

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

OCTOBER 2006 / NO. 5



St. Gotthard:
A legendary mountain

How much patriotism
does a democracy need?

Tanja Frieden:
Living for fun sports

In support of “patriotism light”

MANY SWISS MEN AND WOMEN often have an uncertain, somewhat masochistic attitude towards their homeland. The British, French, Italians and even the Americans behave very differently. In contrast to the Swiss, they have always been proud of their home country. And yet some Swiss often seem almost embarrassed about their origins.

I recall radio programmes on August 1st and reports by foreign correspondents who had been asked to find out how Switzerland was perceived by people in their host country. The Swiss always feel the need to know what others think about them. That's why tricky referenda are frequently preceded by dire warnings that the outcome will affect Switzerland's image abroad. The French wouldn't care less, nor would the British. Anyone who consumes foreign media quickly discovers that few people beyond our borders are interested in domestic Swiss policy – perhaps unjustly so.

It's also fashionable here to overlook the fact that Switzerland enjoys an outstanding image throughout the world, and that the alleged land of milk and honey is often even presented too perfectly.

Is it insecurity that blinds us to certain realities? Why do we feel inclined time and again to hide our light under a bushel although there is no reason to do so?

Fortunately, the mood has changed in our country in recent years. As I mentioned in my last editorial, the white cross on a red background has long attained cult status in all segments of our society. It's now cool to be Swiss, especially among young people.

Kurt Imhof, a sociologist from Zurich University, has spent years studying patriotism and related issues, particularly vis-à-vis the situation in Switzerland. We discussed the definition of “love of one's homeland” with him, its necessity and the dangers inherent in misguided patriotism. During the interview, Professor Imhof reminded us that the student movement of '68 is largely to blame for bringing the state into disrepute. It painted a picture of an exploitative nation, and pilloried it as the ugly face of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. The political left was still preventing the Swiss getting to grips with the concept of “homeland” as late as the 1980s, since for leftist sentiments Switzerland was synonymous with immoral and incorrect political action. Intellectuals in particular were at loggerheads with Switzerland. Indeed, writer Max Frisch's statement that “My only link with my homeland is my passport” was more or less the acceptable position.



Heinz Eckert

Even the FDP, the country's one-time standard-bearer together with the SP, campaigned under the slogan “More freedom, less state”.

Those days are gone. Ever since the world became a global village, the nation state has been gaining in popularity and people have once more been allowed to express warm feelings about their homeland. Imhof therefore calls for what he terms “patriotism light”: a form of patriotism free of religious, political and ideological connotations. We can and may be proud of our country's achievements and institutions, Imhof says. He also cites the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), a well-functioning public service, the solid welfare state and direct democracy, describing them as masterpieces borne of generations of work.

In the light of this, there really are plenty of reasons to be proud of Switzerland.

HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Cover photo:

Tunnellers celebrate the first breakthrough for the new east tunnel through the Gotthard on 6 September 2006.
Photo: Keystone

IMPRINT: “Swiss Review”, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 33rd year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 21 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 390 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

■ **EDITORSHIP:** Heinz Eckert (EC), Editor-in-Chief; Rolf Ribi (RR), Alain Wey (AW), Gabriela Brodbeck (BDK), responsible for DFA information pages, Service for the Swiss Abroad DFA, CH-3003 Berne. René Lenzin (RL), reporting from parliament. Translation: CLS Communication AG ■ **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. Internet: www.revue.ch ■ **E-MAIL:** revue@aso.ch ■ **PRINT:** Zollikofer AG, CH-9001 St.Gallen. ■ **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please advise your local Embassy or Consulate – do not write to Berne. Single copy CHF 5.- ■



Raptures in red-and-white

Editor-in-Chief Heinz Eckert made an error in his excellent editorial, which we needn't therefore agree with wholesale. He describes "La Suisse n'existe pas" ("Switzerland doesn't exist") as a slogan which Switzerland used to draw attention to itself in the 1990s. In fact, "Suiza no existe" is a painting by Ben Vautier, an artist from the Vaud, which was exhibited alongside more than 100 other artworks in the Swiss pavilion at the world fair in Seville in 1992, a pavilion that the Federal Council had decided to dedicate to Swiss culture. Vautier simply wanted to say that there was no Swiss culture per se, but rather a series of local and regional cultures in our country. Although it was heavily criticised by certain conservative groups in Switzerland, the pavilion gained international acclaim and was described as very promising for the future. People tend to forget the existence of a second picture by Ben Vautier in the Swiss pavilion in Seville. Its title: "Je pense donc je suis Suisse" ("I think, therefore I am Swiss").

PHILIPPE LÉVY, FORMER CEO,
MESSE BASEL

Minor error

I'd like to start by congratulating you for your excellent magazine, which I always have great

pleasure reading. The articles are highly topical, very interesting, well-presented and written with a rare intelligence for this type of publication. Well done. However, permit me to draw your attention to a minor error that crept into your August edition. Gerhard Richter is certainly one of the great painters of our time, but although he certainly uses photography in his work, he is not at all what one would call an "artistic photographer". Many thanks once again for all your work for the Swiss abroad.

MARTIN BAENNINGER, WESTMOUNT,
QUEBEC, CANADA

Beautiful Lavaux

Thank you for your excellent article in your June 2006 issue of the "Swiss Review" on Lavaux. I was delighted to read that Lavaux may soon become a UNESCO World Heritage site. I have travelled in many countries but believe that Lavaux is the most beautiful place in the world, thanks to its exceptional landscape and to all the hard-working vigneron who have toiled in the vineyards for generations to keep it that way. One important correction: the vineyards of Lavaux are at the foot of the Alps on the shore of Lake Lemane and not Lake Geneva. Any self-respecting Vaudois or Vaudoise would never call it anything else.

CLEO BOLENS DIBBLE, A VAUDOISE
WHO NOW LIVES IN WASHINGTON,
USA

Thank you

As echoed by many others, I would like to add my thanks to you and your staff for an excellent "Swiss Review". I read it from cover to cover each time and feel very connected to what is happening in Switzerland. It keeps the Swiss part of me very alive! Thank you!

JEANNY KARTH, SOUTH AFRICA

«Traitor»

In the late 1970s, Switzerland was gripped by the "betrayal of the century". In August 1976, Brigadier General Jean-Louis Jeanmaire, the then commander of Switzerland's air defences, was arrested on the streets of Lausanne. The allegations against him: military espionage and handing over military secrets. It was claimed that the one-star general had been passing military documents to Russian military attachés since the early 1960s. Given that the Cold War was in full swing at the time, this case of alleged treason provoked outrage in public and the media. The professional soldier was tried and convicted by a top-secret military court in June 1977, stripped of his rank, kicked out of the army, and sentenced to 18 years in prison, of which he served 12. Jeanmaire died in 1992 at the age of 81.

The Jeanmaire case still rumbles on to this day. A recent book takes a close look at the affair, the conclusiveness of the evidence, the military tribunal and the officer himself. The author, Jürg Schoch, had reported on the affair from the Federal Parliament at the time the story broke. He has since been granted access to the case files in the national archives. Almost 30 years after Jeanmaire's conviction, many questions remain unanswered: Did he really betray his country to the Soviet Union? Was he tried and convicted in accordance with the correct legal procedures? And why was his sentence so harsh?

On 7 October 1976, Federal Councillor Kurt Furgler spoke in parliament about "the betrayal of the most secret of documents", and called the officer a traitor before he had even been tried. When it was published, the list of accusations ran to 35 counts. The only document classified "secret" was one containing the regulations for military mobilisation – of which there were thousands of copies. Corps commander Josef Feldmann later discovered that Jeanmaire had "never had access to strictly confidential files".

