

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

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Parliament's younger members –
adept at stealing the limelight

Villa Patumbah – the legacy
of a rich Swiss abroad



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Swiss allies drift away

ONE ISSUE IS CURRENTLY HIGH on the agenda for many states, notably Switzerland's neighbours – the collection of taxes on assets which their citizens have concealed from the fiscal authorities using various schemes and often with the assistance of financial institutions. The pursuit of those evading taxation and seeking optimized tax solutions is understandable in light of the debt situation facing many countries. Switzerland “the tax haven” finds itself directly in the firing line of many disgruntled governments. Hardly a day goes by without criticism being levelled at Switzerland or the pressure being stepped up. Switzerland has also in recent months lost its last remaining allies – Luxembourg and Austria – in its fight against the automatic exchange of information and complete transparency.

Switzerland now finds itself in an extremely awkward situation. And what has the response been? The actions and comments of our government and the conduct of our Parliament have done little to inspire confidence. An ill-tempered cacophony has been heard from Berne. This does little to improve our nation's position or image in the world.



Many letters and emails sent by readers to the editorial team lead us to conclude that this situation is increasingly having an impact on the Swiss abroad. And in the midst of all this, the Federal Council has now also activated the safety-valve clause which puts restrictions on immigration from all EU states. This has made everything even more unpleasant even if on closer inspection it is clear that the Federal Council's decision is a measure aimed more at alleviating domestic political tension than an effective means of combating immigration and the issues associated with it. These issues were explored in the April edition of the “Swiss Review”.

In the current edition we pay particular attention to various players and events in Parliament. The focus-topic article looks at the younger generation of politicians under 40 years of age on the national political scene. Many of these young MPs have an advantage over their more senior colleagues – they are highly adept at handling the media and take every opportunity that arises to raise their profile and to enhance their popularity. Some have thereby quickly established themselves as key figures in political opinion-making.

Finally, our reporter Jürg Müller looks at Switzerland's army and defence policy by observing developments during Parliament's spring session. He reveals where uncertainty lies and which contentious issues the Swiss people are ultimately likely to be called to decide upon.

BARBARA ENGEL

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Echo

Cover image:

The younger members of the Swiss Parliament do not shy away from high-profile or unusual public appearances: Pascale Bruderer at the Swiss Award, Toni Brunner with the mascot “Zottel”, Cédric Wermuth at Credit Suisse's annual general meeting and Christa Markwalder as an advocate of the EU (clockwise).

Photos: Keystone

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graubünden

Election of Federal Council

The article "Will the people soon be electing the Federal Council?" is most enlightening. The upcoming debates have the potential to trigger fierce controversy. In order to avoid confrontations between certain political parties and the present Federal Council and Parliament, I have the following proposal. In the time-honoured Swiss tradition, in the future, half of the members of the Federal Council could be elected by the people and the other half by Parliament. Unfortunately the number of members in the Federal Council is an odd number. Since the Swiss are notorious for rounding up their bills, I suggest that the number of this honourable consortium be increased to the next even number which is eight.

ANTON ANDEREGGEN,
MAPLE VALLEY, USA

Federal Council elections

Switzerland's system of "consensus government" is unique, and for it to work its composition must take account of the various languages, faiths and regions. An election of the Federal Council by the people would not ensure this, and the various facets of Swiss society would no longer be represented. The outcome would be political polarisation like in the USA, and what a shame that would be.

HANS LEUTHOLD, SANTA CRUZ

Immigration policy

Immigration in the 1960s went hand-in-hand with an economic boom and salary adjustments twice a year. Salaries have now remained constant for the last 15 years in terms of purchasing power, and the average Swiss person lives on a tight budget. Women going out to work has become a normal part of family life, whereas this was the exception and frowned upon 50 years ago. Tolerance towards rivals in the labour market and benefit recipi-

ents is declining accordingly. Unrest and instability are to be anticipated.

