Matiz Fr. 650.00
- Dacia Sandero Fr. 700.00
- Opel Vivaro 9Pl. Fr. 1750.00

www.ilg-mietauto.ch / Tel. 0041 52 720 30 60



International Health Insurance

Comprehensive, worldwide cover and free choice of doctor and hospital

SIP

SWISS INSURANCE

PARTNERS®

Tel. +41 44 266 22 66
info@sip.ch

Competence. Experience. Independent Advice. www.sip.ch



Vorsorgen in Schweizer Franken.

Agentur Auslandschweizer
Stefan Böni
Dorfstrasse 140, 8706 Meilen
+41 44 925 39 39, www.swisslife.ch/aso



Un Testament en faveur de la vie.



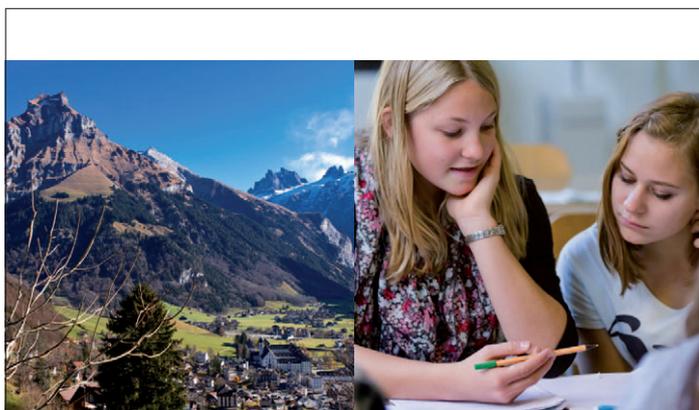
Cette forme de soutien m'intéresse.

- Veuillez m'envoyer le guide gratuit «Un testament en faveur de la vie».
- Veuillez m'envoyer le guide gratuit avec modèles pour des informations aux proches en cas de maladie et de décès.
- Veuillez m'envoyer le nouveau guide gratuit de dons planifiés/assurances.

Terre des hommes:
Vincent Maunoury, Schwarztorstr. 20,
3007 Bern, Tel. +41 58 611 07 86 oder
vincent.maunoury@tdh.ch, www.tdh.ch



aide à l'enfance | Kinderhilfe
aiuto all'infanzia | child relief www.tdh.ch



Stiftsschule Engelberg

Abbey School Since 1120

Gymnasium | Sekundarschule | Internat

Zweisprachige Maturität (Deutsch/Englisch)

International Baccalaureate (Candidate School)

CH-6390 Engelberg | Telefon +41 (0)41 639 62 11 | Telefax +41 (0)41 639 62 13 | info@stiftsschule-engelberg.ch | www.stiftsschule-engelberg.ch

Glorious chaos

They are known locally as “messies” – people who succumb to a boundless passion for collecting things. They are regarded as having an illness, relatives find them difficult to put up with and their behaviour turns them into isolated loners.

The media like to feature particularly obscure cases because in tidy Switzerland they fly in the face of normal perceptions of orderliness with their obsessions. The film “Messies, ein schönes Chaos” (Messies – glorious chaos) takes a different approach. Bernese filmmaker Ulrich Grossenbacher portrays four people with collection compulsions in a film just under two hours long: Thomas, Arthur, Elmira and Karl. They collect scrap, tractors, excavators, cars, newspapers, film magazines or simply anything that might be usable. He discusses with them their passion for collecting, their compulsions, their suppression strategies and explanations for their behaviour. Grossenbacher shows great respect for these people, revealing a comical side to the “messies” that will amuse audiences without ridiculing them.

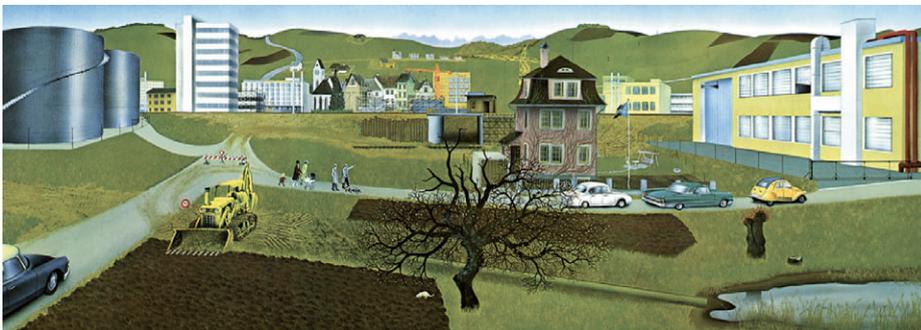
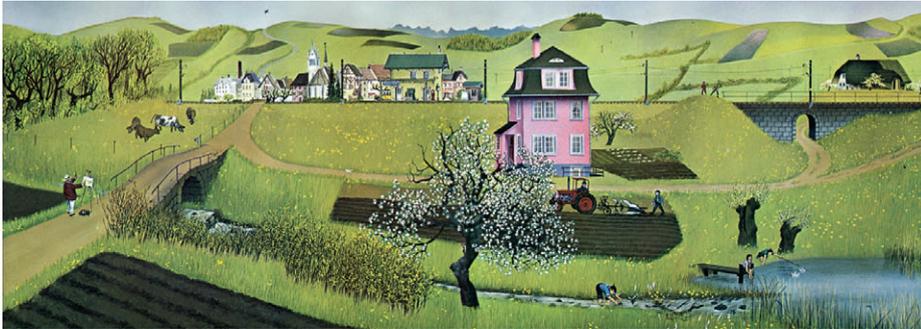
The film premiered in August 2011 at the Locarno Film Festival. It has since been on show at cinemas. The DVD can be ordered from: Fair & Ugly, Filmproduktion, Lorrainestrasse 15, CH-3013 Berne, fair&ugly@lorraine.ch



Passionate debate rages over Switzerland as a vast building site

It came as a huge surprise to many that the Swiss people imposed clear limits on the construction of second homes on 11 March 2012. The decision was undoubtedly fuelled by a fundamental opposition to unrestricted and barely controlled building projects in Switzerland. Yet, there are also increasing signs of a complete rethink – an intensive debate is currently ongoing about a paradigm shift in spatial planning in Switzerland. At the same time, new storm clouds are gathering.

By Marc Lettau



Illustrations from the book "Alle Jahre wieder saust der Presslufthammer nieder" by Jörg Müller

How would the average Swiss classroom have looked thirty or forty years ago? It would have been a light, unostentatious space with large windows. The two-pupil desks would have been neatly arranged facing the blackboard. Two dozen children would have sat at the desks. If they happened to glance out of the window they would have seen a few cows grazing alongside the school building and behind them a row of new single-family homes. On closer inspection, they would have been able to make out the long wooden posts outlining of a couple of new houses to be built in the meadow.

This view from the classroom window was one of a rapidly changing environment. In those days almost every teacher at some point displayed a series of images on the classroom wall which for decades came to epitomise this rapid change. The images entitled "Alle Jahre wieder saust der Pressluft-

hammer nieder" (The Pounding of the Jackhammer Can Be Heard Every Year) are a sequence of seven drawings by the illustrator Jörg Müller which feature the same section of a typically Swiss landscape becoming increasingly modern and unfamiliar in seven stages.

All the teachers, who lived in the new rows of single-family homes, attempted to make the pupils, who also lived in new homes built on the green meadow, aware of the transformation. It was a cause for concern even then.

"Urban sprawl" is the term coined

"Alle Jahre wieder saust der Presslufthammer nieder" was awarded the German Youth Literature Prize in 1974 and has been reprinted constantly ever since. It has been a success, but also an enduring failure – the jackhammer ultimately proved to be stronger than the lesson. Building work all

over Switzerland, in both the mountains and the valleys, continued for three decades without any obvious general strategy. "Urban sprawl", with its negative connotations, is the term used to describe the phenomenon.

Developed land is expanding at a rate of around one square metre every second. This means that almost 30 km² of land that can be cultivated is irretrievably lost each year.¹ This developed area is increasing more rapidly than the population itself in 23 of the 26 cantons. People are demanding more residential and developed space per capita every year except in the cantons of Basel-Land, Schwyz and Zurich. The reserves of land for building on are large enough to allow Switzerland's populated areas to grow unrestrictedly almost everywhere at the same time. The think tank, Avenir Suisse, which has close ties with business and is far from averse to growth, has been warning for some time that "Switzerland's Central Plateau is increasingly becoming one continuous agglomeration". The classroom pictures of yesteryear are being overtaken by the reality.

A genuine shift

For several weeks now it has no longer been presumptuous to speak of obvious signs of change. The clearest indication of this is the Swiss people's approval of the far-reaching initiative against the excessive construction of second homes on 11 March 2012 (also see box on p. 11). The initiative put forward by the adversarial 84-year-old environmental campaigner Franz Weber, who is showing no sign of mellowing with age, calls for radical restrictions to be placed on the construction of holiday homes. Weber and his fellow campaigners see these properties, which stand empty most of the time, as symbols of the futile destruction of the

¹ This transformation of Switzerland was covered in figures in the 1/2010 issue of "Swiss Review".

Alpine region. Environmentalist Weber claims that the sprawling construction of second homes is general proof of the lack of a sustainable spatial planning policy in Switzerland.

It was not just in the urban regions where a majority of people voted in favour of the radical initiative. Approval was also astonishingly high in several alpine tourist areas. A good example is the clear support for the initiative in Interlaken, which is heavily reliant on the tourism industry.

It is likely that many Swiss people cast their votes not just on the construction of second homes but also on the issue of unrestricted urban sprawl in general. This is also the conclusion drawn by many newspaper commentators. Zurich's "Tages-Anzeiger" said it was easy to explain why the communes would now lose some of their planning freedom: "The track record that the communes have in spatial planning is simply not good enough." The cantons and communes were "paying the price for decades of neglectful spatial planning".

Building land equals prosperity

The jackhammer that pounds away every day has begun to falter after the people's decision. Observed at some distance, the decision means that the voting public is today willing to make spatial planning decisions that would have been unthinkable several years ago. The psychological distress caused by the "spatial planning problem" is clearly significant. But what are the root causes of the problem? In Switzerland, the regulations governing when, where, how and how much development can take place have in the past largely been determined by the communes and cantons. To put it mildly, federal government's influence over spatial planning has been very low key over past decades. However, if spatial planning is determined from below rather than directed from above, it follows its own rules. Every commune wants to make as much building land available as possible, as this provides new taxpayers and prosperity. Little consideration is given to changes to the landscape. As a result, this supposedly rural nation can no longer claim to be rural in many places. The gap between the purported idyll and the actual landscape has become very wide. To use an untypically Swiss touch of pathos, this is paining the soul of the people.

If people's own fundamental impression



Davos and Zermatt: These pictures clearly show why the second homes initiative was approved

of their environment becomes something nostalgic that belongs to the past, this ultimately has a negative impact on their quality of life and sense of rootedness in the country where they live. Biologist Raimund Rodewald, director of the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation and one of the most highly regarded experts on landscape conservation issues, tells "Swiss Review" that the approach to development in the past had been the opposite of typically Swiss: "In this country where order, stability, reliability and quality matter so much, building has never been structured well. There has been a general lack of responsibility to society."

Parliament wants to take control

One single popular initiative cannot repair all the spatial planning shortcomings. But a

second popular initiative is already having an impact, even though it has yet to be presented to the people – the landscape initiative, which is supported by a broad coalition of environmental organisations. This seeks a general curbing of the expansion of settlement areas and essentially calls for the reduction of excessive development zones. Approval of this initiative would effectively mean that no more new development zones would be allocated for twenty years. Parliament is taking the criticism of the failings in spatial planning so seriously that it wants to take over the reins itself. Following on from the Council of States, the National Council also resolved to tighten up spatial planning law in March after months of hesitation. According to its proposals, federal government would have the power to force the cantons to reduce any development

zones deemed too large. Secondly, land-owners would be required to make payments if their land became building land and consequently increased significantly in value. Some of this kind of overnight accumulation of wealth would be skimmed off. Any new zones would therefore result in the transfer of significant sums to the state. The state would be able to use these to return building land to agricultural usage elsewhere and to pay compensation where necessary. This would undermine a mechanism that has contributed massively to urban sprawl in Switzerland in recent decades: farmers selling off acres because building land is worth ten or even as much as a hundred times more than agricultural land, and the communes concerned approving the transformation because they hope to benefit significantly themselves through the farmers who become overnight millionaires, through the vibrant building activity and by attracting affluent taxpayers. The overriding consideration of geographical space is overshadowed by local interests.

The environmental associations are already celebrating. They plan to withdraw their initiative if the spatial planning law is actually tightened up in the way described. Rodewald talks of a “clear paradigm shift”. Parliament’s final vote on the amendments to the law has yet to take place. This is scheduled for summer. The possibility that interest groups may then call a referendum against so much “spatial planning from above” cannot be ruled out either.