Basic legal principles were repeatedly breached. In violation of the Human Rights Convention, Jeanmaire had no contact whatsoever with the outside world for 170 days after his arrest. As the Federal Prosecutor was subsequently forced to admit, there was no evidence against him at the time of his arrest. During the investigation, the Federal Prosecutor regularly reported to Federal Councillor Furgler in contravention of state authority. And the prosecutor and the judge discussed the case, thereby preventing the officer getting a fair trial. The sentence of 18 years was only two years short

of the maximum permissible. But the people, most politicians, the officers and the media all demanded he atone for "betraying his country". The tough sentence was also meant to show foreign intelligence services that Switzerland had its own defences under control again. Politically naïve Jeanmaire passed on a secret document and confidential files; for that he had to be punished. The author of the book is convinced that the officer could not possibly have had a fair trial

in the hyped-up atmosphere of the time. "Jeanmaire was both perpetrator and victim", Schoch says.

ROLF RIBI



Jürg Schoch: "Fall Jeanmaire, Fall Schweiz. Wie Politik und Medien einen 'Jahrhundertverräter' fabrizierten" (The case against Jeanmaire and Switzerland. How politicians and the media fabricated the "betrayal of the century"). Published by Hier und Jetzt, Baden 2006, CHF 38, EUR 24.80

Small Number – Big Impact

Hundreds of thousands of Swiss have emigrated to the USA since the early 18th Century. As the book “Small Number – Big Impact” by Bruno Abegg and Barbara Lüthi shows, some had a lasting impact on their adopted home. The photographs and biographies document the motives behind the immigration, travels, integration and influence of these Swiss-Americans. The book is published in English by the NZZ-Buchverlag and costs CHF 68.



Louis Chevrolet, automobile constructor



Fritz Zwicky, scientist



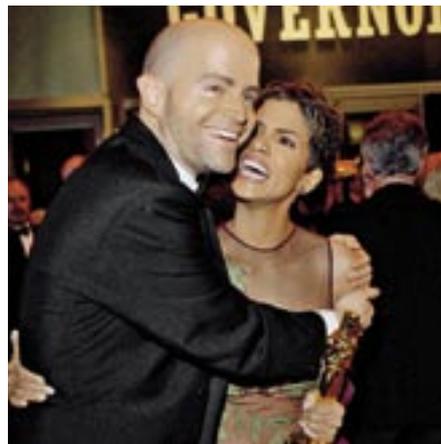
Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, psychiatrist specialising in death and dying



Othmar H. Ammann, bridge builder



Yule Kilcher, adventurer



Marc Forster, Hollywood director



A family of Swiss émigrés

St.Gotthard – the legendary mountain

Neither the Matterhorn, the Jungfrau or the Pilatus is Switzerland's mountain of mountains. That honour goes to St.Gotthard, for it is here that Switzerland was allegedly founded and where it built its masterpieces. By Rolf Ribli

Every schoolchild knows the legend of the construction of the Teufelsbrücke, and how the people of Uri outwitted the devil. Many know the "St.Gotthard Mail Coach" painting by Rudolf Koller, which hangs in Zurich's Kunsthhaus. Old men and women remember the military fort on St.Gotthard from the Second World War. Some people see the birth of their nation reflected in the freedom-loving shepherds of St.Gotthard. And all Swiss are proud of engineering feats like the mountain pass, the railway and its helical tunnels, the motorway and road tunnel, and what will eventually be the world's longest railway tunnel.



The legendary "St. Gotthard Mail Coach" by Rudolf Koller.

"Royal mountains"

Firstly, St.Gotthard is a massive mountain range between the Reuss valley and the Leventina, or more precisely between the Urseren and Bedretto valleys. Its highest peak, Pizzo Rotondo, tops out at 3,192 metres. St.Gotthard is named after the pass between the Hospiten valley and Airolo,

and this gets its name from a bishop to whom the hospice chapel was dedicated in the 13th Century. The altarpiece shows St.Gotthard. "St.Gotthard may not be the highest mountain range in Switzerland, and Mont Blanc in Savoy easily outranks it in terms of size," wrote Johann Wolfgang Goethe in his 'Letters from Switzerland' in 1799. "Yet it alone has the status of a royal range because it is the point where the largest mountain ranges meet." Indeed, the Bernese and Valais Alps converge on St.Gotthard from the west, the Glarus and Grisons Alps from the east. To the north and south, the Reuss and Ticino rivers have gouged deep valleys in the rock.

St.Gotthard is a European watershed. Four major rivers spring forth there: the Rhine flows to the North Sea, the Rhone to the Mediterranean, the Reuss joins the Aare and later the Rhine, and the River Ticino merges with the Po before emptying into the Adriatic. Right at the top of the pass, two lively streams flow

out of small mountain lakes only a few steps apart: the Reuss and the Ticino. The Gotthard Massif is also a weather divide. When it rains in the north, the south mostly has a northerly wind and perfect weather. And when the warm Föhn wind blows in the north, it often rains for days on end in the Ticino.

The road over the pass

Until the 12th Century, the Schöllenen Gorge blocked the way to St.Gotthard. It was only with the construction of the



Monument to fallen miners in Airolo.

Teufelsbrücke in around 1220 that mule trains began transporting goods all the way to Lombardy. However, the dangerous path remained mainly a local connection between the two valleys until the 1500s. Mule trains took seven days to travel from Flüelen to Bellinzona. In the 17th and 18th Centuries there was a horse-ridden mail service between Zurich and Milan. The expansion of the former mule trail into the mountain pass around 1830 transformed St.Gotthard into the most important transit route through the Alps, initially by horse-drawn carriage and later by the first cars.



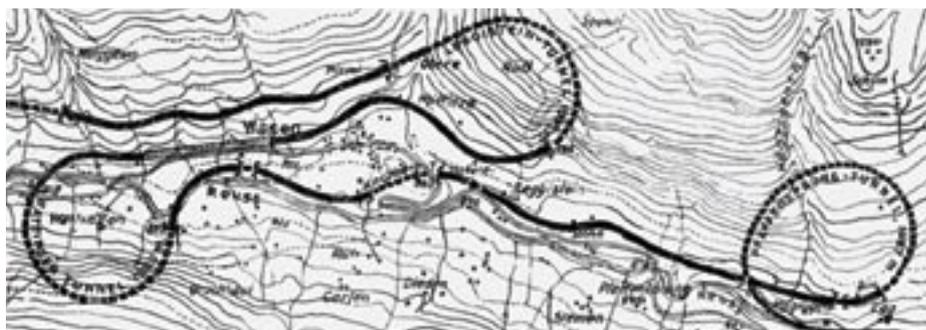
It took almost four years of drilling...



...to make the first breakthrough on 6 September 2006.

After the Second World War, it was increasingly used by holidaymakers. The construction of the motorway spawned the idea of a road tunnel through St.Gotthard. In 1980, after 11 years' work, the longest road tunnel in the world at the time, consisting of a single 16.9-kilometre tunnel pipe and one service tunnel, was completed. "The tunnel is not a corridor for heavy goods vehicles," Federal Councillor Hans Hürlimann said at the opening ceremony. "Our transport policy focuses on goods being transported by rail both today and tomorrow." Today we know that this hope was in vain. The flood of lorries (and cars) is constantly increasing, bringing local residents and the St.Gotthard route itself more problems than benefits.

At 9.44am on 24 October 2001, the St.Gotthard road tunnel became an inferno when a northbound lorry loaded with tyres collided head-on with an articulated lorry driving in the other direction. A fire broke out and a diesel tank exploded, producing blinding, choking smoke and causing the tunnel ceiling to collapse. Eleven people died of smoke inhalation. The fire in the St.Gotthard Tunnel became a national disaster and a pan-European event. It was the worst-case scenario. Critics demanded the rapid construction of a second tunnel pipe and the eventual shifting of goods transport onto rail. The Swiss Federal Roads Authority claimed the tunnel and its infra-



A masterpiece of engineering: the seven helical tunnels of the Gotthard railway.

structure were very safe. "No-one need have died in the tunnel if those responsible had acted correctly," a statement said.