HANSRUEDI GUT, ANGELES CITY

Immigration

Xenophobic sentiment is nothing new but comes to the fore primarily during times of economic hardship, high population density and excessive immigration. A small country like Switzerland has reached its absolute growth limit with a population of eight million. A halt to immigration is inevitable. Annual immigration quotas would regulate the problem fairly. Granting Swiss citizenship to immigrants should be made subject to the renunciation of any previous citizenship, as is the case in many countries.

DANIEL GUGGISBERG,
REDONDO BEACH, USA

Thank you

A reader complained about the bias shown by Barbara Engel, editor-in-chief, in making the "Swiss Review" left-leaning by focusing too heavily on the Greens and not enough on the Swiss People's Party. While it is right that this publication should not seek to polarise its readers, I am personally delighted to see it finally provide an accurate reflection of Switzerland after years when it seemed that the less one addressed the realities the better. Thank you for providing us once more with editorial clear-sightedness.

PHILIPPE LEMOINE, FRANCE

Wide selection of topics

I have been living abroad as long as I previously lived in Switzerland, about 34 years each. I enjoy the "Swiss Review". I often read it cover to cover, particularly since Barbara Engel has taken editorial control. Her wide selection of topics of interest is appreciated, but what I enjoy even more are her astute comments. I hope she will stay at the helm for a while yet.

HEINRICH BENZ, AUSTRALIA

All kinds of Switzerland

IF THE ORIGINAL CANTONS LEFT SWITZERLAND. Despair and happiness are often not that far apart, as is the case in caricatures and satire, for example. Both exaggerate the facts and often get closer to the heart of the matter than many an in-depth analysis. Or, in the words of Charles Lewinsky: "Caricatures can give a better reflection than mirror images." This Swiss author is a master of sardonic satire. In his latest book entitled "Schweizen: 24 Zukünfte" (Switzerland: 24 futures) he mercilessly transposes current trends into a future that is not altogether encouraging.

The book also provides strong evidence that Charles Lewinsky is Switzerland's most multi-talented writer. He is a director, editor, columnist and screenplay writer as well as the author of great historical novels, such as "Melnitz" and "Gerron". He displays the full gamut of his talents in his latest book. Each of the 24 stories is told in a different form of writing – readers are presented with a screenplay, a set of minutes, a school essay, a diary, a job application, a last will and testament, a memorandum and even a federal charter. Various literary styles are also deployed, including the theatre performance, the crime story, the ballad, the fairy tale, the fable and the science-fiction story. None of this is done for "some deeper reason", as Lewinsky writes in the foreword, "but quite simply because I enjoyed letting myself go stylistically".

He does not just let himself go stylistically, but thematically as well. Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden declare, by federal charter, that they will leave Switzerland "at the beginning of the month of August in the year of our Lord 2072" because it has acceded to the EU. We also experience the triumph of technical progress and the salvation of Swiss tourism thanks to the invention of artificial snow, which provides a durable top-quality blanket in summer, too, even down in the valley. We learn which qualities are required to succeed in a popular election of the Federal Council in a dialogue between a candidate and his election campaign adviser. Visitors to the Ballenberg 2 open-air museum in 2064 can see extinct animals – which produce a distinctive white-coloured liquid – brought back to life by genetic engineering. Incidentally, Ballenberg 2 "is located in the middle of the Brienz-Ballenberg city district,

a region that is still very rural and sparsely populated with fewer than 300,000 inhabitants". Everything is relative, including the perception of a sparsely populated region.

Swiss democracy is also relative, at least when the country suddenly has a Federal President appointed for life. After his death he lies in state in a mausoleum which school parties are obliged to visit. Upon whom is this honour bestowed? That is not revealed. But one thing is for sure:

Charles Lewinsky's negative utopias provide amusing reading even if the humour is often somewhat caustic. It is clever entertainment, which is not just funny but also highly political.