Social change

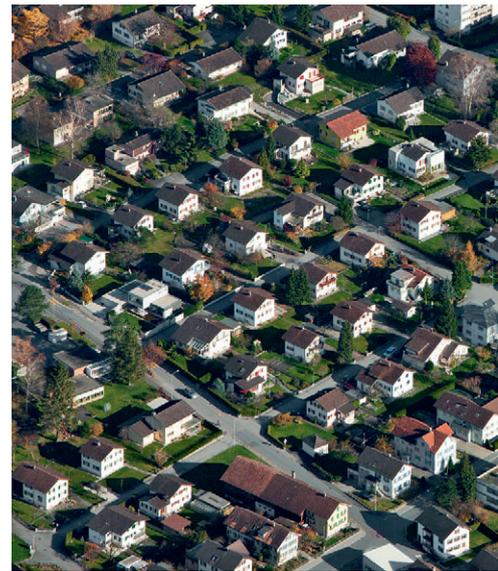
First the second homes initiative and now the landscape initiative. On the one hand, the anticipated change in spatial planning can be explained by psychological distress. On the other, it is also a reflection of social change. The reasons for protecting the land and countryside are changing. While in the past critics of spatial planning were driven by a desire to protect farmland, natural landscapes and rural aesthetics, today there is increasing emphasis on energy policy arguments in the spatial planning debate. If the change in energy policy and the rejection of the craving for non-renewable energies succeed, spatial planning guidelines will also be required. This reasoning is already evident in everyday life. A young Swiss family no longer necessarily dreams of a single-family home in the idyllic countryside be-

cause the double garage that goes with it is evidence of the cost of this “dream”: far greater mobility or, in other words, environmental pollution.

The obvious migration to private homes in the country since 1970, and the resultant depopulation of the cities, has more than just been curbed. There has been an evident “return to the cities”, with large and small towns and cities growing significantly since 2005. The populations of many rural communes have stagnated, though admittedly they may continue to grow in terms of area due to their sprawling development zones. In total, around 45% of the Swiss now again live in cities and agglomerations close to urban centres. The think tank *Avenir Suisse* concludes that “Switzerland is becoming more urban”, and the more urban it becomes, the fiercer the debate about how the cities must change. The declared spatial planning ethos is “internal growth”. “Dense inner cities” are being considered in most urban centres, partly for environmental reasons, as Ulrich Weidmann, a professor at the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, points out: “A high-density city is more environmentally friendly than a low-density one. Energy consumption for mobility decreases, journeys become shorter and the proportion of public transport increases. The alternative to a dense inner city is urban sprawl in the countryside. Concentrated urban settlements can be organised more energy-efficiently than individual homes in the countryside. There is the possibility of more creative ways of heating and energy recovery.” However, the “internal growth” of cities is anything but rapid. Disused industrial and service buildings often remain vacant for decades before being transformed into new, vibrant districts. Slow-paced urban renewal contributes to housing shortages, which are acute in some places, driving up property and rental prices.

Clearing forests here and there

Environmentally friendly urbanisation is establishing itself as the new benchmark. In contrast, the previously dogged protection of forests is increasingly being called into question, although it was in this particular area that federal government’s spatial planning was most effective. The basic principle that forests can only be cleared if reforestation takes place elsewhere has meant that forestry land has been preserved even in the



Near Buchs in the canton of St. Gallen – one single-family



Köniz in Switzerland’s Central Plateau – not always a harbinger for “exemplary urban development”



Bern-Brünnen – the development of a leisure and shopping area with 10 restaurants, a hotel and an adventure pool



home after another



monious sight despite the Wakker Prize



ng centre with 11 cinema halls,

Central Plateau in recent decades. But pressure is now growing on forests close to urban centres. A highly charged debate is currently taking place in Berne over whether parts of the Bremgartenwald forest should be cleared to create an urban settlement for 8,000 people. The main argument is that clearing forests near to cities results in less urban sprawl than converting green meadows into building zones on the outskirts of the city.

The same environmentalists currently applauding the change in spatial planning being implemented by federal parliament are, of course, entering the fray. They are complaining that the relaxation of forestry protection constitutes the breaking of a taboo. If the first forestry land close to the city is cleared, this will set a precedent to start up the chainsaws in all urban centres. Lukas Bühlmann, Director of the Swiss Spatial Planning Association, shares these concerns. If there is a shortage of building land, this will inevitably result in calls for deforestation to be made easier: “If the forest town on the Bremgartenwald site is approved, it will be impossible to prevent forestry clearance on the Üetliberg in Zurich, in the Allschwilerwald in Basel and in the Bois de la Bâtie in Geneva.” The list may grow as plans are being considered in Neuchâtel to create space for 8,000 new inhabitants in the forested areas on the outskirts of the city.

Why not build a few more dams?

The impact of the Fukushima disaster, which has shaken western confidence in nuclear technology, is also putting new strain on Switzerland’s countryside. As well as the call for a relaxation of deforestation regulations, the targeted change in energy policy is also seeing new battle lines emerge. Owing to Switzerland’s effectively rubber-stamped withdrawal from nuclear power, energy companies are seeking to exploit renewable energies – wind and hydropower – to a much greater extent than ever before in the alpine region. They are calling for more wind turbines, higher dam walls and new small-scale hydropower plants. Environmentalists are dismayed at how the energy generation projects are again challenging the increased protection of the mountain environment. Raimund Rodewald from the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation fears that a new form of urban sprawl will emerge if clear guide-

lines are not set. He says: “We are facing a wave of around one hundred power plant projects. I am concerned that the landscape will be destroyed and without making any significant contribution to the withdrawal from nuclear power.” The WWF in turn is arguing that the power plant developers currently have their sights set on some of the most valuable biotopes. A dam project in the canton of Fribourg is threatening to destroy the ecological qualities of the Warme Sense river. From an ecological perspective, the “Warme Sense” is one of the “most valuable waters” among the unspoilt alpine rivers. It provides a habitat for many species of animals and plants.

Protect the countryside – and clear more forests? Protect alpine panoramas – and call for new dams? The spatial planning debate is in vogue. But the areas of conflict are massive. Despite the signs of a paradigm shift, the issue of spatial planning in Switzerland still remains something of a work in progress.

MARC LETTAU is an editor at “Swiss Review”

CHALLENGING IMPLEMENTATION

It remains unclear how the second homes initiative approved by the Swiss people on 11 March 2012 is to be implemented in many respects. There is even disagreement on what constitutes a second home. What is not in dispute is the fact that the large number of often unoccupied holiday homes cannot be allowed to increase unchecked. The initiative calls for the proportion of second homes to be restricted to 20%. In some Swiss tourist regions, 70% of properties are currently second homes. What is clear is that the initiative does not jeopardise any existing holiday homes. But it is also evident that the purchase and construction of new second homes will become much more difficult from now on. This applies to interested parties residing in Switzerland as much as it does to the Swiss abroad. Supply will stagnate – not least owing to the as yet undefined approval criteria for future second homes – and can no longer be increased at will in future in the event of increased demand.

Rigi – Switzerland under the magnifying glass

A public baths designed by the famous architect Mario Botta will open on the Rigi at the start of July. The Rigi, renowned for its spectacular location, was once an exclusive spa resort, but the mountain has been little more than a fine-weather destination for sightseers over the past 50 years. This is now set to change.

A report by Hanspeter Spörri

“You’ve never been up the Rigi? Not even on a school trip? That can’t be true!” – friends and acquaintances react with disbelief to my confession. Everyone has visited the Rigi; it’s one of Switzerland’s most famous mountains. It is neither its height (1,797 metres) nor its shape that makes it spectacular. It looks like other lower alpine peaks and consists mainly of pudding stone, the sedimentary rock that is also found, for example, in Appenzell, Toggenburg and the Napf region. What makes the Rigi a famous travel destination is its location between Lake Lucerne, Lake Zug and Lake Lauerz as well as its unique panoramic views. This massif is also like a

between sobriety and cheeriness, between professionalism and nepotism and between functional aesthetics and kitsch.



Angelo Zoppet is a journalist and civil engineer. I meet him at Arth-Goldau station and he immediately explains that only the station bears this name, the place we are in is actually Goldau. Arth and Oberarth are neighbouring towns. I have asked Zoppet to accompany me because he is an expert on the Rigi and a born fighter. He campaigns against the destruction of the landscape and poorly designed construction, sometimes making

structural problems are clearly in evidence today. But, an identity is now being sought and longstanding confrontation is slowly giving way to cordial cooperation.”

This confrontation may also explain why two railway lines climb the Rigi. While this is great for tourists, it costs much more than it brings in. The two rival companies with Rigi lines running from Vitznau in the canton of Lucerne and Goldau in the canton of Schwyz merged in 1992.



Having absorbed some advice from Zoppet, I finally board the blue train, which was built



View from the Rigi looking towards Küssnacht

theatre backdrop; it is the setting of Schiller’s drama about William Tell, which unfolds between the Gesslerburg, Hohle Gasse, Tellsplatte and Rütli. The Rigi is within easy reach for day-trippers from all the major Swiss cities by train, boat and the two cog railways that run from Vitznau and Goldau to Rigi-Kulm.



And what awaits visitors on the Rigi apart from the somewhat obtrusive touristic infrastructure at the summit and the smell of fries from the self-service restaurant? Perceptions are perhaps heightened when visiting this place for the first time: in the course of a single day, I find a Switzerland under the magnifying glass here – a country with all its qualities and contradictions, with self-belief and self-doubt, swaying between a fear of crisis and a mood of optimism, bet-

himself unpopular in the process. After just a few yards, he points out an example of ill-considered speculative architecture. Zoppet explains with some annoyance that various regulations were circumvented to get the property built.

He then tells me of his love for the Rigi. He says: “For me it represents home, unrestricted panoramas and my local recreational area for sporting activities. I also associate unforgettable memories of my youth with it, but it is a place of painful experiences too.” What does that mean exactly? Zoppet says that the Rigi also signifies ideas and action on a small scale. People here have long worked against one another rather than with one another. The two Rigi cantons, Schwyz and Lucerne, have not pulled in the same direction. This may also explain why tourism has waned at the Rigi. Zoppet remarks: “The

in 1953. I immediately feel as though I’m on a school trip with the thrill of anticipation at the unknown which has long been imagined. During the journey, I get an ever clearer view of the Kleiner Mythen and the Grosser Mythen, the impressive massif looming over the cantonal capital of Schwyz. The cog railway then goes through a romantic ravine, passing waterfalls and precipices. There are lots of day-trippers among the passengers, some Asians and a group attending a yoga and meditation class here. Suddenly, something comes into view that resembles a stranded UFO. It is the event tent at Rigi Staffel. Zoppet had mentioned it. “It’s absolutely hideous”, were his words. “How could anyone permit and construct such an ugly gigantic tent on this wonderful mountain ridge in the middle of a protected landscape?” He is quite right. This thing that advertises itself as a

“unique event location” for 100 to 750 people has been there since 2007.



Nevertheless, I enjoy taking in the landscape. Arriving at the summit, I feel as Mark Twain and his travel companion, Harris, did: “We could not speak. We could hardly breathe. We could only gaze in drunken ecstasy and drink it in”, he wrote in his book, “A Tramp Abroad”, published in 1880. This must have been a busy spot even in Mark Twain’s day. He called the Rigi summit an exhibition ground and did what tourists love doing – he poked fun at other tourists: “They had their red guide-books open at the diagram of the view, and were painfully picking out the several mountains and trying to impress their names and positions on their memories. It was one of the saddest sights I ever saw.”



This form of civilisation soon disappears when you leave behind the summit region. I begin to descend in the direction of Rigi-Kaltbad. After just a few minutes, a pleasant aromatic smell reaches my nostrils. Is it soup? Could it be cheese? Is it cake? It is the Kessiboden hut, and there is still room on its tiny terrace. I soon get caught up in a discussion with guests about the approval of the second homes initiative. While no consensus is reached about its impact, it is clear to the group why the initiative was approved; someone remarks: “Too much development has taken place, a lot of it is unattractive and just for the sake of making a quick buck. People have simply had enough of seeing the landscape blighted.” (See also pages 8–11)

There are highly experienced hikers among the group who are familiar with the inns on many of the mountains: “This is a wonderful place – it’s magical”, one remarks. “It’s down to Sylvia, the landlady”, he adds. Sylvia is sitting with guests at a table, leaving her husband Toni to serve customers. He has helped out here since taking early retirement from his position as a customer service advisor in the automotive trade but looks as though he has spent his entire life in catering. But the boss is Sylvia Planzer, who, at the age of 49, completed a business school course after a serious skiing accident and then worked in an office for two years. In 2005, she discovered that



View of the Rigi from the “Mythen”

the Kessiboden hut, then a bratwurst stand and kiosk, was available to rent. She had no hesitation in saying, “I’ll do it”. Since last year it has been a proper little inn rather than a kiosk.