Five years later, the St.Gotthard motorway was again in the headlines: Huge boulders broke off from the mountain near Gurtellen and plunged 700 metres to the ground. A German couple in a car was killed, many others had a narrow escape. Chunks of granite weighing up to 125 tonnes and spanning

50 cubic metres blocked the motorway and cantonal road. There is no protection against such giants, the cantonal authorities said. Days later, the overhanging rock head was dynamited away expertly while dozens of camera crews recorded the event in safety from the other side of the valley.



The Schöllenen Gorge and "Devil's Bridge".

National legend

"The construction of the Teufelsbrücke in the Schöllenen Gorge was considered a seminal event in the early days

of the Confederation," wrote historian and journalist Helmut Stalder in his book 'Mythos Gotthard'. No-one captured the essence of St.Gotthard's mythical role in the foundation of Switzerland better than the poet Friedrich Schiller in his 1804 liberation drama 'William Tell'. "St.Gotthard becomes Tell's path of destiny, the common path of destiny for all Switzerland," Helmut Stalder wrote. The new federal state of 1848 eagerly seized upon this myth, he says. "It was easy to develop a national identity around St.Gotthard", combining virtues such as the love of freedom, defensibility, fear of God and loyalty to tradition.

For a century, St.Gotthard remained a symbol of liberty, resistance and watchfulness, indeed serving as Switzerland's God-given fortress. At least that's what the Federal Council believed on the eve of the Second World War. "It is no coincidence that the first federal alliances were formed around the Gotthard Pass. That fact was providential and crucial for the national consciousness of the Swiss Confederation." St.Gotthard not only symbolised self-assert-



Filling with excavated material from the Gotthard in the Reuss delta near Flüelen.



The major construction site at the tunnel entrance in Faido.

iveness. It also hosted the reduct national; the alpine fortress of General Henri Guisan. At the end of the War, it was clear that St.Gotthard and the fortress had kept the enemy at bay and independence emerged victorious – thanks partly to gracious good fortune.

The rail line through St.Gotthard

Gotthard or Lukmanier? The row over the new alpine tunnel raged for years and was only settled in 1871 with the foundation of the Gotthard Railway Company. The driving force behind this was Zurich politician and businessman Alfred Escher. Louis Favre of Geneva was commissioned to build the 14.9-kilometre tunnel, which he planned to complete in precisely eight years at a cost of CHF 47.8 million.

The miners began their incredibly arduous work in September 1872, standing knee-deep in water, breathing hot, smoky air in an extremely dangerous environment. On 28 February 1880, the drill rods of the two galleries met with almost perfect precision: they were only a few centimetres apart in height and 33 centimetres horizontally. The world's longest railway tunnel of the time and the first all-year connection through the Swiss Alps had been completed, and the St.Gotthard railway began operating on 1 June 1882.

At least 200 miners, nearly all of them Italians, lost their lives. A small memorial stone was erected to them in Göschenen cemetery, while another memorial to fallen miners – “Le vittime de Lavoro” by Vincenzo Vela – stands near Airolo station. Louis Favre never lived to witness his triumph. He collapsed in

the tunnel and died half a year before his work was finished. Nor was Alfred Escher at the celebrations in Lucerne and Milan. The father of the Gotthard railway was blamed for the excessive cost of the tunnel and retired in bitterness.

Not only the tunnel, but the entire Gotthard railway is a magnificent feat of engineering. It includes seven helical tunnels by Wassen, Dazio Grande and the Biaschina Gorge that elegantly overcome height differences of hundreds of metres. “The Gotthard railway was the Swiss Suez Canal, the technical conquest of the Alps, victory over the vertical,” wrote Helmut Stalder.

Another engineering feat

The Gotthard is once again the site of a monumental development. The 57-kilometre base tunnel from Erstfeld to Bodio is a tunnel of superlatives. It is the longest railway tunnel in the world, the first level transalpine track, it connects central and southern Switzerland, forms a straight, near-horizontal connection, and is the boldest vision yet for conquering the Alps. Since the autumn of 1993, gigantic tunnel drilling machinery with drill heads 10 metres in diameter has been working its way through the millennia-old rock. Never has a tunnel been dug so far into a mountain. According to the computer model, the tips of the two screws will be less than 20 centimetres apart when they meet at the centre.

Trains will have to climb or descend no more than eight metres per kilometre. Thanks to this small incline, trains will be able to race through the Alps at 250 kilome-

tres an hour, cutting travel times between Zurich and Milan by an hour to only two hours and 40 minutes. The near-level railway will also permit freight trains to carry more than twice as much weight as at present and travel at up to 160 kilometres an hour.

The new Gotthard line is part of the New Rail Link through the Alps (NRLA). The NRLA project to build the two tunnels under St.Gotthard and the Lötschberg was approved by popular referendum in 1992 and gained planning permission in 1998. It is due to be completed in 2016 at a cost of about CHF 18 billion. But even now it's already clear that the Gotthard base tunnel and its two single-track pipes will be the crowning achievement of the 21st Century.

And when the new flat line opens, what will happen to the old Gotthard railway, this masterpiece of engineering prowess, when instead of 260 trains a day only three dozen locomotives will climb the helical tunnels by Wassen's little church? Plans are afoot for the Gotthard line to become a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site.

LITERATURE: DOCUMENTATION:

Helmut Stalder: “Mythos Gotthard”. Published by Orell Füssli, Zurich 2003. CHF 44.80, EUR 29.90; “Der St.Gotthard und seine Hospize”. Swiss art guide. Berne 1994; www.alptransit.ch (NRLA base tunnel); www.gotthard-strassentunnel.ch (Traffic reports, guided tours of the control centres); www.gotthard-tunnel.ch (Information on the railway tunnel and its history); www.gotthard-hospiz.ch (Sights, hotel, restaurant)

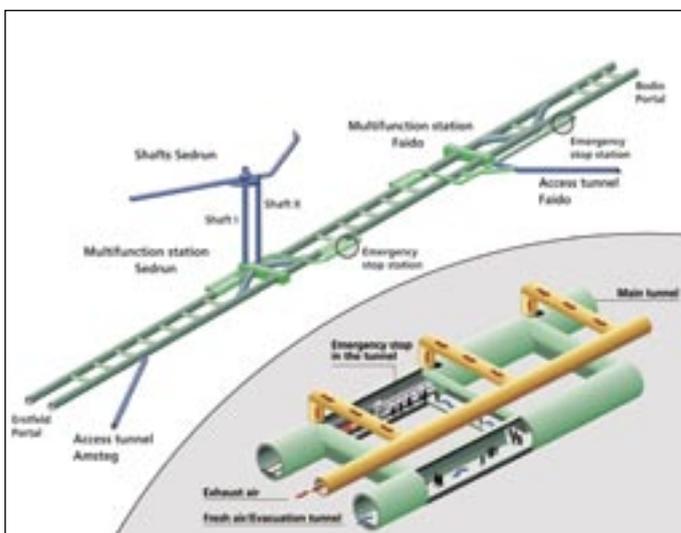


Diagram of the Gotthard Base Tunnel with emergency stops and ventilation.



At 57 kilometres, the new base tunnel is the longest railway tunnel in the world.