JÜRIG MÜLLER



CHARLES LEWINSKY: "Schweizen. 24 Zukünfte". Verlag Nagel & Kimche, Munich 2013. 176 pages. CHF 25.90, EUR 21.10

Driven by poverty and freedom

Switzerland was a nation of emigration for a long period, something which is often forgotten today. Between the 15th century and the first few decades of the 20th century, hundreds of thousands of people left Switzerland due to population growth and economic hardship to seek a better life elsewhere in the world. An exhibition on emigration from Appenzell,



An alleyway in Marseille in the early morning – a photograph by Herbert Maeder



A portrait of Arthur Beyer, the painter and graphic artist, on display at the Appenzell Volkskunde-Museum



"The Original Baumgartner", the Swiss tavern with cheese shop has existed in Wisconsin since 1931



150 years of Nueva Helvecia in Uruguay was celebrated by the Swiss abroad currently living in this South American country

staged at two museums, uses individual stories and biographies to show what emigration is all about and how emigrants to all parts of the world attempt to integrate a bit of their old homeland into their new one.

"Appenzeller Auswanderung – Von Not und Freiheit" exhibition at the Volkskunde-Museum in Stein and at the Brauchtumsmuseum in Urnäsch. Duration: until 27 October in Stein, until 13 January 2014 in Urnäsch. www.appenzeller-museum-stein.ch; www.museum-urnaesch.ch.



artist born in 1904, by Herbert Maeder in the spe-



Emigrants aboard a ship approaching New York, taken in 1915 by Edwin Levick



ated with military parades in 2012. Around 1,000 country



Many traditions have continued for generations in New Glarus, founded in 1845

Young politicians under the Federal Palace dome

The proportion of National Councillors below the age of 40 stood at 18% at the 2011 elections. The number of young politicians has not been as high for almost a century. Who are these young high-flyers, and why are they being elected?

By Seraina Gross

They have not yet turned 30 but already they are well up the political career ladder. Among the young stars in the Swiss Parliament at the beginning of June, four National Councillors had yet to celebrate their 30th birthday. Young Socialist Cédric Wermuth was elected to the large chamber in Aargau at the age of just 25 at the federal elections in October 2011, as was Mathias Reynard, also aged 25, a teacher and Social Democrat from the village of Savièse in Valais. The others are two Bernese politicians, Aline Trede (29) of the Greens and Nadine Masshardt (28) of the Social Democrats. Both moved up to the Na-

doubled in comparison to previous elections. It is in fact higher today than the proportion of the population that age group comprises," Seitz remarks. The average age of National Councillors elected in 2011 stood at 50 – two years lower than in 2003. In 1999, two under-30s were elected to Parliament, while there were five in 2003, six in 2007 and four in 2011.

The star from St. Gallen

The election of Toni Brunner in 1995 caused a sensation. The young farmer and current Party President of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) became the youngest National Coun-

cellor of all time when he was elected at the age of just 21. The former Party President, Hans Uhlmann, persuaded the young politician to stand for election. The cantonal SVP in St. Gallen, which had only recently been founded, was participating in National Council elections for the first time. It was lacking numbers. Nobody expected Toni Brunner to be elected to the National Council – he was extremely young, he did not come from a prominent or wealthy family, and he lacked the political experience that comes with the usual hard slog through school administration, communal council and cantonal parliament. He himself calls it an "accident" – no wonder this whizz kid was swamped by the media. The "Blick" newspaper extolled his big brown eyes and complexion "as healthy as the air in Hundsrücken above Ebnet-Kappel". Even

From "accident" to strategy

The election of Toni Brunner marked the start of a trend. A few more young politicians have since made the step up to Berne every four



Aline Trede, Greens



Céline Amadruz, SVP



Christian Wasserfallen, FDP

tional Council at the beginning of March to replace party colleagues Franziska Teuscher and Ursula Wyss, who had been elected to Berne's city government.

While Switzerland's population is ageing all the time, its politicians are getting younger and younger. The proportion of those under the age of 40 stood at 18 per cent at the 2011 National Council elections. This is the highest figure for almost a hundred years, as an overview produced by the Federal Statistical Office reveals. You would have to go back to 1919 to find a comparably high proportion of National Councillors aged under 40, at 21.2 %. Werner Seitz, a political scientist at the Federal Statistical Office, points out that there has primarily been an increase in the number of 30 to 39 year olds. "The number of politicians elected in this age bracket has

cillor of all time when he was elected at the age of just 21. The former Party President, Hans Uhlmann, persuaded the young politician to stand for election. The cantonal SVP in St. Gallen, which had only recently been founded, was participating in National Council elections for the first time. It was lacking numbers.