The produce served comes from the local region – deer sausage from Moutathal and cheese from the canton of Uri; the cakes are homemade, and the wild garlic for the soup is handpicked.



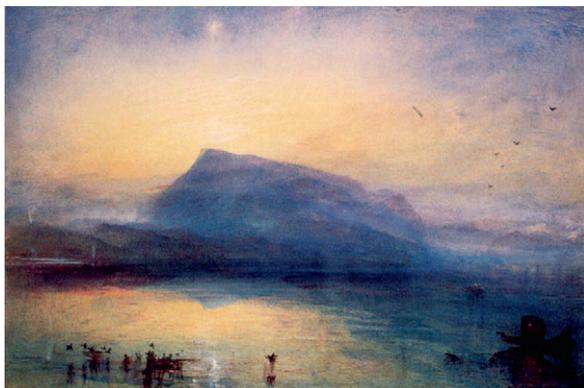
I would love to have stayed for longer. But we have to set off for Rigi-Kaltbad to be on time to catch the train. The route across the Chänzeli is spectacular. And I also want to take a look at the new Botta baths. It is set to open soon after years of wrangling, failed projects and an unfinished building blighting the landscape for ten years. There are great hopes attached to it. Zurich’s “Tagesanzeiger” recently described the Rigi as a “crisis summit”. The Botta baths is now expected to herald a recovery. Roger Bernet is the director of Aqua Spa Resorts, which owns the Botta baths. He believes the new

baths will meet the great need for a slower pace of life. People will be able to enjoy the facilities and recuperate even in poor weather.

The baths is still a building site, but typical Botta features are already recognisable – a round tower and a natural stone façade made of granite, which does not come from the Rigi. The scheme will cost 28 million Swiss francs. Guests will soon be able to “bathe in an environment steeped in legend with a vista of the mountains”. This is what the online publicity tells us anyway. It is due to open on 1 July.



Just a few minutes away by foot is a small chapel in an historical location. Total silence reigns, and clear water flows from a mountain crevice. This spring once gave the “Kalte Bad” its name. People seeking cures came here on pilgrimages as early as the 16th century. They plunged into the cold water, ran around the chapel, prayed and rid themselves of their ailments. There were four hotels on the Rigi at the beginning of the 20th century. Some were extremely luxurious and they could accommodate 2,000 visitors. Guests came from all over the world and included the aristocracy, the snobbishly wealthy and artists. Tourism and contemplation are closely entwined as the need for recovery, spiritual recuperation and physical reinvigoration has always brought people here. The journey is well worth it.



The world-famous painting “The blue Rigi” by William Turner

HANSPETER SPÖRRI is a freelance journalist based in Teufen.

The political profile of the Swiss abroad

Michael Hermann, head of the "sotomo" research unit at the University of Zurich, has carefully analysed the data available on the voting behaviour of the Swiss abroad. He explains the results of his research in the following article.

More and more cantons are revealing the voting behaviour of their Swiss citizens abroad who are eligible to vote in elections and referenda. By the 2011 national elections the figure had reached nine – nine cantons in which almost half of all Swiss abroad registered on the electoral roll live. This is sufficient to provide an accurate overall projection of the voting behaviour of the Swiss abroad at elections and referenda. Our projection model for the share of the vote at the National Council elections reveals a party-political profile that does not differ greatly from that of the Swiss at home, but does however possess some distinctive characteristics. What stands out is the exceptional performance of the Greens, who obtained 15 % of the vote from the Swiss abroad, almost doubling their national total. Without the votes of the Swiss abroad, the Greens' national share of the vote would have stood at 8.2 % instead of 8.4 %. While this does not represent a vast difference, it nevertheless il-

lustrates that the Swiss abroad who vote clearly have an impact.

The Greens surpassed the two traditional parties, the FDP. The Liberals and the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP). However, it was the Social Democratic Party (SP) that won the most votes from the Swiss abroad. With a 21 % share of the vote, it only just exceeded its national share of the vote, but this was nevertheless sufficient for first place owing to the amazingly poor performance of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) among the Swiss electorate abroad (20 %).

The electoral profile of the Swiss abroad is clearly lopsided: the red-green camp is overrepresented, while the national conservatives are underrepresented. The comparatively poor performance of the centre parties, the CVP and the Conservative Democratic Party (BDP), which are well established in rural areas, is also very noticeable. This suggests a rather left-liberal pro-

file for the Swiss abroad who actively participate in political life in Switzerland.

Swiss abroad less conservative

What does this mean exactly? The best way to understand the political profile of the Swiss abroad in context is to use a comparison. If one takes all Switzerland's communes as a point of reference, it is the town of Baden that most closely resembles their political profile. The community of Swiss abroad dispersed around the world who actively participate in politics is typically reflected in the population of Baden. The political profile in both cases reveals a rather urbane, well educated population stratum with an open outlook. Just like Baden's electorate, the Swiss abroad are not too far away from the Swiss middle ground. The major cities in German-speaking Switzerland and many of the communes in the French-speaking region have a profile that is much further to the left than that of the Swiss abroad.

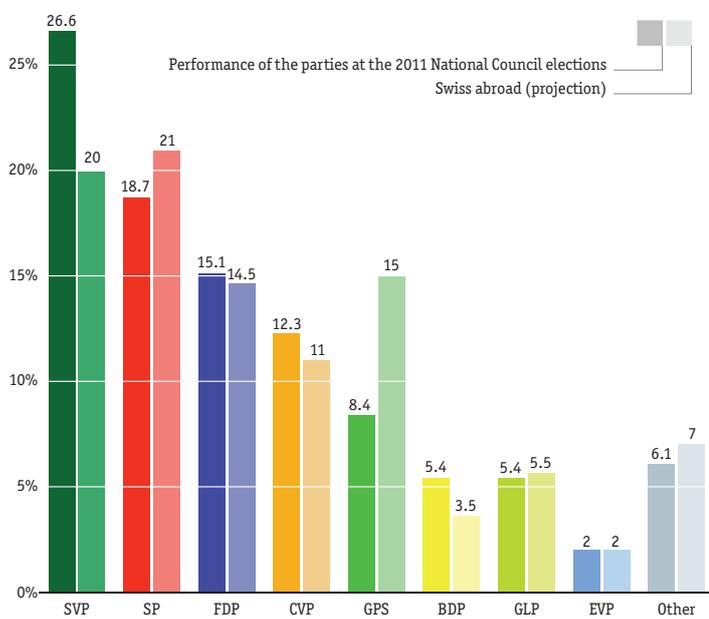


Fig. 1: Performance of the parties at the 2011 National Council elections. Official results and projection of the voting behaviour of the Swiss abroad (error margin: +/-2 percentage points)

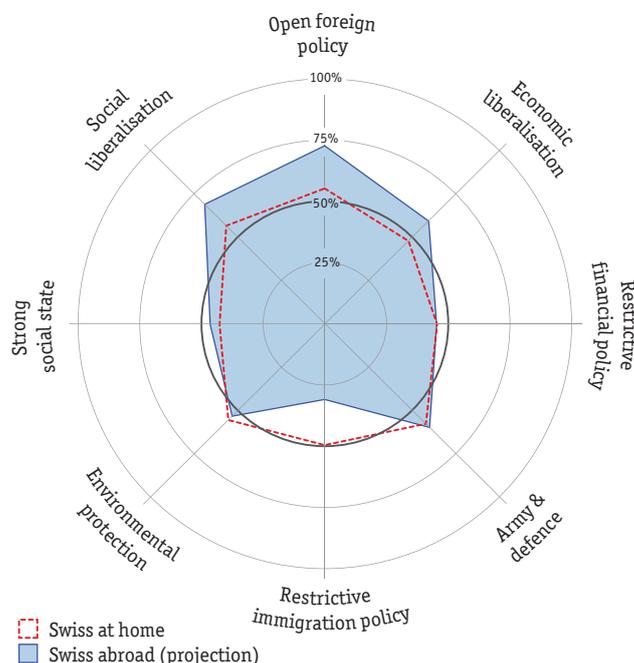


Fig. 2: A comparison of the political profile of the Swiss abroad and at home. Basis: 42 federal referenda from 2004 to 2011. Projection of the figures for the Swiss abroad (error margin: +/-3 percentage points)

Even better almost than election results are referenda for determining the political profile in Switzerland. Specific attitudes to key issues only become apparent at referenda. In the same way as with the electoral projection, we have used the disclosed cantonal referendum results to provide a projection for the entire politically active Swiss community abroad and thus reveal the political profile of the Swiss abroad (see fig. 2). This profile is based on 42 referenda between 2004 and 2012 and shows the issues and controversies where the position of the electorate abroad differs from that of the electorate at home.

All in all, the greatest divide between the Swiss at home and abroad appears in referenda on immigration policy. These include issues such as the SVP's extradition initiative and the bill on facilitating naturalisation. On average, support from the Swiss abroad for a "restrictive immigration policy" is 19 percentage points lower than that from the overall electorate. The difference in attitude is almost as great on foreign policy proposals, such as the Schengen agreement and biometric passports. Bills aimed at open foreign policy receive just short of 18 percentage points more support from the Swiss abroad than from all voters in general. But it is not just the differences that are of interest, the

similarities are too. The profile of the Swiss at home and abroad is practically identical in the areas of social, financial, security and, finally also, environmental policy. Given the strong backing that the Green Party enjoys among the Swiss abroad, their restraint when it comes to environmental policy is particularly interesting to note.

Neither left nor right

In overall terms, it is clear that the Swiss abroad support the red-green faction more and the SVP less than the population on average, but they cannot be deemed "left-wing" in the true sense. In the area of tension between labour and capital and the conflict of interests between employers and employees, the Swiss abroad do not diverge from the conservative consensus of the Swiss at home. There is only a difference on issues of economic policy. As the political profile shows, the Swiss abroad are more in favour of liberalisation and deregulation than the average person.

Generally speaking, the Swiss abroad lean neither to the left nor to the right on the traditional socioeconomic left-right axis. The distinctive characteristics of the profile of the Swiss abroad emerge in political debates along the so-called modernisation axis. On average, the Swiss abroad are more supportive of poli-

cies of openness and reform and therefore less conservative than their counterparts at home. This in itself is not particularly surprising given that the most significant common characteristic of this population group is their decision to emigrate. A degree of cosmopolitanism is therefore inherent in them. However, the decisive factor seems to be the social profile and educational background of the Swiss abroad. As the major survey of the Swiss abroad conducted in 2003 showed, they include a disproportionately high number of well educated people in managerial positions, at least among those registered on the electoral roll. If a group with the same educational and social structure was randomly put together from among the Swiss living at home, their political profile would not differ greatly from that of the Swiss abroad.

Attempts are sometimes made to explain the voting behaviour of the Swiss abroad at referenda by their interests (for example, would they vote for an increase in VAT because they would not be affected by it?). However, it is actually the selective composition of this population group that is much more significant. In other words, it is the many well educated, ambitious and cosmopolitan emigrants who typify the community of the Swiss abroad politically. MICHAEL HERMANN

SWISS ABROAD AND THEIR CANTONS: The political profile of the Swiss abroad reflects the profile of their canton of origin, at least to a certain extent. However, the differences between the Swiss abroad from the various cantons are less prominent than those between the cantons themselves. This is shown by the political map with the five cantons that have revealed the voting behaviour of the Swiss abroad since the start of the survey period in 2004 (see fig. 3 to the right). At least in the case of these five, the variance between the cantons is greater than that between their Swiss citizens abroad.

The registered Swiss abroad are much more receptive to modernisation and a policy of openness than the local cantonal population in all five cantons.

However, the canton of Geneva stands out. Its population of Swiss abroad differs far less from the local population than in the other cantons. The obvious explanation would seem to be the overheated property market and Geneva's location near to the border, as a result of which many citizens of Geneva live on the other side of the border. This makes them Swiss abroad though they are still in effect part of the local population.

Interestingly, no such pattern emerges in Basel-Stadt despite the fact that the half-canton is also situated on the border of the country. However, the property market here is not overheated like it is in Geneva. Emigration to neighbouring countries therefore plays a less significant role in the make-up of the political profile.