Preview to the referendum of 26 November

1. Contributions to the new EU Member States
2. Uniform child allowance of at least CHF 200

In conjunction with the second package of bilateral negotiations, Switzerland and the EU have come to two more agreements. These concern the extension of free movement of persons to include the ten new EU Member States, and a contribution of CHF 1 billion to these countries. The negotiation dossier itself and the extension of the agreement on free movement of persons already passed the referendum test last year. Now the electorate must also vote on the third part. The Swiss People's Party (SVP), supported by the Swiss Democrats and the Campaign for an Independent and Neutral Switzerland, has succeeded in pressing for a referendum on these cohesion contributions.

The Federal Council and parliament want this financial support to be paid within the framework of the Federal Law on Eastern Europe. Rather than being made to the EU Cohesion Fund, payments would constitute direct contributions by Switzerland to bilaterally-agreed projects in eastern European countries. Only the overall total and its distribution among the different countries is defined. The payments are to be staggered over ten years. The two ministries that provide development aid to the east will be required to cover 60 percent of the extra expenditure through internal cost-cutting without compromising development aid to countries in the southern hemisphere. The remaining 40 percent will come from general federal budgets.

The price of bilateral cooperation

The SVP demanded that the CHF 1 billion be funded budget-neutrally. It also wanted the law amended to prevent Switzerland having to make similar payments if Romania, Bulgaria or other countries also joined the EU. Having failed to get either demand approved in parliament, the SVP has now sought a referendum. The bill was passed by 127 votes to 53 in the National Council, and 37 votes to 11 in the Council of States.

The Federal Council and the majority of parliament look on the payment as the price

Results of the referendum of 24 September

1. New foreigners' law and amended asylum law approved
2. Proposal to divert National Bank profits to the AHV rejected

It's final: Switzerland can modernise its immigration policies. The voters have brushed aside a centre-left referendum and clearly approved legislative changes proposed by the Federal Council and parliament. The new regulations will lay down a twin-track immigration system. Whereas bilateral agreements mean that European Union citizens are treated just like Swiss nationals, would-be immigrants from outside the EU will now only have access to the Swiss labour market if they are highly skilled. Foreigners already living in Switzerland will be helped to integrate better.

In addition to the foreigners' law, the Swiss also voted to toughen up the asylum regulations. Although the referendum committee got broader support in opposing such changes and campaigning focussed almost entirely on this issue, the two bills received almost identical backing: 68 percent of voters said "Yes" to the foreigners' law, while 67.8 percent approved the amended asylum law. The moves were endorsed by all cantons. The "Yes" votes for both bills topped the 75 percent-mark in the cantons of Aargau, Appenzell-Innerrhoden, Glarus, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schwyz, Thurgau and Zug. The new laws fared less well in western Switzerland than in the German-speaking areas, getting slightly over 50 percent support in Geneva, Jura and Neuenburg.

National Bank profits not for the AHV

A Social Democrat-led bid to redirect some of the Swiss National Bank's profits to the old-age and survivors' pension scheme (AHV) failed to get popular approval. Overall, 58.3 percent of voters said "No" to the proposal. Only the cantons of Ticino (57.5%), Basel City (53.6%) and Geneva (51.3%) backed the move. The outcome was very tight in Jura (49.2% Yes votes), while the proposal was most unambiguously rejected in Appenzell-Innerrhoden (No: 74.9%), Zug (66.8%), Glarus (66.5%) as well as Appenzell-Ausserrhoden and Thurgau (both 66.2%).

RL

Comment

Bitter defeat for the left

Before Sunday's referendum, the left was confident it would get majority backing for its "National Bank profits for the AHV" campaign. The outcome was therefore extremely sobering: Three-fifths of eligible voters in 23 of the 26 cantons opposed the move. In other words, a clear majority of the Swiss population has shied away from taking a gamble that no country has yet embarked on, namely linking economic and welfare policies. As enticing as the windfall may be for the AHV, the people see it neither as a lasting solution for safeguarding pensions nor did they want federal and cantonal revenues cut by CHF 1.5 billion a year.

However despite the clear verdict, the day's winners can't afford to rest on their laurels. An ageing population means the AHV faces serious shortfalls in the near future. Switzerland must therefore put together reforms capable of securing a majority based on a combination of tweaking expenditure and raising contributions. The political left suffered an even greater defeat on the amendments to the asylum and foreigners' laws. Although even the popular parties had criticised the laws, and asylum applications are at their lowest point in years, the majority of the Swiss people is convinced that the asylum regulations need further toughening up. And yet the outcome is hardly surprising since voters have endorsed all immigration policy changes proposed by the Federal Council and parliament in recent years.

By backing the foreigners' law, the electorate has paved the way for modern immigration and integration policies. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether the amended asylum law will meet its backers' high expectations. After all, the tougher regulations are unlikely to prevent people coming to Switzerland not because of persecution in their home country, but simply in search of a better life in the rich north.

RENÉ LENZIN

Continued on page 15



Matrimonial property law and foreign residents

Swiss matrimonial property law determines what belongs to a husband and wife during their marriage and how their assets are to be divided up in the event of divorce or death. If you live abroad, the international private law of the host country may stipulate that the matrimonial property regime selected in Switzerland does not apply. It is therefore advisable to find out about the applicable international private law regulations in your intended country of residence if you are planning to move abroad.

The Swiss Civil Code (ZGB) distinguishes between three different types of property regime:

Community of acquisitions

This is laid down in Articles 196–200 of the ZGB. It is described as the “statutory property regime” and applies automatically whenever a husband and wife have not entered into a marriage contract. Under the terms of the community of ac-

quisitions, the husband and wife basically have separate estates. Their assets are divided into personal and jointly-acquired property.

Personal property includes assets that each spouse uses purely for his own use, for example clothes, sports equipment or assets that the person either had before marrying or he/she acquires free during the marriage (gifts, inheritances, etc.) Jointly-acquired property is defined as everything the couple acquires during their marriage, for instance through work, including interest on personal assets.

If the estate is dissolved due to divorce or death, the jointly-acquired property is divided equally between the husband and wife. The part belonging to the deceased spouse is inherited in accordance with the provisions of the law of succession.

Community of property

This is defined in Articles 221–246 of the ZGB and laid down by a marital contract/nuptial agreement between the husband and wife. In this case, three estates are differentiated: the wife’s, the husband’s and their common property. The

common property belongs to both parties in its entirety. The marital contract defines which items constitute the common property.

Separation of property

The separate estate regime is described as an “extraordinary property regime” since it is imposed either by law or by a court ruling (Articles 247–251 ZGB). However, the couple may choose to separate their property through a marriage contract. The separation of property regime recognises no common property. Both spouses manage and use their assets autonomously, and have independent rights to them during their marriage. If the marriage is dissolved, neither spouse has any claim on the other’s assets.