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years. In 1999, Brunner was joined by someone of his own age for the first time with the arrival of Bernese Social Democrat Ursula Wyss. However, the election of this Young Socialist was no "accident" but rather the result of a strategic decision. The Social Democratic Party (SP) in Berne deliberately focussed on the appeal of young faces and put the then 26-year-old Wyss right at the top of its National Council list. The young Bernese politician later became faction president, the most important position within the party after the Party President. However, she too failed to secure election to the Council of States in March 2011. The Social Democrat lost out to Adrian Amstutz, the SVP candidate from the Bernese Oberland.

The strategy of introducing young faces to attract votes during election campaigns set a precedent. The SP, then the SVP and finally

also the centre parties recognised the strength of the “young (and female)” argument. At the 2007 elections, the SVP in Zurich put Natalie Rickli, who was just 30, in second place on its National Council list, right behind the then Party President Ueli Maurer. The young politician, who had only recently been elected to Zurich’s cantonal parliament, easily won her seat in Berne and was re-elected in 2011 with 145,776 votes – even ahead of Christoph Blocher, who had been deselected from the Federal Council and was standing again for the National Council.

Being young is nevertheless no guarantee of electoral success. Anita Borer, the young SVP candidate from Zurich, suffered the bitter taste of defeat at the same election. She failed to secure a seat in Berne despite being placed high on the list right behind Christoph Blocher.

Young politicians are media-savvy

Left-wing, right-wing or green, young politicians are not all of the same opinion. But one

erage to discuss children, careers, a lack of childcare places and the abiding political issue of work-life balance from personal experience. The Zurich Green politician Bastien Girod scored points with the public and the media in December 2007 when he cycled the 130 kilometres from Zurich to Berne for the first session.

A provocateur

Cédric Wermuth, the President of the Young Socialists, pushes things to the limit and sometimes beyond. In 2008, he lit up a joint on stage at the SP’s party conference to promote the legalisation of cannabis. He is also responsible for the tasteless poster produced during the referendum campaign on the initiative for a ban on the export of munitions. It depicted Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard with blood on her hands. But the approach adopted by this provocative figure from Aargau is paying dividends. He now represents the SP in the National Council. Orig-

youngsters under their wing. The SP has also set up a programme to promote young talent. The party secretariat of the Christian Democrat People’s Party (CVP) specifically aims to ensure that young politicians are given an opportunity at events when more senior representatives are tied up. Talented young politicians are also given the chance to assume responsibility whenever possible by the SVP. “This is not a marketing measure,” explains SVP spokesperson Kevin Grangier. “The involvement of young people constitutes political groundwork.”

The parties are not just doing all this for the joy of it, they are also under pressure. Young people today are no longer prepared to wait in line for years on end. They are self-assured, ambitious and believe in themselves. This is also evident in the youth parties. These are no longer an appendage of the parent party but instead independent parties with their own agenda.



Marco Romano, CVP



Mathias Reynard, SP



Natalie Rickli, SVP

thing the young representatives of all parties have in common is that they are extremely good at dealing with the media. “Young people have grown up in a highly media-oriented world and know how to project themselves,” explains Zurich-based political scientist Michael Hermann. “And that is useful if you want to become a National Councillor.”

It is very evident that young politicians have less fear of the spotlight than older ones. Nothing is taboo for them, even their private lives, especially if a political message can be worked in. Ursula Wyss and Pascale Bruderer, her party peer from Aargau, posed back to back when pregnant in 2011 for the popular magazine “Schweizer Illustrierte”. The feature looked at whether pregnancy could be combined with a Council of States election campaign. Both young women used the cov-

inality, too, can help achieve objectives. Aline Trede, a Green politician from Berne, illustrates this point. In 2011, she posed on her election campaign poster wearing a green shirt with an anti-nuclear sticker and a red-and-white polka dot bandana, showing off her biceps and smiling. The poster won awards, and the young Bernese candidate secured the first replacement position.