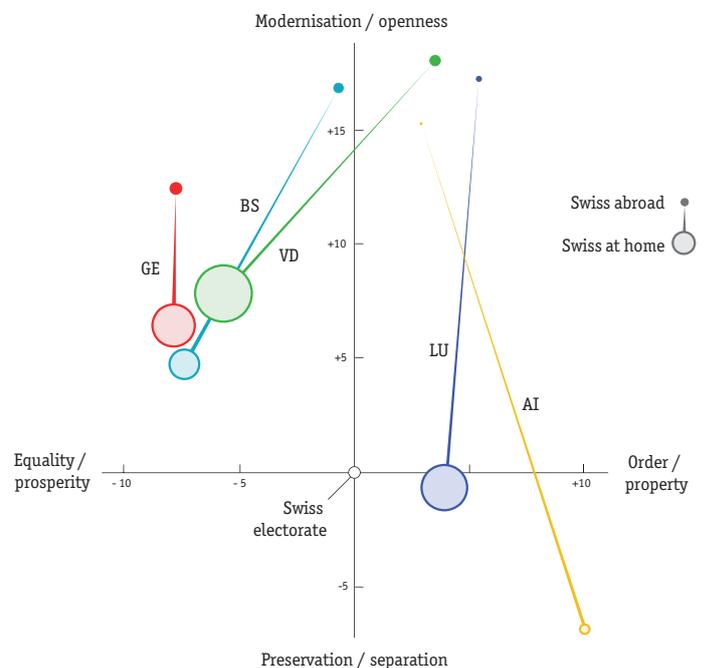


Fig. 3: Political map of the five cantons that have revealed the results for the Swiss abroad for many years. Basis: 42 federal referenda from 2004 to 2011

“A clear statement has been made”

Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter set out the priorities in foreign policy for the next four years at the beginning of March. Laurent Goetschel, Professor of Political Science at the University of Basel and Director of the peace research institute swisspeace in Berne, believes the new strategy has logic but lacks vision.

Interview by Barbara Engel

“SWISS REVIEW”: *After the presentation of the foreign policy objectives, the Swiss media talked of a fundamental change in foreign policy. Do you see it that way too?*

LAURENT GOETSCHEL: It hardly constitutes a fundamental change in terms of substance. The priorities remain Europe, development cooperation, peace-building, the environment, international law, neutrality, the financial centre and trade. What has changed is the order of priority. Neighbouring countries are now the main focus, followed by Europe and then the rest of the world. There is a definite emphasis on areas closer to home.

What do you believe is the reason for this shift of emphasis?

There are currently several key issues to be resolved with our immediate neighbours. These include the bilateral tax agreements with individual states as well as institutional problems with the European Union. And we also have issues such as Zurich airport and the debate about the free movement of persons.

So, you see the priorities as logical? There are no surprises?

Let's put it like this, I can understand why these priorities have been set. Reading the report you also sense that a clear statement has been made. This may have been a personal message from Federal Councillor Burkhalter to his predecessor Micheline Calmy-Rey. Issues that were very important to her, such as international cooperation and peace-building, are still among the priorities but they have fallen down the pecking order.

Federal Councillor Burkhalter has presented his priorities after just two months in office. Can we therefore conclude that the priorities contained in the report are primarily those that the diplomats at the FDFA consider appropriate and important? Could they be objectives that they



Laurent Goetschel

were unable to implement under Federal Councillor Calmy-Rey?

There are many diplomats working at the FDFA who also have many different leanings and viewpoints. From what I have seen, many of them were pleased with the commitment shown by Federal Councillor Calmy-Rey, even if she sometimes tended towards activism. I regard the new set of priorities more as the consequence of criticism from outside the department, from politicians and the business world.

One of Federal Councillor Burkhalter's main foreign policy objectives is apparently to support the Swiss abroad. Do you have any idea what this might mean?

That's not an easy question to answer. It is obviously important to the 700,000 or so Swiss abroad that they are not forgotten in Berne. Or better still that they are actively taken into consideration. Numerically, they are Switzerland's most important representatives and are only too readily called 'ambassadors'. Although I am not a Swiss abroad, I constantly find that the perception of Switzerland abroad is shaped primarily by people and individuals. The Swiss abroad are therefore very much an advertisement for Switzerland and important to the image of the country. It's commendable that the Foreign Minister is aware of that. What this means for the

Swiss abroad in terms of federal government services is another matter. This covers many very different areas, including the consular service, social insurance, tax issues and electoral participation. The Department of Foreign Affairs is not solely responsible for these.

Are there objectives missing from the foreign policy priorities that should have been included in your view?

I don't think anything major was left out. But for years now these reports have been drafted in such a way that nobody could object to them. That's also the case here. It is more about listing all sorts of endeavours rather than setting out clear objectives. However, the government ought to and really needs to develop new visions again, particularly in the field of EU relations, which really are a priority right now. This is actually part of the executive mandate. The constant pledge to 'focus on the bilateral approach' is inadequate. But perhaps it was simply too early for that.

You have been observing Swiss foreign policy for many years. Has Switzerland's position in the world become more difficult? Has our image been tarnished?

I would say our image has become more multi-layered. Whereas we were primarily seen in the past as a pretty, likeable nation, we now have more facets. To give you an example, people were aware twenty years ago that Swiss banks were a sanctuary for money from dubious sources. This is simply viewed and judged differently today. So, pressure is now being exerted to make Switzerland adhere to certain rules. I don't believe Switzerland's image has really been damaged. It is still regarded as an upright state and a country where people would like to live.

BARBARA ENGEL is Editor-in-Chief at "Swiss Review"

All or nothing with no in-between

“Rousseau for everyone?” Before we get too comfortable with the founder of ecology, the pioneer of the Occupy movement and the forefather of hiking, let us attempt to take a proper look at him in this anniversary year.

By Daniel Di Falco

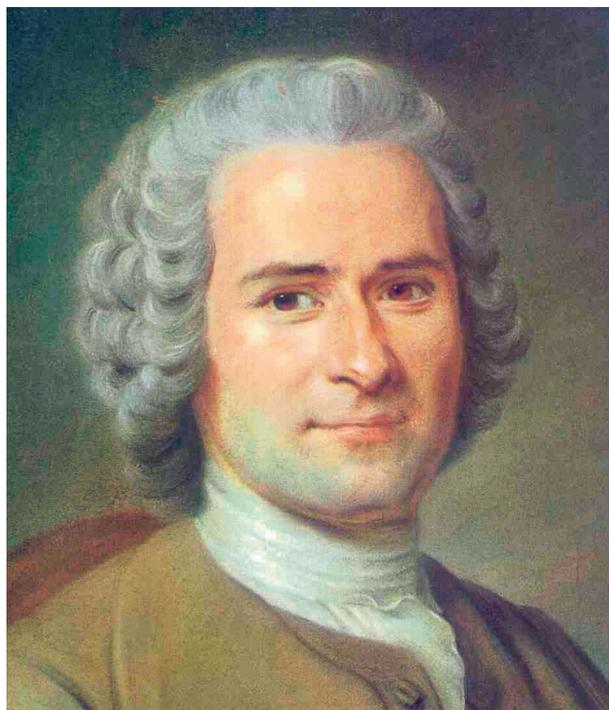
During their lifetime we keep them small, but in death we make them larger than life and bask in their glory – this tends to be the fate of illustrious figures. It is no different with Geneva and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the philosopher, pedagogue, author, composer and botanist, just somewhat more dramatic.

On 9 June 1762, Rousseau fled from Paris in a carriage with an arrest warrant hanging over him because of his novel “Emile”, which besides his reform teachings also contained the profession of a religion without a church. The police seized the books fresh off the press. They were torn to pieces and burnt under a parliamentary decree in the courtyard of the Palace of Justice. Rousseau reached Geneva and hoped to be welcomed in the city where he was born on 28 June 1712. He had always proudly declared himself a “Citoyen de Genève” (citizen of Geneva), and hailed Geneva as a “model for all other peoples”.

Geneva received him as a persona non grata. The city fathers also immediately banned Rousseau’s “Contrat social” (Social Contract) as well as “Emile”. They issued a warrant for his arrest, and this time his books were burnt in front of the city hall. He fled again and obtained temporary asylum in Neuchâtel, which was under Prussian rule at the time, after being turned away by the Bernese as well. Now in exile, Rousseau took revenge on Geneva in a war of words. He renounced his citizenship in a letter to the mayor.

And in 2012? Geneva is honouring him with a magnificent celebration to mark his 300th birthday – there is hardly a day without a planned event. The city has also revamped the Île Rousseau, including the Rousseau memorial, and adorned it with

new poplars. A new house of literature has been named after him, and the Rousseau Society, which publishes his complete works, is now well subsidised. Rousseau’s estate is part of UNESCO’s world heritage, and his name represents a touristic asset for Geneva: along with Dunant and Calvin, he makes the city famous the world over, embodying the



Jean-Jacques Rousseau painted by Maurice Quentin de la Tour (1753)

“esprit de Genève” (spirit of Geneva). The fact that he was ostracised during his lifetime and his books burned “for fear of the revolutionary wind that he created” is acknowledged in the official guidebooks with remarkable candour.

Admittedly, it took some time to get to this stage. The memorial on the small island in the Rhone was created by the revolutionaries of 1846. They honoured Rousseau as a pioneer of democracy and, in so doing, provoked Geneva’s establishment, the patri- cians and the Church, who regarded him as a godless figure and an instigator of the

revolutionary terror in France. The row was still raging in 1878, the year of the centenary of his death, but it had subsided completely by the time of the celebrations of 1912 – his 200th birthday was a public festival. The people of Geneva had reconciled themselves with the past and come to accept the less controversial sides to Rousseau. “Rousseau

pour tous” (Rousseau for everyone) is this year’s anniversary slogan. Really? Rousseau for everyone? Rousseau for everyone, and Rousseau for everything. In March, a podium debate was held in his honour in New York. Sitting there alongside politicians, academics and a representative of “Occupy Wall Street” was Pascal Couchepin, who had no difficulty giving an answer to the question as to what Rousseau would have said about the current state of democracies. He would have been concerned, and the issues causing anxiety would have been those which trouble the former Federal Councillor – growing social inequality, dwindling public spirit and the power of money in politics. Rousseau would have condemned the financial industry’s “confiscation of such a large share of value creation”,

as Couchepin put it, as “feudalism”. And everything somehow fitted together nicely. Rousseau – the voice of the statesman from the Federal Palace, the anti-capitalist activist on the street and the philosopher from the 18th century.

Thousands of answers

But didn’t the great man say that the financial system was a threat to any republic and that even the term finance was a “slave’s word”? He did, it was in the “Contrat social”, and he said much more besides – enough in fact for thousands of answers to the question

as to what is currently relevant about his thinking. Rousseau was the first to describe the people as sovereign and is therefore the patron saint of the “indignant” and the “outraged” in their struggle against the arrogance of the ruling classes. He was also the first person to take such a radical stance against the power of science and technology, on behalf of nature and morality. Even though the terms did not exist back then, today he would have been an environmentalist, a Green and a critic of growth. He dismantled the myth of the adulation of progress and discovered another truth – the triumph of reason drives the humanity out of man.

So much for reason! Instead, Rousseau released emotion from its shackles. “I am my heart”, he said, and probably no philosopher has done as much for the good reputation of emotion and conscience. He drew a contrast between society, with its restrictive conventions and formalities, and “natural man”, who is honest and genuine, primal and intuitive. Awareness of social justice, the fight for human rights and humanitarian efforts are today based on these convictions.

Timelessness and current relevance

What more does it take to prove the modernity of this three-hundred-year-old thinker? He could also be lauded as the forefather of escapists after his Robinson Crusoe-like exile on St. Peter’s Island in Lake Biel in 1765 or the pioneer of hiking on account of his love of walking and nature. He can also be seen as the mastermind behind living in the countryside because of his loathing of cities and his enthusiasm for rural life. And someone also claimed this year that without Rousseau there would be no organic food.

Rousseau for everyone? Rousseau in everyone. This raises the question of what is left of him. It would appear that Rousseau has influenced western thinking so comprehensively that we encounter him today in every part of our self-perception. In fact, he has continued to have a sustained and fundamental impact. Ideas once resulting in arrest warrants have become common sense. Hats off to Rousseau – we could spend an entire anniversary year thanking him for making us everything we are.

However, that would not be particularly interesting. It would be confusing two things, timelessness and current relevance. Rousseau – the progenitor of everyone and

everything? If that were the case, we could practically forget about him again. So, what does he have to teach us that we have not already internalised? If Rousseau has significance for us today, it is to cause us concern not offer us comfort. He did not want to confirm the certainties of his contemporaries but instead to challenge them.

Let us return to 1750. Did the boom of the sciences help to “improve morality” – this was the key question in the competition that the Academy of Dijon held for academics. The answer Rousseau provided in his essay “Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts” (Discourse on the Arts and Sciences) shocked Europe and instantly made him famous. He won the competition with the disturbing notion that the development of civilisation was in truth a story of decline and decay: in his “natural state” man lives independently and freely, but in society he is like a slave in increasingly tight chains – the evil lies in the essence of society. This provoked a scandal in this age of Enlightenment that celebrated the continuous, indeed inevitable, improvement of life by science and technology.