Changes to the property regime through a marriage contract

Within certain limits, the spouses may adapt the legally stipulated regulations to their individual needs by means of a marriage contract. Persons wishing to draw up a marriage contract must be capable of judgement. Minors and those placed under guardianship re-

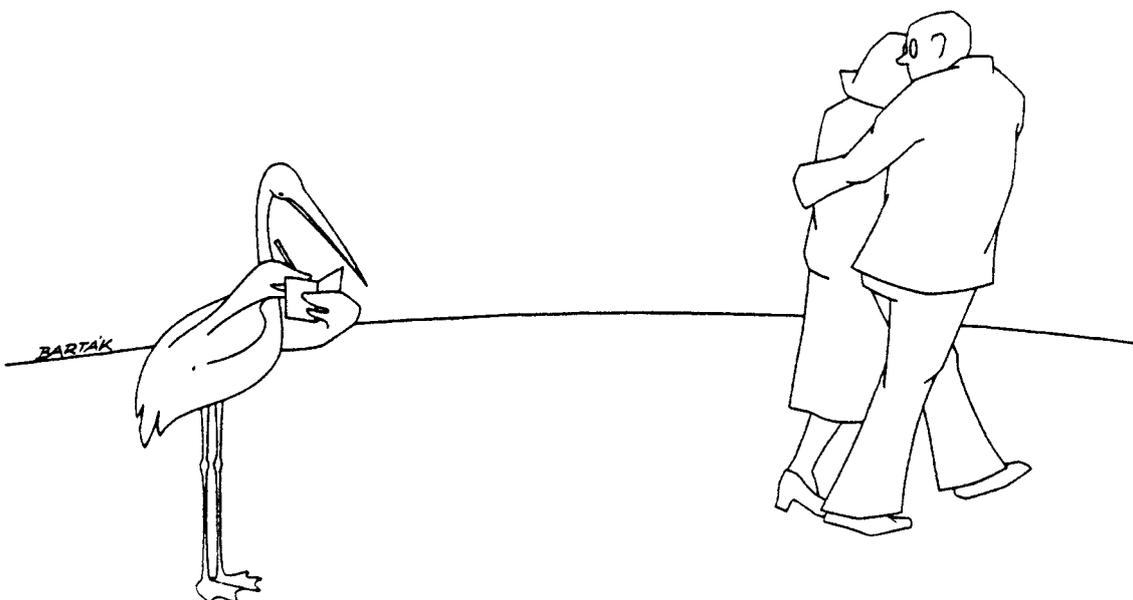
quire authorisation from their legal representative. In Switzerland, marriage contracts are usually concluded in the presence of a notary.

Further information on Swiss marital and succession legislation can be found in a brochure published in German, French and Italian by the Swiss Federal Office of Justice. It is available at the following Internet address: www.bundespublikationen.ch

Swiss nationals resident abroad

The situation is more complex if a Swiss couple moves its residence outside Switzerland. In this case, both Swiss law and that of the host country may apply. Many married couples are not aware that if they switch countries they may be subject to the legal regulations of their country of residence and that their chosen Swiss matrimonial property regime may not apply. The relevant international private law of the country of residence decides which legislation is applied – be it Swiss law or that of the host nation.

International private law determines which legal system is employed in which situation,



and rules on private-law relationships (personal, family, inheritance, contractual, corporate law, etc.) of an international nature. It primarily answers the following questions: Which national law is applicable? Which court has jurisdiction? And under which conditions can a ruling made in one country be recognised and enforced in another? Outside Switzerland, therefore, the norms applied to assess individual cases are those stipulated by the international private-law regulations of the country in question.

It is important for Swiss citizens to note that *in principle, the international private law of their country of residence applies*. This largely determines the law to which their assets are subject and the property options available under this law.

We therefore recommend that Swiss couples living abroad enquire about the relevant international private law in their country of residence. Under some circumstances, couples may have a certain amount of choice in determining their property regime. This would mean that Swiss couples could partly decide which legislation has precedence in regulating their assets: Swiss law or that of their country of residence. Swiss nationals resident abroad should also enquire about what happens to the property rights they held until then.

Swiss embassies and consulates can provide information on the relevant legal authorities in host nations. They can also supply addresses of lawyers and notaries in the country of residence.

If the international private law of the country of residence states that Swiss international private law applies, Swiss expatriates can find out about the

relevant Swiss legislation from the following bodies in Switzerland:

- Cantonal legal information centres
- Cantonal lawyers' associations.

Information is also available from the Swiss Institute for Comparative Law in Lausanne. Please note that this information is not free of charge. Depending on the work involved, fees range from CHF 150 to CHF 450 per hour. Estimates are issued for any research likely to cost more than CHF 500. This allows customers to decide whether or not to ask the Institute to undertake the research on their behalf.

Address:

*Swiss Institute
for Comparative Law
CH-1015 Lausanne
Tel.: +41 (0)21 692 4911
Fax: +41 (0)21 692 4949
E-mail: Secretariat.isdc-dfjp@unil.ch
Internet: www.isdc.ch*

Energy tax for a healthy environment and securing the welfare state

An inter-party initiative committee has launched a federal popular initiative entitled "Tax non-renewable energy, not labour".

The initiative calls for a new Article 131a BV to be added to the Federal Constitution, laying the foundations for an ecological tax on energy. This would enable the state to replace some or all obligatory social insurance contributions by taxes on non-renewable energy sources. This shift towards taxing energy rather than labour would, it is claimed, protect the

POPULAR INITIATIVES

The following initiatives have been launched since the last issue and can now be signed:

- "For a ban on exports of military equipment" (until 27 December 2007)
- "Against the excessive construction of factories that damage the landscape and the environment" (until 20 December 2007)
- "No more unbridled construction of second homes!" (until 20 December 2007)

Signature forms for current initiatives can be downloaded in German, French or Italian from the Federal Chancellery site: www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/vi/vis_1_3_1_1.html

VOTING

Federal referendum of 26 November 2006

- Federal law of 24 March 2006 on cooperation with the states of eastern Europe (provided the move for a referendum is successful)
- Federal law of 24 March 2006 on family allowances (provided the move for a referendum is successful)

environment and both secure and fund the Swiss welfare state in the long term.

The initiative wants the welfare contributions of all taxpayers to be phased out as soon as possible. The resultant revenue shortfall would then be covered by taxes on non-renewable energy sources, namely coal, crude oil, natural gas and hydroelectric power.

According to the committee, this would cut wage costs and leave employees with more take-home pay. Labour would also be cheaper for the economy and companies would have a genuine incentive to create more jobs. This would also boost consumer spending.

The initiative can be signed until 24 July 2007.

Changes of address: Not to Berne, please!

Changes of address should be reported only to your responsible Swiss embassy or foreign consulate. These are the sole bodies responsible for managing the addresses of non-resident Swiss citizens and ensuring that "Swiss Review" is sent to the correct address.

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Your Gateway to Switzerland

In support of “patriotism light”.

The white cross on a red background has become a fashion accessory, and Switzerland is back in favour with all segments of the population. A new, apolitical form of patriotism is in vogue. Sociologist and patriotism expert Kurt Imhof explains why. Interview by Heinz Eckert

SWISS REVIEW: *Just a few years ago, it was the done thing to criticise Switzerland. What was the reason for this negative attitude towards one's homeland?*

KURT IMHOF: The student movement of '68 started the political battle against the state in all its shapes and forms. They attacked offshoots of the Cold War like state surveillance, the Federal Police, the expansion of civil protection as well as the bourgeoisie and capitalism. We mustn't forget that – just like the Free Democratic Party – the Social Democratic Party (SP) was very much an establishment party after the Second World War. This too the student movement of '68 protested against. Added to this, Switzerland was seen as a perpetrator, not a victim, of north-south dualism. At the time, the revolution was expected to start in the south. The left-wing battle against the state was then adopted by the popular parties. In the 1970s, the FDP starting campaigning under the slogan “Less state, more freedom”. Anti-statism therefore has a long tradition on both sides of the political divide.

That was long before Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, wasn't it?

Yes, Switzerland was a pioneer in terms of neo-liberalism. It was years before Reagan and Thatcher came to power with the same approach. In 1983, the Swiss People's Party (SVP) took over the “antistatist sceptre” from the FDP, merging it with the “Landi” patriotism which had won it many votes. In the 1990s, the mix of anti-statism and patriotism based on intellectual national defence was further strengthened to become a key in-

gredient in the SVP's recipe for success. *Was that a calculated move by the SVP?*

The SVP's manifesto filled a vacuum for many people, but I don't think it was calculated. Christoph Blocher is certainly a patriot. He makes no pretence.

But the patriotism of today has very little in common with that.