Young talent promoted everywhere

The parties have grasped that youth is as attractive in politics as in other walks of life. They appreciate the appeal of their young members and are now focussing intensively on the development of young politicians. The Liberals have established a mentoring programme for young politicians where established campaigners take up-and-coming

Although the parties, with very few exceptions, are focussing on youth, it is mainly in the parties at either end of the spectrum that politicians under 30 are being elected to the National Council. “Growing parties, such as the SVP, have shorter waiting lists,” remarks Zurich-based political scientist Michael Hermann. “This makes it easier for young politicians to be elected.” Examples include Jasmin Hutter, the SVP politician from St. Gallen, who was elected to the National Council in 2003, and her party colleague Lukas Reimann. Also from St. Gallen, he secured election in 2007 at the age of just 25.

The young stars in the “small chamber”

Of the centre parties, only the Liberals (FDP) initially managed to secure the election of a young star – Christa Markwalder

was 28 years old when she was sworn into the National Council in December 2003. She was joined in the National Council four years later by a second up-and-coming young Liberal – Christian Wasserfallen. Wasserfallen benefited from having a prominent name as the son of the now deceased head of the Bernese police department. Since the 2011

Berset also helped to improve its image. He became the youngest President of the Council of States of all time before being elected to the Federal Council in December 2011 at the age of 39.

Reduced in size, the CVP did not manage to send a National Councillor aged under 30 to Berne until the 2011 elections. Marco Romano,

August. “He could be my grandfather,” says Marco Romano. “But it makes no difference – on the contrary, we share lots of laughs.”

Around 50 on average

The Green Liberals (GLP) stand out on account of their young faces. This recently established political party has set itself the ob-



Nadine Masshardt, SP



Raphaël Comte, FDP



Tiana Angelina Moser, GLP

elections, a Liberal has become the youngest member of the much-vaunted “chambre de réflexion” – Raphaël Comte from Neuchâtel was elected to the Council of States shortly after his 30th birthday. He and Pascale Bruderer, the Social Democrat from Aargau, are responsible for ensuring that the smaller chamber no longer lives up to its traditional elderly image. The Social Democrat Alain

a young politician from Ticino, was selected for the National Council in Ticino by the drawing of lots after he and his internal party opponent won exactly the same number of votes in the election. The young star of the CVP now sits in Berne next to the senior parliamentarian Jacques Neirynck from Vaud. The former professor at the Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne will celebrate his 83rd birthday in

jective of achieving reconciliation between ecology and the economy. “The phenomenon that new parties lead to a lowering of the age of politicians is nothing new,” remarks political scientist Werner Seitz. “This has occurred repeatedly in the past irrespective of whether new parties were right-wing or left-wing.” In 2007, Tiana Angelina Moser of the GLP in Zurich entered the National Coun-

CHILDREN, TOO, GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS

Children and young people are interested in politics. The current SVP Party President Toni Brunner apparently began reading newspapers regularly at the age of 12, while the Green Party’s Bernese National Councillor Aline Trede made her grandmother turn off the tap when brushing her teeth to save water. However, involvement is not restricted to such acts. Children and young people can also take part in the political process. In Switzerland, this happens during the Youth Session in Berne and at around 50 local and regional children’s and young people’s parliaments.

In 1991, a Youth Session was held at the Federal Palace for the first time to mark the 700th anniversary of the confederation. For once, young people sat in the seats usually occupied by greying men and a few women in suits. On that occasion, the youngsters called for better environmental protection, a Switzerland that was open to the world and showed solidarity, and Switzerland’s rapid accession to the European Union. The event became an institution that today has a firm place in the political calendar.