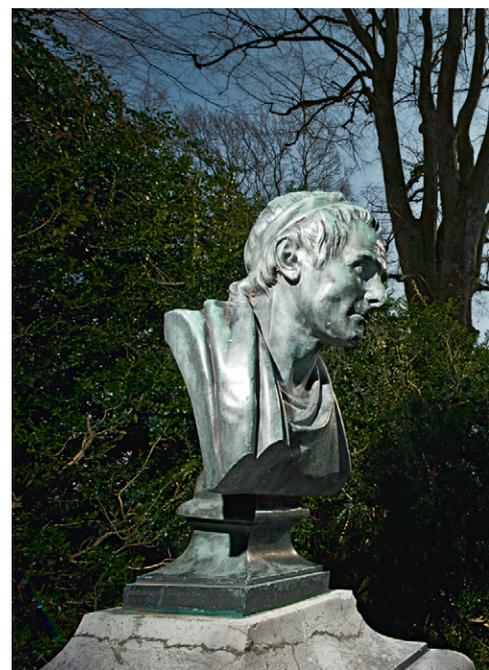
Rousseau opened up a chasm around which he would build his entire philosophy – nature is good, society is bad. His main works were then published almost simultaneously twelve years later, the two titles that made him a political refugee in 1762, and even though it seems the “Contrat social” and “Emile” were attempts to overcome the chasm, they made it even greater.

Theory and practice in democracy

Assuming there was a state but a judicious one and not one where the Church and king could mask their tyranny as the work of God, how should such a republic be conceived and established? This is the issue the “Contrat social” addresses. Various philosophers before him had set out the idea that a state was only legitimate if it was conceptually based on a “contract”, an agreement between free and equal people. However, Rousseau rejected all their proposals and put greater emphasis than his predecessors on freedom and equality in the solution to the problem of how to reconcile human nature with political rule. He wrote: “The problem is to find a form of association in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before.” Only the law should be above the individual.

It sounds like a statement that we could all endorse – of course we are all free democrats, of course we do not obey people but laws. However, it did not take Rousseau long to show that this is just theory and must always remain so. Even a simple parliamentarian, though elected, rises above other citizens. And above the laws since he makes them. “The moment a people gives itself representatives, it is no longer free”, wrote Rousseau. What he called for was a state without politicians, government or officials – inconceivable under the conditions of modern life.

Furthermore, an absolute common good



The Rousseau memorial on St. Peter’s Island in Lake Biel

exists in his absolute republic, a state-like interest, so to speak, that everyone has in equality and freedom which must never be ignored, not even in a referendum. He wrote: “This presupposes, indeed, that all the qualities of the general will still reside in the majority: when they cease to do so, liberty is no longer possible.” This also conflicts with the modern perception of democracy, according to which there is competition of interests and the majority decides.

Man or citizen

This, however, is not negotiable for Rousseau: freedom and equality either exist completely or do not exist at all. His “Contrat social” is not a draft for an ideal republic but rather evidence that even in his age the

judicious state is an impossibility and the original kingdom of freedom and equality is lost to man as a citizen. And what about today? Rousseau is like a thorn in the side of real democracy. What about the outvoted? What about referenda that ignore the imperative of freedom and equality? Can authorities exist that use unlawful means to apply laws? Rousseau's current relevance is a healthy uncertainty about what we actually mean when we call ourselves democrats.

With the "Contrat social", Rousseau buried the republic, and that had consequences. His work "Emile", a tract on pedagogy disguised as a novel in which public education



does not feature, was published in the same year. Pedagogy could no longer be about public spirit or civic virtue: "You must make your choice between the man and the citizen, you cannot train both."

Rousseau decided – without question – in favour of the man. He argued for "natural education", but that is not what made the book so controversial. Even back then reform teachings existed that referred to spontaneity and learning through play and to a child's nature, which differs completely from that of an adult in terms of thinking and feeling. Rousseau is much more Rousseau when he gives up hope on the idea of education healing the world in "Emile". Pedagogy based on nature is nothing more than an experiment on the fringes of society

and can, paradoxically, only succeed in an artificial sphere that protects the child from society. Here is Rousseau's great chasm again – natural education on one side, public on the other; the interests of the individual on one side, his integration into society on the other.

The hero of the novel also grows up in rural seclusion under the guardianship of an educator called Jean-Jacques (Rousseau, of course). The aim is for Emile to discover his innate freedom, which will later help him to survive in life outside. The teacher dedicates all his efforts to this every day for two decades. And then everything goes wrong. At the end, we meet an unhappy loner who has been dealt many blows by destiny. "Everything vanished like a dream", Emile writes to his teacher. "Still young I lost everything – wife, children, friends, in sum everything – even commerce with my fellows. My heart has been torn apart by all its attachments."

The young man has fallen into that epochal abyss that Rousseau once again presents to his readers – man is "good by nature" but there can be no approximation between him and society. The vision of a successful life also fails because it would require total control over the pupil. In the same way as a republic that reconciles man and citizen is impossible, so is an education that sustains the contradiction of individual and society. Rousseau's diagnosis is once again crushing and completely at odds with the image of the great human benefactor we encounter everywhere in this anniversary year.

Principle and reality

Jean-Jacques Rousseau would have been three hundred years old on 28 June. His main works will celebrate their 250th anniversary and, despite the fact that he fought against this on many occasions, both provided the script and served as bibles for revolution – the "Contrat social" for a political one and "Emile" for an educational one. One thing that was clear to Rousseau is that the development of civilisation is irreversible. "Retour à la nature?" (Return to nature?) is the slogan that defines the image of the philosopher, yet it does not come from him. Rousseau strictly ruled out any such return. He did not proclaim any utopia and certainly not a return to one. All he had to offer was an exhaustive look at disaster and the contradictions in which modern life engulfs mankind. This is also how he would have

wanted "Emile" to have been understood. "This so frequently read, so little understood and so sinisterly interpreted book is nothing more than a tract on the original goodness of man which aims to show how vice and fallacy, which are unfamiliar to man's basic nature, pervade him from outside and transform him unnoticed."

In principle at least. But Rousseau is a man of principle, and you will search in vain for a sense of reality in his work. Perhaps that represents a provocation in an age like ours that values "solutions" above all else – Rousseau does not play the game. He presents us with principles that are valid, with democracy or education aimed at children, and his books are the blackboards on which he shows what remains of them at the end of the day.

His arch-enemy Voltaire, the great mind of the Enlightenment, provided us with a marginal note that he wrote in one of Rousseau's books: "You always exaggerate everything." But Rousseau's demonstrations on the blackboard remain difficult to refute even today precisely because he was so absolute and inexorable. And what about the principles? Less remains of them than one might have hoped. For Rousseau this would not detract from the ideals that he held high. It is more a case of reality being unsuccessful. We continuously fail to meet our own expectations – this is the reminder with which Rousseau burdens and unsettles us. He still gets us up off the sofa. Even now.

DANIEL DI FALCO is a historian and editor for cultural and social issues at the "Bund" in Berne

ROUSSEAU 2012

Exhibitions, presentations, operas, plays, readings, concerts, films, discussions and city tours – Rousseau is everywhere. Geneva is the epicentre of the anniversary year. The highlights are a "Republican Banquet" and a spectacular multimedia event in the La Grange park to mark Rousseau's 300th birthday on 28 June. The entire programme can be found at: www.rousseau2012.ch. Anniversary events will also be held in the canton of Neuchâtel (www.rousseau300.ch, www.neuchatel-tourisme.ch) and on Lake Biel (www.biel-seeland.ch).

Sapperlot! Swiss Dialects

Switzerland is not just a nation with four official languages, it is also one of countless dialects. The National Library has dedicated an exhibition to these dialects - some have died out while others are very much alive. Tales from French-speaking Switzerland can be heard there - along with folk songs from Grisons, satire poems from Basel and anecdotes from Malcantone. Below are a few examples; we recommend you read them out loud.

By Miriam Hutter

*Sägid was iär wend.
Ich ba es Rächd uf my Sprach
uf my Redensart
uf mys Word –
won ich bruich wiä nä Hegel
oder wie ne Zärtlichkäit
won ich verwennä
wiä nes Mäitli.
Ich ba Sorg zuänerä
wi zu me ne Bätti
vo der Muätter sälig.
Sägid was iär wend.
Ich ba es Rächd uf my Sprach
uf my Redensart
uf mys Word.*

(Julian Dillier, *Ds Rächt uf d Sprach*, 1992. Text: Emma Dillier, Basel)

*Nus esitain
sco'l vent
ed il nvel
tranter gnir
e partir
Spetgain
ch'il tschiel
ans regalia
ses blau engulä*

(Clo Duri Bezzola, *Gedichte*, 2002. Text: Gertrud Bezzola-Müller, Stäfa)

*Ora, mè, m'in vé prèlyi... Mè rèkemandou
Bon Diu, a Noutbra Dona, a Chin Dsojé, a
me n'andze agrdyin... dè mè touâdè le krou-
lyo... è indremidè mè... dè voutbra man.*

(Joseph Yerly, *Der gutmütige Arme*, Gruyère, 1964. Text: University of Zurich's phonogram archive)

*E vi altri se la nova sassofonîsta e la nova
bassîsta?*

*Sì sí... bé... mi a sum la Daafne e questa
l'è la... bé... la Jösefine!*

*He! Vegni deenta deenta, mi ma ciami
«Zücar candi».*

Salve! «Zücar candi»?

*Ho cambia nom, a ma ciamävi «Zúcbero
Kandinski».*

Polacca?

*Sì! Sum nassüda in una famiglia da sonadò.
La me mam l'eva pianîsta e l'me pa il diri-
geeva.*

Ah sì? Chell'urcheštra?

No il dirigeeva il tráfico!

(Teatro popolare della Svizzera Italiana, 2011. Dubbing in dialect of the movie "Some Like It Hot". Text: University of Zurich's phonogram archive)

Dialects are part of the Swiss identity. In French-speaking Switzerland, where the *patois romands* have practically died out, they have been consigned to history whereas they are a living part of cultural heritage in other parts of the country. They are also a cause of dispute in some places. In Grisons, for example, 40 years after its introduction as a common written language for the five Romansh dialects, *Rumantsch Grischun* is still not accepted as such by everyone. Dialects attempt to outdo one another in German-speaking Switzerland. The most beautiful, popular or attractive *Mundart* is chosen using surveys that are not always very well-founded.

The question as to whether small children at kindergarten should be expected to use High German has increasingly caused a stir in recent times. And, if so, how much should be used? Many German-speaking Swiss clearly do not like speaking High German, the standard form of the language. There is a much more relaxed approach to standard Italian in Ticino. The *dialetti* are spoken at home and among friends, while the standard

form of the language is naturally used in school, at work and in public life.

Local dialects

Communication is not always easy in tiny Switzerland with its four national languages and three cultural regions. This issue is exacerbated by the diglossia of the German-speaking Swiss, their special form of bilingualism. High German is recognised as the single valid written language but dialect is used almost exclusively in conversation. The dialects are in fact so different within German-speaking Switzerland that people can sometimes hardly understand one another. This great diversity in such a small

LANGUAGES IN SWITZERLAND

The results of the 2000 census also reveal in which parts of the country and how often the Swiss still use a dialect as their family language today:

German-speaking Switzerland: 96.2 %
French-speaking Switzerland: 1.3 %
Ticino and Grisons: 44.6 %

area is primarily explained by the fact that movement was extremely restricted in the alpine region until 100 years ago, which is why no larger linguistic communities were formed. Growing mobility has since brought gradual harmonisation.

Hardly anyone now speaks dialects in French-speaking Switzerland but that does not mean that the French-speaking Swiss do not have anything to contribute to the debate on dialects. Many of them find it disappointing and frustrating that their knowledge of German acquired at school can barely be used in conversation with their compatriots in German-speaking Switzerland. The calls by politicians from French-

The same survey also asked participants about the language "they have the best command of and in which they think". The main languages break down as follows:

German: 63.7 %
French: 20.4 %
Italian: 6.5 %
Romansh: 0.5 %
Non-national languages: 9 %

speaking Switzerland for the use of more standard language in public life and in particular in German-language national television and radio programmes were buried without a trace this spring – by the mainly German-speaking parliament.

Listening to old and new

Dialects can be heard and experienced at the National Library's "Sapperlot! Swiss Dialects" exhibition. Visitors are put in the mood with old and new quotations from the realms of media and culture, which cover the wall opposite the entrance. Visitors can walk over a giant map of Switzerland above which audio units dangle from the ceiling. The 20 historical and 20 current recordings that are played from them are explained in the exhibition guides handed out at the entrance – in all the national languages, of course. The more recent sound recordings show that the intention is "not just to bathe in nostalgia", as the curator Peter Erismann put it. There are also examples of current ethnolects and sociolects. For example, a discussion among young people from Zurich on the 2009 "youth word of the year": "sbeschtwosjehetsgits" (the best there's ever been).

Recordings of songs and literature in dialect as well as spoken word art show that dialect is more relevant culturally than ever before. While dialect in music and literature was restricted to folk and the rural idyll until a few decades ago, it is today also used in pop, rock and rap, and verse is composed on topics such as politics, sport and society at *poetry slams*.

The "Voices of Switzerland 2012" project is also an important part of the exhibition. Visitors to the exhibition can record their own voices in two small sound studios and listen to the recordings of previous visitors. The University of Zurich's phonogram archive is collecting this new material for research. This project goes beyond the exhibition itself. Anyone can participate online (see box). The phonogram archive, which is heavily involved in the production of the exhibition, is also exhibiting historical and modern recording devices in the main hall.