No. The SVP gave patriotism a very political edge. Those who promoted the Swiss



Kurt Imhof: “National identities devoid of party politics.”

myth with flags had already clearly chosen their political camp. The Holocaust debate of the 1990s only reinforced that. This gave the SVP another chance to strengthen their specific understanding of “Swissness”.

You coined the term “patriotism light”.

What does it mean?

This kind of patriotism stems neither from the conservative right nor from the political

centre or the left. Because of their globalised economic policies, centrist parties weren't able to focus on the nation state, and the left considered it politically incorrect to see Switzerland as good in any way. The new patriotism stems from young people who were not involved in the old political squabbles and simply love Switzerland.

How long ago did this form of patriotism first surface?

Reservations about globalisation not only helped the SVP, but also prepared the ground for this new patriotism. So when Expo 2002 celebrated Switzerland in a carefree way, this acted as a catalyst, strengthening the trend towards the new patriotism. Even the cultural sector took part at the time. This led to the emergence of an image of Switzerland untainted by party politics.

And since then people have been able to wear the Swiss cross on their chest with impunity again and it has even become fashionable?

Indeed. Expo turned the Swiss cross into a fashion accessory. All those who had used Swissness for their political ends or rejected it on economic grounds were outmanoeuvred by young people who discovered that they lived in a great country. These young people made comparisons and were suddenly proud of their homeland.

Have other countries had similar problems with patriotism?

The Italian left also had difficulties with the state, but it was more extreme in Switzerland than anywhere else. After all, Switzerland is a nation created by volition, without any natural, historically-dictated self-identity. It has to be renewed again and again.

Were the Swiss virtues which young people value so highly today, such as cleanliness, security, punctuality and reliability, simply not perceived in the past?

On the contrary, they were even rejected. The left denounced them as narrow-minded and bourgeois, and centrists thought these

Swiss achievements would cost too much. So patriotism fell to the only party left: the SVP.

Do democracies need patriotism?

Democracy requires a belief in a common element. It requires loyalty and acceptance. Why else should we bow to democratic decisions? That is why democracy is completely unthinkable without patriotism. Amazingly enough, both left-wingers and centrists either overlooked or forgot this fact for many years. But that's not all. Switzerland was even rejected and condemned as an outdated model. Many people thought a globalised world no longer needed national identities anymore.

What role does the EU issue play?

A decisive one because it split the elites. In the past, politics and economics always went hand-in-hand. And this schism was not good for the country's national identity.

A lot of the patriotism has come from the "secondos" (second-generation immigrants, ed.), of all people. Shouldn't they be more multiculturalist?

That's the outcome of successful integration, which always leads to a kind of over-identification. The banlieues in France, where entire subcultures of un-integrated immigrants have developed, are witnessing the opposite effect.

Is this new patriotism fashionable around the world?

Yes. The nation state is undergoing a revival as a primary organisational model for the global society, and taking on more than merely a symbolic significance. People are identifying themselves through their nation state. That's a reaction to globalisation. At the same time, democracy is also increasingly being debated worldwide.

How important is national consciousness for one's own identity?

From the political standpoint it is of decisive importance. Democracies simply cannot govern or regulate without patriotic national consciousness. But the importance of national consciousness varies at the subjective level.

So you consider the current developments positive?

Absolutely. Our democracy would be unthinkable without sovereignty coupled with a self-image as a Swiss citizen.

Do "Euroturbos" (campaigners for immediate negotiations on Swiss entry to the EU, ed.) see it that way too?

The "Euroturbos" have forgotten that because they only ever see the primacy of the economy and the market as a regulatory principle.

Isn't identification with Europe enough?

The European identity is based on either defending against new wars, Christianity or enlightenment. Of these, only enlightenment is suitable as a common denominator for a European identity.

Patriotism is always also a question of mass. How much can it tolerate?

It depends what the patriotism is based on. Ethnic patriotism excludes all others and is thus as dangerous as religious patriotism, which harbours the idea of being a chosen nation. There is too much of both of these around. By contrast, there cannot be enough open republican patriotism, which stems from an act of volition by the citizens of a state.

Will the new patriotism have a political impact on the next federal elections?

I'm certain of it. It just depends to what extent the political left and the centrists are able to offer projects and visions for Switzerland and focus their attention on their own country. Possible topics include education, the family, transport, concordance and democracy. If the SP, FDP and CVP take up the cause of Switzerland and its institutions, the SVP will lose momentum. European policies must also be based on sovereignty, and European politicians must set themselves the target of "swissifying" Europe. Then the objective will be achieved.

KURT IMHOF (49) is a professor of journalism and sociology at Zurich University. He heads a unit researching the general public and society. Before entering academia, Kurt Imhof worked as a construction designer and site manager. He has written numerous books about the media, communication and social change.

Continued from page 11

to pay for bilateralism. They say Switzerland benefits from the opening of the new markets in central and eastern Europe, and must therefore also contribute towards the development of this region. They also claim that a Swiss "No" could threaten the bilateral path. Brussels may not have said how the EU would react to a negative vote in the referendum, but it must be assumed that such an outcome would hamper further negotiations. Ratification of Switzerland's inclusion in the Schengen Agreement also still hangs in the balance. In addition, preparatory talks are underway on an agreement over the electricity market, and Switzerland has indicated it would be interested in negotiating a free trade agreement on agriculture.

At least CHF 200 per child

"One child, one allowance" – this is the principle agreed by parliament in March this year. If Swiss voters now approve the move at the end of November, every child in Switzerland will receive an allowance of at least CHF 200 and every adolescent in vocational training at least CHF 250 per month, no matter how much their parents earn. The only exception is self-employed parents, who will not benefit from the nationwide scheme.

Allowances are currently the responsibility of the cantons, and vary from CHF 154 for a first child in the canton of Jura to CHF 260 in the Valais. Parents in 17 cantons currently receive less than CHF 200 a month for their first child. But these are the minimum rates. Many cantons already grant higher allowances for second and third children as well as young people in vocational training. In addition, employers are free to pay higher allowances. For instance, civil servants receive CHF 330 a month for their first child.

The harmonisation will increase expenditure by about CHF 600 million. Three-quarters of this will be met by the economy, which will finance the allowances through employer's contributions. That is why the Swiss Trade Association and Employers' Association have called for a referendum, supported by the FDP and SVP. By contrast, the bill is backed by trade unions, the SVP, the SP and the Greens, who see the current cantonal differences as objectionable and consider child benefit payments an important element of family policy. The National Council voted 106 to 85 in favour of a universal minimum child benefit, while the Council of States approved the bill by 23 votes to 21. (RL).



84th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Basel

The 84th Congress of the Swiss Abroad was held in Basel on 18–20 August under the motto “Partnership between Business and Culture”. As the representative of the Federal Council, Christian Blocher welcomed the 400 participants, who were also given a chance to visit Basel’s chemicals plants and museums.

Federal Councillor Blocher spoke about the role of both the Swiss abroad and foreigners living in Switzerland. He

lates, before engaging in an extensive discussion of political issues with young Swiss abroad.

Saturday’s plenary session included speeches by Michael Plüss, head of Novartis Switzerland, Guido Magnaguagno, the director of Basel’s Tinguely Museum, and Charles-Henri Favrod, a writer, journalist and founder of the Elysée Museum in Lausanne.

Basel and the surrounding area are one of the best examples of fruitful cooperation between business and culture in Switzerland. Participants at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad were given an opportunity to witness this for themselves during organised visits to major

the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) gathered in Basel Town Hall to discuss current issues on all aspects of the Fifth Switzerland, including the introduction of electronic ballots (e-voting) for elections and referenda. Federal Chancellor Annemarie Huber-Hotz gave a progress report on developments at the national level. She confirmed that pilot projects were working well and that e-voting could therefore be introduced. The CSA considers e-voting a valuable tool for encouraging Swiss abroad to become politically active, and has therefore lobbied vigorously for the rapid introduction of this alternative method for

more Swiss abroad involved in the political debate and encourages them to run for a seat in the Federal Parliament.