Winning over politicians to support issues

“It is not about getting a taste of life in Berne. It is a question of political participation,” explains Micha Küchler, project manager

for the Youth Session at the Swiss National Youth Council. “I don’t know of any other country that has anything like this.” The 200 or so participants, aged between 14 and 21, do not have a formal right to submit motions but their petitions have the same status as citizens’ petitions. “The resolutions of the Youth Session cannot be ignored,” says Küchler.

Another route is via “Juse direct” (Youth Session direct). The principle is that young people attempt to win over a sitting National Councillor to support their issues. This was successful in the case of Lukas Reimann and the ban on private poker games. The St. Gallen SVP National Councillor submitted a motion to lift the ban, and private poker games are now permitted again.

Much has also been done in recent years at municipal and cantonal level to involve young people in politics. There are now cantonal youth parliaments throughout French-speaking Switzerland, Ticino and north-western Switzerland, with the exception of Neuchâtel. They are somewhat thinner on the ground in central and eastern Switzerland. Aargau, Schaffhausen, Uri and St. Gallen, along with the two Appenzells, are on board, while youth sessions take place every three years in Grisons and Thurgau. Political initiatives to establish youth parliaments are pending in Berne, Zurich and Lucerne. “We have set ourselves

cil at the age of 28. However, no Green Liberals under the age of 30 managed to win a seat in the 2011 elections. With an average age of 45.5, they nevertheless have a young team in Berne. The National Councillors of the Green Party had an average age of 49.5 in 2011, just slightly lower than that of the Liberals at 49.6. The Federal Council party with the highest average age at 52.7 years is Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf's Conservative Democratic Party (BDP), which broke away from the SVP. The SVP's average age is almost identical at 52.3 years. However, the National Councillors of the CVP (50.6 years) and the SP (48.7 years) are significantly younger.

Improved chances of election

Being young has long since been an asset rather than a disadvantage in politics. This is also reflected in the chances of election. "Younger candidates today have a much better chance of election than older ones," explains Werner Seitz. Candidates aged 25 to 34 achieved an election quota of 37 in 2011. This means that the number of people in this age group being elected was around one third the number of candidates in that age bracket. Among candidates aged 65 to 74, only one in 50 was elected. The under-40s are therefore less underrepresented in politics today than the over-sixties. "We live

in a society where being young is a major drawing card," says Werner Seitz. "That is no different in politics." The Zurich-based political scientist Michael Hermann believes the good electoral chances of young politicians are also explained by reconciliation between the generations after 1968. The generation of 1968 adopted the maxim "don't trust anyone over 30", but the older generation also mistrusted the young along the lines of "don't trust anyone under 30". "All that has changed," explains Hermann.

Asking young politicians how they explain their election produces some remarkably simple answers. "I was out campaigning on the streets almost every day," says the Green Party's Aline Trede. She distributed 40,000 voting cards. Céline Amaudruz, an up-and-coming SVP politician from Geneva, also emphasised her street campaign. Her high profile as cantonal party president and a member of Geneva's city council helped. Her profession also stood her in good stead among the bankers of Geneva – Amaudruz works as an asset manager. To sum up, face-to-face contact with the electorate is still an absolute must for anyone seeking election to the Federal Palace at the start of the 21st century, despite Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

SERAINA GROSS is a correspondent for the "Basler Zeitung" in French-speaking Switzerland and a freelance journalist

Parliamentarians under 40 (reference date 1 June 2013)

First name	Name	Party	Canton	YOB	Deputy since
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National Council