Unusual lexicons

The exhibition also presents the four national dictionaries "Schweizerisches Idiotikon", "Glossaire des patois de la Suisse Romande", "Dicziunari Rumantsch Grischun" and "Vocabolario dei dialetti

della Svizzera italiana". They all date back to between 1860 and 1910, and none has yet been completed. The "Idiotikon" (from the Greek *ídios*: idiosyncratic) is set to be completed in 2022 with its 17th volume. All published articles can already be accessed at www.idiotikon.ch. This work also reveals the meaning of the title of the exhibition,



Sound recordings were made on wax discs with the "Vienna Phonograph" from 1909

"Sapperlot". This euphemistic form of the religious term "Sakramänt" is an "expression of affirmation, annoyance, astonishment or admiration". It is quite possibly a word that might slip out when confronted with the bewildering diversity of Swiss dialects.

MIRIAM HUTTER is a volunteer at "Swiss Review"

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

When: from now until 25 August 2012, Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sat 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Where: Swiss National Library, Hallwylstrasse 15, 3003 Berne; Entry: free; www.nb.admin.ch/sapperlot

PARTICIPATION

It is also possible to take part in the "Voices of Switzerland 2012" project remotely. You can record your own dialect online and listen to recordings that have already been collected.

www.stimmen.uzh.ch (German)
www.voix.uzh.ch (French)
www.voci.uzh.ch (Italian)
www.vuschs.uzh.ch (Romansh)

RESEARCH

At <http://dialects.from.ch>, 10 terms, which have to be translated from High German into dialect, are used to determine the region from which speakers come.

PUBLICATION

The panorama of Swiss dialects that was published at the national exhibition in Zurich in 1939 under the title "Stimmen der Heimat" is now available in a new edition: "Stimmen der Schweiz", Verlag Huber, Frauenfeld 2012. Two audio CDs + phonetic transcription. ISBN 978-3-280-1559-5

The reflections of a "Romand"

I'm unwinding on the terrace of a pub in Brienz. At the table opposite, the guests are discussing their respective weeks on this Friday evening in complete tranquillity. As a "Romand", a French-speaking Swiss, straddling the divide between the two linguistic regions, I have difficulty understanding the distinctive dialect of the Bernese Oberland. I recall my school days when we were taught High German. The language of Goethe. What an extraordinary act of altruism on the part of the education system in French-speaking Switzerland. But what is the point of force-feeding these poor pupils with grammar destined to be forgotten? Dative, genitive and accusative – now I'm the one pointing the finger of accusation. Sleep-inducing declinations. And not for one moment amid this mass of German grammar did a teacher draw parallels with Swiss German. That's, the height of absurdity for the Swiss. It's so simple. Abend – Abig, zusammen – zäme, ich habe – i ha. Or "i bi z'Brienz gsi!": I've been to Brienz. I left this inoculation with written German behind at the school desk at the age of 18. I'm now twice that age and nothing has changed. There seems to be a lethargy hanging over cantonal education – "Why change? We've always done it this way!" Young French-speaking and German-speaking Swiss converse in English. That's globalisation for you. But the solution seems so simple, oral and progressive. I often hear critics of teaching Swiss German at school say they would not know which cantonal dialect to use. That's just an good excuse. The canton of Zurich has a population of over 1.2 million. The answer appears very obvious. A real linguistic injustice is essentially being done as my neighbours in the Oberland have learned French at school – the language currently spoken in the Romandie region – while the French-speaking Swiss have not learned the language used east of the Sarine river. And whose fault is that? ALAIN WEY

Ever higher, ever faster

When did mountaineering begin? And why did it begin in Switzerland? In the company of Ueli Steck, the world's fastest mountaineer, and author Daniel Anker, a man with encyclopaedic knowledge of mountains, we explore the history of the conquest of Switzerland's summits.

By Alain Wey

The conquest of the mountains bears comparison with man's most incredible journeys, such as the crossing of the oceans and his first steps in outer space. It encapsulates the quintessence of the human spirit – always aiming higher and relentlessly pushing back the boundaries. Even when all the peaks had been ascended, mountaineers continued to brave the unknown and find new ways of reaching the summits. Ueli Steck from Berne is one of the finest examples (interview on page 23). Known as “The Swiss Machine” outside Switzerland, he has smashed the ascent records for the toughest north faces in the Alps. He took just 2 hours 47 minutes to free-climb the north face of the Eiger solo. This 21st-century alpine hero has revived public interest in his exploits. But when did mountaineering actually begin? Man has not been endeavouring to scale the summits since the beginning of time. The

age of mountaineering in fact began in the 18th century, as Daniel Anker, an author and journalist specialising in mountains, explains.

The beginnings

“Before the ascent of the summits was recorded, mountain dwellers and chamois hunters had already scaled some peaks, but had left no trace”, Daniel Anker explains. The ascent of Titlis (3,238 metres, Uri) in July 1744 by four monks from Engelberg monastery marked the birth of mountaineering in Switzerland as a leisure pursuit. The first summit conquered that has permanent snow cover was Schelsaplana (2,965 metres, Grisons), which was reached in around the 1740s. Monks from the Grand-Saint-Bernard monastery then scaled Mont Vélan (3,727 metres, Valais) in 1779. The first 4,000-metre peak in Switzerland to be

climbed was the Jungfrau (4,158 metres) in 1811 followed by the epic ascent of the Finsteraarhorn (4,274 metres, Berne), of which this year is the 200th anniversary. However, these feats cannot be discussed without mentioning Horace Bénédicte de Saussure, who is regarded as the father of alpine mountaineering. A naturalist and geologist from Geneva, he sponsored the first ascent of Mont Blanc in 1786 and himself climbed Europe's highest peak a year later.

From science to sport

The history of Swiss mountaineering has also been shaped by geologists like Louis Agassiz (1807–1873), who climbed to take measurements to prove the existence of the Ice Ages and to gain a better understanding of the formation of the Alps. Topographers also had to reach the summits to undertake the triangulation of Switzerland. The most

Continued on page 24



Above the clouds – mountaineers on the summit of the Eiger, with the Mittelhorn (left) and the Rosenhorn in the background. The first ascent was made in 1858 via Wengernalp and the west flank. The British mountaineer Lucy Walker became the first woman to climb the Eiger in 1864. She was also the first woman to ascend various other alpine peaks, including the Matterhorn in 1871

“When I’m climbing, the only thing that matters is the ascent”

Ueli Steck has become a legendary figure in global mountaineering over the course of a decade, in particular for his rapid ascents of well-known faces, known as “speed climbing”, solo and without a rope. The star from Ringgenberg (Berne) has built his reputation on major feats that have attracted great media attention. Having smashed the speed record for the north face of the Eiger in 2007, he repeated the feat a year later in 2 hours and 47 minutes, improving his time by more than an hour. He then undertook record ascents of the north faces of the Grandes Jorasses in 2 hours 21 minutes and the Matterhorn in 1 hour 56 minutes. He is nicknamed “The Swiss Machine” because of his physical preparation and extraordinary training. In 2009, he received the “Piolet d’or” – the Oscar of mountaineering – with Simon Anthamatten for the first ascent of the north face of Tengkampoche (6,500 metres) in Nepal. In 2011, he reached the summit of Shishapangma (8,027 metres) in a record time of ten and a half hours. One of his partners in the Himalayas, the American Freddie Wilkinson, said of him: “Climbing with Ueli is like shooting hoops with Michael Jordan.” Ueli Steck is renowned for his versatility, technique, physical condition and extraordinary mental strength.

How would you describe Ueli Steck?

A Swiss mountaineer from Interlaken who attempts to climb mountains. I have a very German Swiss temperament – I like to have things under control and to do them properly. Am I reckless? I don’t believe I take excessive risks. I’ve always said that I don’t do extreme mountaineering. The challenges I undertake are always controlled.

You are one of the few mountaineers to climb above 8,000 metres without oxygen. How do you prepare your body to endure such altitudes?

It’s a question of acclimatisation. The body has to become accustomed to the altitude. It’s the same for everyone. It’s more a matter of patience than training.

When you climb with a partner, is there a reason for not going solo?

That’s something completely different. When climbing solo, it’s just you and the mountain. When I climb with a partner, we take decisions together. Ultimately, it’s the team that matters. It’s not a question of safety. With 8,000-metre-plus climbs, you ascend more quickly solo and speed is a safety factor.



Ueli Steck

Do you sometimes get frightened?

Not on the mountain. Beforehand, yes, I do. But not during the ascent. I train to the point where I’m able to control the situation.

What do you think about when climbing?

When I’m climbing, the only thing that matters is the ascent. I’m fully focussed on the grips and my hands and feet. I’m completely immersed in the moment. That’s my main source of satisfaction when I’m climbing.

Where does your passion for speed climbing come from?

Speed climbing originated in the 1980s with the French climbers and their incredible enchainment climbs. But it’s also part of the history of mountaineering – the aim has always been to reach the summit as quickly as possible. I’m always looking for new challenges and one day I gave it a go.

You’re now 35 years of age. Do you plan to continue speed climbing?

Speed climbing solo is very dangerous. You can push back the boundaries but sooner or later you have to accept that you can’t go any faster or higher. You have to do other things. My days of speed climbing in the Alps are over. Time for the next challenge!

Who inspires you?

My idol is Walter Bonatti (Italian mountaineer, explorer and reporter). Not just for mountaineering but for everything he did.

What does your plan to climb Everest involve exactly?

We’ll have to wait and see but it essentially involves reaching the summit without oxygen. However, it depends on whether the mountain affords us the opportunity or not (he had to turn back at 8,700 metres in May 2011). I’m setting off for the Himalayas on 5 April and plan to return in June.

Have you already made plans for after the Himalayas?

I’ve got plenty of ideas but when I get back the first thing I’ll be doing is building a house in Ringgenberg with my wife.

Which are your favourite mountains?

The Eiger, obviously. In the Himalayas, Cholatse is another mountain that remains close to my heart (6,444 metres, first solo ascent of the north face in 37 hours in 2005).

What’s your philosophy?

Everyone has to choose their path in life and decide what they want to do. You then have to stick to that path.

Information on Steck’s projects at www.uelisteck.ch

famous of them was Johann Coaz from Grisons. In 1850, his rope team was the first to reach Piz Bernina (4,048 metres, Grisons), the highest peak in the eastern Alps.

“But it was the British who introduced mountaineering as a sport”, Daniel Anker explains. “They started climbing in Switzerland in the 1840s.” Switzerland’s highest peak, the Dufourspitze (4,633 metres), was conquered in 1855. Anker adds: “This was the start of the golden age of mountaineering, which came to an end in 1865 with the first ascent of the Matterhorn. Most of Switzerland’s highest summits were reached during this ten-year period.” The British received all the accolades but it was Swiss guides who paved the way for them. “This is explained by the fact that the first histories were written by the British. The name of the client came first. In the case of the Matterhorn, the name of Edward Whymper is entered first, then the guides are mentioned”, Anker explains. When all the summits had been conquered, new, ever more challenging routes were sought. Ascents were then also undertaken in winter. Women’s tours and ascents on skis were later introduced. Last came solo ascents. The “final three Alpine challenges”, the north faces of the Matterhorn (4,478 metres), the Grandes Jorasses (4,208 metres) and the Eiger (3,975 metres),

were conquered in 1931, 1935 and 1938, respectively, by European rope parties. The challengers included a legendary figure in women’s mountaineering, Loulou Boulaz (1908–1991) from Geneva.

Swiss mountaineers take on the world

Swiss climbers soon took an interest in the highest peaks on every continent. Everest (8,848 metres), for example, conquered by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay in 1953, was almost reached six months earlier by two rope teams from Geneva who were forced to turn back just 250 metres from the summit. Hillary did not set out on his journey without first obtaining vital information gathered by the Swiss. In 1956, Ernst Reiss and Fritz Luchsinger became the first men to climb Lhotse (8,516 metres), the fourth-highest peak in the world. The first ascent of Aconcagua (6,962 metres), the highest peak in the Andes, was made by the guide Matthias Zurbiggen in 1896. Countless Swiss climbers have scaled mountains worldwide, and it would take a book to chronicle all their achievements. However, Lorenz Saladin (1896–1936) and his expeditions in the Caucasus Mountains, Michel Piola and the new routes on the Mont Blanc massif, and Michel Vaucher and his many first ascents - including Dhaulagiri (8,172 metres),

the world’s seventh-highest peak, in 1960 - are especially worthy of mention. His wife, Yvette, also became a major figure in female mountaineering. We should also mention Erhard Loretan (1959–2011), who became the third mountaineer to climb all 14 peaks over 8,000 metres.