In the hope of preserving the rights – including free movement of persons – acquired through bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the European Union, the CSA reiterated its support for a CHF 1 billion cohesion contribution by Switzerland to the ten new EU Member States, and recommended voting in favour of the federal law on cooperation with eastern European countries on 26 November. The Council approved the law by 70 votes to 2.

The CSA had a lively debate about solidarity and asylum ahead of the 24 September referendum on the new Foreigners’ Law and amendments to asylum legislation. Several Council members expressed their unease about the moves, emphasising Switzerland’s humanitarian traditions and the loss of image the country may suffer in the rest of the world if it introduced legislation which some critics consider inhuman. After a heated debate, the Council eventually voted in favour of both laws by 38 to 26. *The 85th Congress of the Swiss Abroad will take place in Geneva on 17–19 August 2007. The topic for debate will be the humanitarian role of Switzerland.*



Federal Councillor Blocher discussing politics with young Swiss abroad.

reminded listeners that writer and Switzerland critic Max Frisch once said his passport was his only link with his homeland, although Blocher doubted that this was generally the case for the Swiss abroad. He then provided information on the new Asylum Law, which will be put to the vote on 24 September. After his address, Blocher answered questions from the audience and spoke out strongly against closing more consu-

panies in Basel, including Novartis, Roche and Syngenta, as well as the cultural venues that help give the city its international repute: the Beyeler Foundation, Jean Tinguely Museum, Schaulager, Kunstmuseum, the Antiquities Museum and the Museum of Ethnology.

Council of the Swiss Abroad
The day before the Congress, approximately 100 members of

casting ballots in elections and referenda. According to the CSA, the aim should be to turn e-voting into reality by 2010.

With just over a year to go before the next general elections in October 2007, the CSA agreed an election manifesto based on five pillars: politics, mobility, education, Switzerland’s international presence, and maintaining contact with one’s homeland. On the political front, the CSA would like

Swiss schools abroad invited to Zurich: Key factors in producing Swiss quality

From 4 to 6 July, the presidents and headmasters of the 16 Swiss schools abroad gathered in Zurich for their annual meeting in Switzerland aimed at gathering information and exchanging experiences.



The main topics of this year's conference were financial management, multilingual education in a multicultural environment, educational benchmarking, a cohesive concept for presenting education and training in Switzerland, as well as comparing best practices in the business and educational sphere.

On 4 July, the representatives of the Swiss schools met delegates from the worlds of politics, business and the media. For this official rendezvous, the canton of Zurich provided the use of its council chambers. Zurich is the patron canton of the Swiss schools in Madrid (Spain), Catania (Italy), Cuernavaca (Mexico) and Accra (Ghana).

Every year, the Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad (CSSA) invites the 16 state-recognised and -sponsored Swiss schools abroad to send delegates to a seminar with the following objectives:

- To exchange information and experiences
- To define their position on relevant political, educational and business developments in Switzerland
- To maximise the synergy effects between the different schools
- To encourage a cohesive approach to the presentation of schools in Switzerland

The 16 Swiss schools abroad have a total of 6500 pupils and are operated as private, non-profit institutions that receive federal aid to ensure that they provide high-quality education and retain Swiss characteristics. These schools make a major contribution towards positive assessments of our country. They have an excellent reputation and offer top-level teaching and, as such, play a decisive role in shaping the image of Swiss quality.

The Swiss schools are not only open to Swiss children abroad, but are also very popular with children from the host countries. This casts Switzerland in a favourable light and creates a network of contacts that is of lasting benefit to Switzerland and the Swiss economy. *For further information, contact: The Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad*

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www.scbweizerschulen.ch*

Head for Switzerland this winter

Welcome to the wonderful holiday paradise of Switzerland. We invite you to come and experience Switzerland's spectacular mountain panoramas, fabulous snow-covered forests, and unique ski resorts.

The OSA Youth Service offers a wealth of holiday options and study opportunities in Switzerland. We look forward to seeing you soon.

New Year ski camp in Sedrun (GR) 27.12.2006 – 5.1.2007

This popular ski resort in the Grisons mountains is a must for young Swiss abroad, or indeed anyone who wants to celebrate New Year in the snow. The camp already has cult status, so be there or miss out!

Language course in Berne 8.1. – 19.1.2007

Four language lessons in the morning, group outings in the afternoon and cordial host families. What more do you

need to learn one of the languages of Switzerland?

Winter sports week in Wengen (BE) 3.3.7 – 10.3.2007

(Minimum age: 18)
Some fans of this camp return year after year, and newcomers are always welcome. It's a week-long chance to sample every winter sport imaginable and make friends with Swiss from around the globe.

Easter sports camp in Fiesch (VS) 7.4. – 14.4.2007

The Valais always has plenty of wonderful snow at Easter. So come and enjoy winter sports in the spring sunshine by day and convivial evenings with the rest of the group at night.

Education

Gain a very personal insight into education in Switzerland. Our host families look forward to welcoming you, while your general travel pass gives you the freedom to explore Switzerland on your own.

*Further information on the packages can be obtained online at www.aso.ch or by ordering the new prospectus from Organisation of the Swiss Abroad Youth Service
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Tel.: +41 (0)31 356 6100
youth@aso.ch*

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad Winter sport adventures for 8- to 14-year-olds

We still have a few places left at our winter sport camps.

So if you want your children to take part, register them now.

Hasliberg (Bernese Oberland) Saturday 10 February 2007 to Saturday 17 February 2007

Number of participants: 24
Age: 8–14
Cost: CHF 640.–
Ski hire: CHF 120.–
Snowboard hire: CHF 125.–

Easter sport camp in Fiesch (Valais) together with the OSA Youth Service

**Saturday 7 April 2007 to
Saturday 14 April 2007**
Number of participants: 24
Age: 12–14
Cost: CHF 640.–
Ski hire: CHF 20.–/day
Snowboard hire: CHF 20.–/day

A reduction in costs may be granted by the Foundation fund on application.

Programme

Ski and snowboard, enjoy other winter sports like tobogganing and ice skating, or simply have a ball with other young Swiss abroad from around the globe.

Staff

Experienced teams of camp leaders from the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad.

Rendezvous

Zurich Airport. Parents are responsible for the organisation and cost of the outward journey to Zurich Airport on the first day and the return journey on the last day.

Further information and application forms for these camps are available at www.aso.ch ("Youth", "Holiday camps for 8- to 14-year-olds", "Program Winter") or from: Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad

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A 30-year-old bundle of energy. Snowboarder Tanja Frieden, the winner of the gold medal at the Olympic Games in Turin, will soon be pitting her skills against her rivals again in the Boardercross World Cup. Because sport plays such an important role in her life, it's hardly surprising that she doesn't limit her sporting activities to snowboarding. Even in summer she's always on the lookout for new sporting experiences. By Alain Wey.



Tanja Frieden, 2006 Olympic boardercross champion.

Beach volleyball, kite surfing, wakeboarding, longboarding (a form of skateboarding), kayaking, mountaineering: When Tanja Frieden isn't standing on a snowboard, she uses her almost boundless energy to engage in a wide range of leisure sports. Her philosophy is "Use the elements the way they present themselves." Tanja Frieden may have won the gold medal in the boardercross, but she never walks away from a new sporting challenge, be it hiking up to the Konkordia Hut (at an altitude of 2,850 metres between the peaks of the Eiger, Mönch, Jungfrau and Aletschhorn) accompanied by a Swiss camera team or enduring a baptism of fire kayaking down the River Aare.