The glory of the Eiger

The great names in Swiss mountaineering today include Ueli Steck and Stephan Siegrist from Berne, the three Anthamatten brothers from Zermatt, Denis Burdet from Neuchâtel and Nina Cabrez from Grisons. Daniel Anker explains: “These young climbers take on extremely difficult new routes. We can talk about mountaineering and Swiss alpine tourism in terms of four main peaks - the Rigi or Titlis in central Switzerland, the Jungfrau (where tourism began and the first difficult ascents were made), the Matterhorn and, of course, the Eiger, which is an extremely challenging peak. In the case of the Eiger, new routes are still being opened up for two reasons - the size of its face (1,800 metres) and the regard mountaineers have for it. To say you have climbed the north face of the Eiger carries more gravitas than climbing any other face.”

ALAIN WEY is an editor at “Swiss Review”



On the steep face, every step and every grip require careful consideration

Thank you!

Over 300 young Swiss abroad visit their second homeland each year to take advantage of one of the offers for young people that are provided by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA). This is only possible thanks to the support of the benefactors, sponsors and volunteers.

OSA's Youth Service relies on the help it receives from numerous very varied organisations.

■ The offers for young people could not be funded without the support of federal government. OSA has concluded a service agreement with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) that puts our funding on a secure footing. The Federal Social Insurance Office also provides money for select projects that relate to OSA's extra-curricular youth work. The sport camps also receive support from the "Youth and Sport" service at the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS).

■ The support of its long-term sponsors is invaluable to OSA. And, of course, new ones are being added all the time through targeted fundraising. Our youth projects are an attractive platform for companies, organisations and foundations because their meaningful commitment is well received by the public. Cantons and communes show

great generosity whenever young Swiss abroad visit their region.

■ The volunteers who work on behalf of OSA also deserve a special mention. The youth officers of the Swiss associations abroad carry out unpaid mediation work. Most young people find out about our projects through their publicity. In Switzerland, the Youth Service receives generous discounts and special offers from many service providers, such as sports teachers, mountain guides, ski schools, tourism companies, mountain railways and transport firms.

■ And we must not forget the untiring efforts of the qualified camp leaders, cooks, supervisors at the language courses and workshops and the many other friends of the Swiss abroad who receive only modest remuneration for their commitment to the projects.

■ Finally, the Youth Service also relies on a network of over 300 host families in Switzerland, who provide young Swiss abroad with food and accommodation free of charge. This saves OSA over 40,000 Swiss francs a year in board and lodging costs. So, on our own behalf and on behalf of the young people, we at OSA would like to say a big thank-you to all the individuals, organisations and companies concerned. The offers for young people would not be possible without them.

Information on forthcoming offers for young people can be found at www.aso.ch.

OSA advice

Is it possible to have more than one domicile?

Under Swiss law, nobody can have more than one domicile simultaneously. Swiss law defines domicile as the place where a person resides with the intention of settling. The intention to settle has to be based on circumstances recognisable to third parties (for example, the presence of family members or a position of employment). To determine a person's domicile, all their life circumstances are taken into account – the centre of their existence being in the place or country where most aspects of their personal, social and professional life are found. The strength of the links with this centre will prevail over links with other places or countries. This means that only the place with which a person has the strongest links can constitute a domicile.

The place where documentation is submitted is not the sole determining factor. It only constitutes an indicator and is not relevant by comparison with personal relationships and interests. This is an assumption that can be overturned by evidence to the contrary.

The notion of domicile is important because it determines which authorities and courts are competent and which legislation is applicable to a person, for example with regard to liability for social insurance payments.

NOTE ON OSA'S LEGAL DEPARTMENT

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad's Legal Department provides general legal information on Swiss law and specifically in areas that concern the Swiss abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law and does not intervene in disputes between private parties.

SARAH MASTANTUONI,
Head of the Legal Department

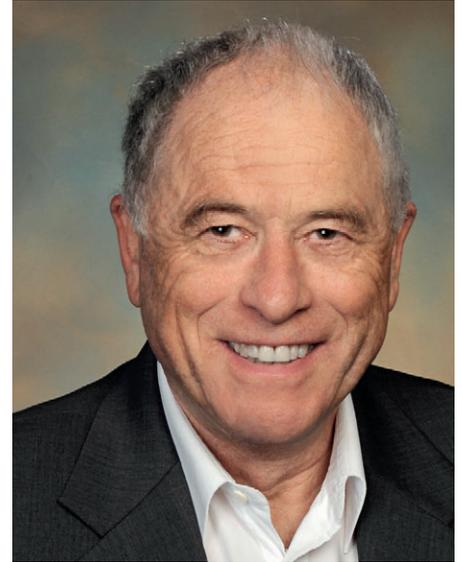




Speakers at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad:
Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter



Creator of "Swatch":
Elmar Mock



Nobel Prize winner:
Kurt Wüthrich

Mobility and Innovation: Switzerland in Times of International Challenges

The 90th Congress of the Swiss Abroad will address Switzerland's qualities in the areas of research and innovation and its position on the international stage - not a Swiss cliché in sight.

The congress to be held in Lausanne between 17 and 19 August 2012 will be attended by renowned experts. Registration is now open.

Switzerland needs to face up to two major challenges – international mobility and the globalisation of knowledge, as knowledge represents a major growth factor for our nation. In addition to economic issues, the Congress of the Swiss Abroad will also look at streamlining and the use of synergies. Modern Switzerland with its research engenders goodwill and trust – an important asset in light of the international criticism levelled at our country's financial conduct.

The high quality of Swiss science also promotes growth in our economy and helps the country to forge global links and play an active role on the international stage. The free circulation of knowledge and the implementation of a coherent migra-

tion policy are vital to overcoming the major challenges of the future.

At the congress in Lausanne, you will have the opportunity to meet Elmar Mock, creator of "Swatch", and Kurt Wüthrich, Nobel Prize winner for chemistry. Swiss researchers and politicians will discuss the challenges outlined above at a round-table event. Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, who, as head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), is an extremely important figure for the Swiss abroad, will also attend the congress.

There will be no shortage of social and cultural activities either: select delicacies from the canton of Vaud will be served on the final evening at the Le Chalet Suisse restaurant, and culture enthusiasts will be able to explore Lausanne and the local region on a guided tour of the city or a trip to Rochers-de-Naye. Detailed information and registration forms can be found on our website in German and French:

German:

www.aso.ch/de/angebote/auslandschweizer-kongress/kongress-2012

French:

www.aso.ch/fr/offres/congres-des-suissees-de-letranger/congres-2012

The registration deadline for the 90th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lausanne is 4 July 2012.

Advertisement

Perfect occupational benefits – with Soliswiss
Life and health insurance, asset formation, protection against political risk

Would you like a personal consultation? www.soliswiss.ch, T +41 31 380 70 30

soliswiss

House of Switzerland United Kingdom 2012

Switzerland at the London Olympics

The London 2012 Olympic Games are just a few weeks away, and millions of people around the world will be getting together to watch this spectacular sporting event. Switzerland will be making its own creative, innovative and surprising appearance at London 2012, stage-managed by Presence Switzerland – a division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) – and a host of renowned partners and sponsors. Called the “House of Switzerland”, the official Swiss hospitality centre will provide a superb platform for athletes, artists, cultural ambassadors, journalists, and representatives of the worlds of politics, business and science, as well as a lively meeting place for the general public. Situated in the heart of the city, beside London Bridge on the banks of the River Thames, the House of Switzerland will be open from 20 July to 12 August 2012 and will be the sporting, cultural and gastronomic “place to be” throughout the Olympic Games.

The House of Switzerland continues the tradition of the Swiss hospitality centre at the Olympic Games, which started with the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano (Japan). Initially no more than a restaurant for athletes and their fans, this time around the House of Switzerland United Kingdom 2012 will offer visitors, for the first time, a free and varied programme organised with the help of partners such as Bernese Oberland-Jungfrau, Swiss Olympic, the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR), Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council, Switzerland Tourism, the city and canton of Zurich, and others.

With world-famous Swiss mountain peaks outside, freshly prepared chocolate creations from “Lindt Maître Chocolatier” and Switzerland’s rich cultural heritage, visitors to the House of Switzerland will be confronted with a concentrated dose of Swissness! The Qualification Park hosted by Switzerland Tourism will take them back in time to an era when British mountaineers began to discover Switzerland and popularise it as a tourist destination. Brave visitors will be able to try their skills and luck to win a trip through Switzerland with historical transport and equipment, following in the footsteps of package tour pioneer Thomas Cook. Today there is still a special relationship between

the UK and the Bernese Oberland-Jungfrau region, which is represented in the House of Switzerland as the Destination Partner. Visitors will have the opportunity to discover the idyllic mountain landscapes of this scenic holiday region, traditional Bernese crafts such as woodcarving, local innovations like the “Flyer” electric bicycle, and regional specialities such as Kambly biscuits and the world-famous Emmentaler cheese.

At the House of Switzerland, visitors will also join in with two very traditional Swiss celebrations. One of these is the Bernese Games, a scaled-down version of the famous Unspunnen Festival, where visitors will be invited to try out a variety of traditional Bernese sports such as Schwingen (a form of wrestling) and Steinstossen (stone put). Another highlight will be the Swiss National Day, which falls during the Olympic Games. The celebration on 1 August, organised jointly with the Swiss Embassy in London, will be combined with a commemoration for the 100th anniversary of the Jungfrau mountain railway. The official Jungfrauoch celebrations will be streamed live to the House of Switzerland.

Catering at the House of Switzerland will be provided by the establishment of one of the most famous Swiss chefs abroad, Anton



Switzerland turns London red. A creative interpretation of “Swissness”



Mosimann. “Mosimann’s” will be serving culinary specialities from different regions of Switzerland in three restaurants. Invitingly rustic, the Bernese Chalet will offer the cosy feel of a “caveau” and a menu featuring the traditional classics of Swiss comfort food, with a particular focus on dishes from the Bernese Oberland. The Rösticceria will offer the ultimate “grab-and-go” convenience in Borough Market style, serving appetising Swiss favourites such as Bratwurst & Buerli, Roesti To Go and Raclette Takeaway. At La Brasserie in Glaziers Hall, the presentation of Swiss culinary art will be a blend of surprises and creativity. Dishes and farm produce from various regions of Switzerland will figure on the bill of fare.

Innovative Switzerland

“We’re delighted to present Switzerland with a tongue-in-cheek look at the clichés while at the same time revealing lesser known, but no less characteristic, sides of our country”, says Ambassador Nicolas Bideau, head of Presence Switzerland. For example, visitors will be able to explore the Swiss game design scene in the Swiss Game Lounge and with a smartphone app. A poster exhibition by graphic designers from Zurich and the

UK will give visitors an insight into Switzerland’s up-and-coming creative industries.

The House of Switzerland will also serve as a forum for debate with decision-makers from other nations, especially the UK as the host country. The Swiss Embassy in London and other partners of the House of Switzerland are organising a series of symposia on Innovation and Education, Life Science and Game Design, thus promoting current and future partnerships between the UK and Switzerland. The École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) is also hosting an interactive “Café Scientifique”, where scientists and journalists will debate the latest scientific developments related to sport.

It’s all happening in the Red Zone

The House of Switzerland will offer visitors an extremely varied and busy programme of sports-themed events. The official medal celebrations organised by the Swiss Olympic Association and produced by SRG SSR have always been one of the highlights at the Swiss hospitality centre. With a TV studio on site and live broadcasts from the Games, SRG SSR will be contributing to the Olympic spirit. The House of Switzerland is also the official meeting place for the Swiss athletes:

for the first time, Swiss Olympic is providing an Athletes’ Lounge.

As the sun sets behind the mountains at the House of Switzerland, Swiss musicians will bring the outdoor stage to life. Young rising stars representing a variety of musical styles will showcase Switzerland’s creative and ambitious music scene, setting the mood and creating a festival atmosphere. On Mondays there will be an open-air cinema showing short films and cartoons to present Switzerland’s diverse cultural and linguistic heritage. A radio bus will play host to the International Radio Festival – The Acoustic Flame of Switzerland – with guest spots by various British radio presenters. Another British guest at the House of Switzerland will be the author Diccon Bewes, who lives in Switzerland and writes about the Swiss way of life with a healthy dose of British humour. For children there will be a special kids’ programme designed to help them discover Switzerland while having fun.

The London neighbourhood hosting the House of Switzerland will be transformed into a “Red Zone” with a buzzing atmosphere all of its own. Be part of this diverse and vibrant event at the London 2012 Olympic Games! See you there.

Presence Switzerland, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Presence Switzerland, as a part of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), is responsible for promoting Switzerland’s interests abroad using the tools of international communication. These include information and promotional material, projects about Switzerland abroad, delegates’ trips to Switzerland, a uniform image for “Brand Switzerland” and Switzerland’s presence at world exhibitions (Swiss Pavilions) and the Olympic Games. The communication strategy is reviewed and defined regularly by the Federal Council based on an analysis of Switzerland’s image abroad.

The House of Switzerland is not just a platform for national communication but also a forum for leading business, politics, tourism, science and sports stakeholders, and the venue for the official medal celebrations of the Swiss athletes.

The House of Switzerland United Kingdom 2012 is being supported by numerous Swiss partners and companies from the public and private sectors: Bernese Oberland-Jungfrau, the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), SRG SSR, Swiss Olympic Association, Switzerland Tourism, Mosimann’s, Lindt & Sprüngli, Zurich, Habegger, Swiss International Air Lines, Victorinox, Mövenpick Ice Cream, Swiss Securitas Group, Switcher, Uniplan, International Radio Festival, Montreux Jazz Festival and Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council.

Address and contact

Glaziers Hall Ltd, FAO House of Switzerland 2012
9 Montague Close, London, SE1 9DD, United Kingdom

info@houseofswitzerland.org
www.houseofswitzerland.org
www.facebook.com/houseofswitzerland
www.twitter.com/HoSLondon2012

Free entrance

21 July – 12 August 2012, daily from 9am to 11pm
Official opening on 20 July at 6pm at Glaziers Hall, London Bridge,

How to get there

– From London City Airport take the DLR to Canning Town, change to the Jubilee Line to London Bridge (25 minutes).

– From London Heathrow Airport take the Piccadilly Line to Green Park, change to the Jubilee Line to London Bridge (60 minutes).

– From the Olympic Park take the Jubilee Line to London Bridge (20 minutes).

No parking available; we recommend visitors use public transport.

Important

Please do not forget to provide the embassy or consulate general responsible for you with your valid e-mail address and your mobile phone number.

Register at www.swissabroad.ch to ensure you do not miss out on any information from your representation ("Swiss Review", newsletters and so on). The current edition of "Swiss Review" and previous issues can be read or printed out at any time at www.revue.ch or via the "Review" link on the websites of Swiss embassies and consulates.



Helpline number from Switzerland: 0800 24-7-365
Helpline number from abroad: +41 800 24-7-365

Over to you

Help to paint a picture of Switzerland

Who exactly are the Swiss? How do they live? Where do they live? And what are they like?

Presence Switzerland has launched "Swiss-world - Life in Switzerland", a portal designed to answer these questions. The Swiss identity is shaped by its people living, for instance, in Berne, Moutier or Flims, but also abroad. This is why Presence Switzerland wishes to invite the Swiss abroad to contribute to the portrait gallery as well.

Adding your contribution to the gallery couldn't be easier. To document your piece of Switzerland abroad, simply go to www.swissworld.org/en/your_switzerland. You can upload text, photos and videos, which can then be viewed at www.swissworld.org/en/know/life_in_switzerland, painting a picture of a fascinating, colourful and diverse country.

Join in and show the world the makers of Switzerland as we know it!

Publications

The Swiss Confederation: A Brief Guide 2012

This richly illustrated brochure is published each year and gives you a broad yet clear pic-

ture of Switzerland's political institutions and executive authorities while also highlighting the structure of and role played by the State. It can be ordered from the Federal Chancellery or downloaded as a printable PDF document from the link below:

www.bk.admin.ch/dokumentation/02070/



Professions and Training in Forestry

In March 2012, the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), in partnership with three UN organisations, published a study into training opportunities for forestry occupations based on an international survey carried out in 2010/2011. A total of 23 countries in Europe and North America took part in the study.

Education systems all over the world are going through a period of upheaval. Education is one of the main tools at our disposal to face up to the challenges of the future. As well as being true in a general sense, this ap-

plies specifically to the sustainable development of forests and their enormous importance to humanity. International mobility has increased dramatically, and with it the need for a basis on which to compare professions and qualifications across different countries.

The FOEN produced its first report on forestry jobs in Europe back in 1996 in partnership with a group of international organisations. Since then, training opportunities and the general framework have changed greatly, prompting a re-examination of the international situation.

The 83-page publication is not available in printed form but can be downloaded as a printable PDF document, in English or German, from the link below:

www.bafu.admin.ch/publikationen/publikation/01651/

New development cooperation newsletter

For the past year, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), part of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), has been publishing a newsletter, which appears every two months and contains the most important information about Switzerland's global development cooperation activities. The newsletter can be ordered at: www.deza.admin.ch > Documentation > Publications > SDC's Newsletter

POPULAR INITIATIVES:

By the time of going to press, the following new popular initiative had been launched since the last edition of "Swiss Review":

- "Pro Service public" (In favour of public service). Deadline for the collection of signatures: 28.08.2013

The complete list can be found on the Federal Chancellery's website at www.bk.admin.ch, in German under "Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen" (also available in French and Italian).

FDFA OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER: JEAN-FRANÇOIS LICHTENSTERN, RELATIONS WITH THE SWISS ABROAD, BUNDESGASSE 32, CH-3003 BERNE, TELEPHONE: +41 800 24 7 365
WWW.EDA.ADMIN.CH, MAIL: HELPLINE@EDA.ADMIN.CH

Advertisement


Your Gateway to Switzerland

Little gems

A special place to stay in Berne

A new bed and breakfast opened in Berne at the beginning of April. The small guest house is situated very close to the world-famous "Zentrum Paul Klee" and is therefore called "Bed & Breakfast Im Klee". The property built in the 1940s, which has a large garden and swimming pool, has been stylishly furnished with great attention to detail. The five rooms – all of which are located on the

south-facing side of the building with fantastic views of the Alps – cost between 75 and 130 Swiss francs per night (single and double rooms, discounts apply for longer stays). Two rooms have running water, while showers and bathrooms are located on the landings. Parking spaces are available in front of the building, and public transport and the well-known "Schöngrün" restaurant are nearby. BE



Im Klee, Bed & Breakfast, Melchenbühlweg 8, 3013 Berne +41 31 931 35 35
www.imklee.ch, schlafen@imklee.ch

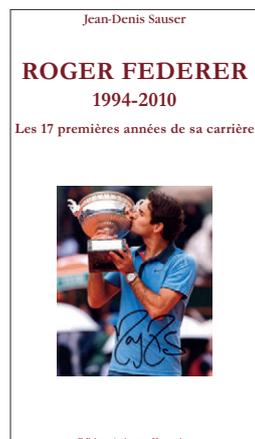


Roger Federer – 1994 to 2010

Neuchâtel-born Jean-Denis Sauser is a fan who has written a book about his idol. The research work he has done on Roger Federer is monumental. While the biography is rather concise, the information provided on matches, records and opponents is encyclopaedic. The book even contains some revealing anecdotes about the champion's ambitions when he was still a teenager. When asked at the age of 15 what his goals in tennis were, he replied: "To become world number 1." The author manages to incorpo-

rate everything – a detailed list of honours including a set-by-set breakdown, characteristics of his game, train-

ers, unforgettable matches, defeats as number 1, quotations from opponents and tennis greats, his life off-court and almost a hundred pages on all of Federer's matches. Some of the proceeds from the book will go to the Roger Federer Foundation, which works to help disadvantaged children in South Africa. This book provides a highly enjoyable insight into the career of the greatest player of all time. AW



"Roger Federer 1994–2010 – Les 17 premières années de sa carrière", Jean-Denis Sauser,

Wonderful sketches

They are in a class of their own. Few Swiss performers have mastered the art of parody and satire as well as Birgit Steinegger and Walter Andreas Müller. Their "Zweierleier" programme could be heard on Swiss radio every Saturday afternoon for 28 years. Absolutely nobody was spared. Steinegger and Müller parodied politicians, business leaders, sportspeople and even the Pope.



Their show was dropped at the end of last year as a cost-cutting measure. A selection of their sketches is now available on CD. This includes a eulogy for banking confidentiality, which had "been sick for some time", for example, along with a parody of Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey and the Axis of Evil, as well as a conversation between Signora Schruppattelli, a cleaner at the Federal Palace, and Federal Councillor Kurt Furgler on the wine glut in Valais. These humorous, probing recordings can still be enjoyed years after their production. BE

Zweierleier live! Birgit Steinegger und Walter Andreas Müller; Christoph Merian Verlag, Basel; audio book 80 mins; price around CHF 20; www.merianverlag.ch

Bulletins

Promoting Italian

The status enjoyed by Italian in Swiss schools is too low. This is the conclusion reached by the Swiss Commission for the Federal School-Leaving Certificate (SMK). A survey in the cantons revealed that on average only 13 % of school pupils at Swiss grammar schools choose Italian as a basic, main or optional subject. The cantons of Geneva and Grisons came out on top with an average of 30 %. A working group is now to propose measures to promote the appeal of Italian.

Right to vote for Swiss abroad

The Great Council of Basel-Stadt is supporting the right of the Swiss abroad to vote at Council of States elections. It has submitted a motion setting out this demand to the Executive Council after approving it by a large majority. The Executive had previously opposed the right to vote for the Swiss abroad.

Criminal investigation against former Federal Councillor Blocher

Zurich's public prosecutor's office has opened a criminal investigation against former Federal Councillor and Minister of Justice Christoph Blocher on account of his role in the affair concerning Philipp Hildebrand, the former President of the National Bank. The public prosecutor's office is investigating whether Blocher committed a criminal offence in passing on confidential bank data. A house search was carried out at Blocher's villa in Herrliberg on 20 March. At the time of going to press, the committee concerned had not yet decided

whether Christoph Blocher's parliamentary immunity would be lifted. This would be necessary for any criminal prosecution.

Mani Matter now in Schwyz

The exhibition on the Bernese singer-songwriter, "Mani Matter (1936–1972)", at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich in 2011 was a huge success. Consequently, the exhibition has now gone on display again, this time at the Forum of Swiss History in Schwyz.

It will run from 31 March to 16 September 2012.

Fewer employees, higher salaries

35,618 people were employed by the federal administration at the end of 2011. This is 162 fewer than at the end of 2010. They are divided among 32,179 full-time positions. Salaries have increased – the average gross annual salary stood at 117,755 Swiss francs last year, 2,163 francs or 1.9 % more than in the previous year. This is indicated by the federal government report on personnel management for 2011. The federal administration still employs fewer women than the Swiss average. The Federal Council has set corresponding objectives. It expects the proportion of women to reach 29 to 34 % in the middle salary bands and 16 to 20 % in the higher bands. 5 % of federal government employees are trainees.

Almost a million per day

The SBB transported 977,000 rail customers a day last year. This represents an increase of 26,000 people compared with the previous year. Passengers travelled a total of over 17.5 billion kilometres.

Quotations

"When consumed by anger, people usually act stupidly rather than cleverly."
Jeremias Gotthelf, pastor and novelist

"Constantly reacting too late is a genetic disorder within Swiss politics."
Dick Marty, former FDP member of the Council of States and Council of Europe

"You need to hit the ground running and then accelerate."
Federal Councillor Alain Berset

"Where freedom reigns, ev'n labour is repose."
Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777), Swiss doctor and botanist

"People usually only learn during wars and personal crises – and rarely of their own free will."
David Bosshart, futurologist and head of the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute

"Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former."
Albert Einstein (1879–1955)

"Are Swiss banks now supposed to collect taxes for other states?"
Oswald Grübel, former CEO of Credit Suisse and UBS

"We are living in a dangerous age. Man has controlled nature before learning to control himself."
Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard

"I felt dreadful when the BDP was formed."
Hans Grunder, outgoing President of the Conservative Democratic Party (BDP)



Daniela W. and David O. returned to Switzerland on 15 March after being held hostage for nine months in Pakistan. Speculation has since been rife regarding the circumstances of their escape, which is how the couple describe it. Experts on the situation in Pakistan say that an escape would have been almost impossible and that it is extremely likely that Switzerland and Pakistan made concessions to the Taliban. This may have involved the payment of a ransom or the release of prisoners. The incident has triggered a debate in Switzerland about how much a state should do for its citizens abroad who negligently place themselves in danger. Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter said that it was imperative that we "reflect on individual responsibility for personal safety and the limitations of state intervention", though he, of course, condemned "the kidnapping industry".



SwissCommunity.org

The platform for the Swiss Abroad

“The SwissCommunity platform networks Swiss people worldwide via the web.”



Ursula Deplazes

Researcher from Graubünden, living in Rome



“Networking plays an important role among the Swiss abroad – both personally and professionally.”



Urs Steiner

Teacher from Berne, head of the Swiss School in Peru



“Get to know other Swiss people abroad, exchange useful addresses, find out about Switzerland ... I can do all these things on SwissCommunity.”



Daniel Keller

Manager from Zurich, living in Hanoi



“The local experience of Swiss people can be very valuable to an international consultant like me.”

- ✓ Network with other Swiss abroad
- ✓ Keep up to date on relevant news and events
- ✓ Find an apartment – or the best fondue in town
- ✓ Discover Switzerland



Sign up for free membership

www.swisscommunity.org

SwissCommunity partners

Switzerland Tourism.
MySwitzerland.com



swissinfo.ch

SCHWEIZER NEWS - WELTWEIT

MEDIAparx



LIBERTY

The independent pension platform