"Sport dictates my lifestyle," she says. "I like to live intensively, go in different directions, and do what I enjoy doing." Although Tanja Frieden's way of life hasn't changed since her Olympic victory, the gold medalist is now very much in demand. What's more, the snowboarder from Berne is the first Olympic champion in a sport that celebrated its debut as an Olympic discipline in Turin. Just like Gian Simmen, who won gold in Nagano in the half-pipe in 1998, Tanja Frieden is now an example to Swiss youngsters, and living proof of the fruits of perse-

verance and bravery.

Tanja Frieden keeps her feet on the ground and refuses to be blinded by fame. Her motto is "Always be honest and stay true to yourself." Whenever she travels around the world taking part in major fun-sport events, she always radiates the cheerfulness and infectious vivacity for which she was fa-

rious even before the Games. Nevertheless, she too must plan for the future and try to cash in on her new-found fame. When her snowboarding career is over, she'd like to help athletes improve their mental strength. But no matter where life takes her, boardercross will have provided her with three important keys to success: concentration, a cool head and patience.

The 2007 Snowboarding World Championships take place in Arosa (GR) in January, and it goes without saying that Tanja Frieden will be there. The support given by Swiss fans to their very own top sportsmen and -women can help athletes surpass themselves; so why not also the woman who came third in two events in Arosa in 2004? Whatever the outcome, the boardercross competition - which is somewhat reminiscent of a Roman chariot race - should attract lots more fans following Switzerland's success at the Olympics. In Turin, the sport proved its telegraphic appeal to worldwide audiences and showed how little separates victory from defeat: something Frieden's

rival, American boarder Lindsey Jacobellis, who fell just before the finishing line, knows to her cost!

And how does the amiable, expressive Tanja Frieden cope with the glamorous world that success brings with it? "I'm a chameleon. I can just as easily convey a very good impression at a gala evening," she quips. Frieden's wit and sense of humour are reflected in the way she explains her Olympic victory: "They say the Bernese are slow. I just wanted to prove that they can also step on the accelerator when necessary!"

SPOTLIGHT ON TANJA FRIEDEN

- **Personal details:** Tanja Frieden was born on 6 February 1976 to a Norwegian mother and Swiss father. She lives in Thun, is 1.73m tall and weighs 65kg. Her mother, Kari, is a former Norwegian speed skater.
- **Profession:** Professional boardercross snowboarder and teacher.
- **Hobbies:** Kite surfing, surfing, wakeboarding, cycling, beach volleyball, longboarding, etc.
- **Achievements:** 2006 Olympic boardercross champion. Fifth at the 2003 World Championships. Runner-up at the 2000 ISF European Championships.
- **Agenda:** 14.-16.12.2006: World Cup meeting in Bad Gastein (D); 14.-20.1.2007: World Championships in Arosa (CH); 25.-26.1.2007: World Cup meeting in Leysin (CH); 3.-4.3.2007: World Cup meeting in Big White (CA); 10.-11.3.2007: World Cup meeting in Lake Placid (US); 16.-18.3.2007: World Cup meeting in Stoneham (CA).

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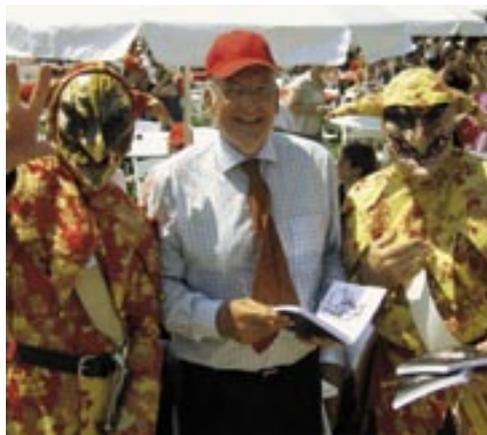
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Lucerne director wins Golden Leopard

The Swiss film "Das Fräulein" walked away with a Golden Leopard at the 59th International Film Festival in Locarno. The CHF 90,000 first prize therefore went to the debut film by Andrea Staka, a young woman from ex-Yugoslavia now living in Lucerne. The last Swiss winner of this prestigious award was Fredi M. Murer's "Höhenfeuer" in 1985.

Pope visits Great St. Bernard

During his holidays in the Aosta Valley, Pope Benedict XVI paid a surprise visit to the monks and their famous dogs in the hospice on the Swiss side of the Great St. Bernard Pass. More than 200 tourists gathered at the monastery to welcome the pontiff.



World champion aluminium recycler

It's official: With almost nine aluminium cans in ten recycled, Switzerland leads the way in recycling. 88% of the cans used in Switzerland are recycled, compared with 87% in Finland and the other Nordic countries. The separation of household rubbish introduced in Switzerland in the 1980s has enabled six waste incineration plants to be closed.

Swiss return from the Lebanon

More than 850 Swiss nationals were able to flee the war in Lebanon with the aid of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, which played a very active role during the crisis. Since the outbreak of hostilities, Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey vigorously urged the warring parties to respect the Geneva Conventions – so much so that her de-

mands for "active neutrality" sparked outrage from the right. The last straw: The head of the DFA suggested Switzerland should request a seat on the UN Security Council. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) was furious.

1 August from New York to Mont-sur-Rolle

The first day of August found Pascal Couchepin on Ellis Island in New York, where Swiss-Americans celebrate their national holiday in remembrance of the fact that the island

was the gateway to the New World for so many of their forefathers. By contrast, Christoph Blocher was in Mont-sur-Rolle, where wine growers dedicated a special cuvee with caricatured wine labels to him, bringing a smile to the Federal Councillor's face. Swiss President Moritz Leuenberger was not present at the Rütliwiese, thus sparing the event from any violence by right-wing extremists.

Fissures in the Eiger

A rock face on the Eiger in the Bernese Oberland has a 250 metre-long fissure. Almost 2 million cubic metres of rock now threaten to fall off. An initial 300,000 cubic metre chunk of rock separated in mid-July, creating a dust cloud that spread all the way to Grindelwald.

Orienteering World Championships

Simone Niggli-Luder's hunger for victory is insatiable. The Bernese runner picked up her 11th World Orienteering Championship title in Denmark. Marc Lauenstein from Neuchâtel won the silver medal in the men's race.

Marathon medal

32-year-old Viktor Röthlin from Obwalden won the silver medal in the marathon at the European Athletics Championships in Gothenburg, Sweden. It is the best result ever at this level for a Swiss marathon runner.

Farewell

to Joseph Deiss

Joseph Deiss bid farewell to the Federal Council and passed the baton to Doris Leuthard. Following his election by the people of Freiburg in 1999, Deiss headed first the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and then the Federal Department of Economic Affairs. His successes: Switzerland joining the United Nations and the signing of bilateral agreements with the European Union.

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Asteroid attracts star-gazers

An asteroid with a diameter of 800 metres passing relatively close to the Earth at 18km/s was recorded by Peter Kocher, the technical director of the Ependes Observatory (FR). If you missed it, you'll now have to wait until 2021 to see a celestial body this close to the blue planet.

The Rolling Stones in Switzerland

The Rolling Stones gave the biggest concert ever held in Switzerland at Dübendorf Airport (ZH). The event attracted 70,000 spectators and cost CHF 10 million to stage. Federal Councillor Samuel Schmid, a Stones fan since the very beginning, even got a chance to exchange a few words with Mick Jagger and the rest of the band.

Federal budget

The Federal Council has approved the budget for 2007 and the financial plan for 2008-2010. Thanks to cost-cutting measures, the budget finished with a surplus of CHF 918 million. According to the government, the financial plans will meet demands to reduce the national debt. But centre-right parties are demanding even greater cuts in spending and public debt. ALAIN WEY