Sebastian	Frehner	SVP	BS	1973	2010
Toni	Brunner	SVP	SG	1974	1995
Andrea	Geissbühler	SVP	BE	1976	2007
Natalie	Rickli	SVP	ZH	1976	2007
Thomas	Aeschi	SVP	ZG	1979	2011
Céline	Amaudruz	SVP	GE	1979	2011
Nadja	Pieren	SVP	BE	1980	2011
Lukas	Reimann	SVP	SG	1982	2007
Evi	Allemann	SP	BE	1978	2003
Valérie	Piller	SP	FR	1978	2011
Jean Chr.	Schwaab	SP	VD	1979	2011
Nadine	Masshardt	SP	BE	1984	2013
Cédric	Wermuth	SP	AG	1986	2011
Mathias	Reynard	SP	VS	1987	2011
Olivier	Feller	FDP/Lib	VD	1974	2011
Christa	Markwalder	FDP/Lib	BE	1975	2003
Petra	Gössi	FDP/Lib	SZ	1976	2011
Andrea	Caroni	FDP/Lib	AR	1980	2011
Christian	Wasserfallen	FDP/Lib	BE	1981	2007
Stefan	Müller	CVP	SO	1976	2011
Yannick	Buttet	CVP	VS	1977	2011
Martin	Candinas	CVP	GR	1980	2011
Marco	Romano	CVP	TI	1982	2011
Thomas	Maier	GLP	ZH	1975	2011
Kathrin	Bertschy	GLP	BE	1979	2011
Tiana A.	Moser	GLP	ZH	1979	2007
Antonio	Hodgers	Greens	GE	1976	2007
Bastien	Girod	Greens	ZH	1980	2007
Aline	Trede	Greens	BE	1983	2013
Lorenzo	Quadri	Lega	TI	1974	2011

Council of States

Pascale	Bruderer	SP	AG	1977	2002
Raphaël	Comte	FDP/Lib	NE	1979	2010

the target of establishing a youth parliament in every canton sooner or later," explains Maurus Blumenthal, director of the Swiss Federation of Youth Parliaments.

An award for shameful behaviour

There are also dozens of municipal and regional children's and youth parliaments. They usually deal with matters like skateboard parks, play areas, night buses and other pressing issues for children and young people. But they also tackle more serious political issues. The

Bernese children's parliament has twice awarded its "shameful behaviour prize" to the Bernese power plant operator BKW for its unfriendly attitude towards children. BKW had failed to decommission the Mühleberg nuclear power plant despite a German study concluding that the facility was not completely safe. The prize was a piranha made by the youngsters themselves. Other candidates were Berne's city council for making cutbacks in



Lucerne's youth parliament

schools and the city of Berne's parliament for withdrawing its support of the children's carnival and failing to provide funds for the soap box derby.

Whether the influx of young faces in politics in recent years is the result of the greater involvement of young people is something the organisers of the Youth Session of Parliament are currently trying to establish. Micha Küchler points to several former youth politicians who have now entered politics at a senior level.

They are all from French-speaking Switzerland. The Social Democrat Mathias Reynard, currently the youngest member of the National Council, took part in the youth parliament in Valais as a youngster. Olivier Feller, the Liberal National Councillor from Vaud, and Pierre Maudet, his 35-year-old party colleague from Geneva and executive council member, once helped to organise the Swiss youth parliament.

The battle over the Olympics

Proponents had promised a highly sustainable Olympic Games. But the dream has ended prematurely – the electorate of the canton of Grisons has rejected the staging of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in St. Moritz and Davos. Why has there been such scepticism in Switzerland towards the Games that are so coveted worldwide?

By Marc Lettau

Who remembers the 2010 Olympic Games in Berne and Montreux? You will not recall them because they never took place. The Berne-Montreux bid was prematurely derailed by the people of Berne. They did not like the idea of sacrificing the federal capital's very own mountain – the Gurten – for a bobsleigh run. So, in 2002, they overwhelmingly rejected the prospect of the Olympic Games right on their doorstep.

Now there is a sense of déjà-vu. The Olympic dream came to a premature end at the beginning of March 2013 in the canton of Grisons too. In a referendum 53% opposed the hosting of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games. Politicians and representatives of the sporting and business worlds had unsuccessfully attempted to highlight the benefits of the Games for the future of Grisons. And the promoters had promised in vain to ensure a sustainable Games. People instead listened to environmental organisations, which decried the promoters' pledges as little more than marketing measures and warned of "mountainous debt and environmental damage".

The no campaign personified

The 60-year-old grammar school teacher and Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP) politician Silva Semadeni is the personification of the no campaign. She vehemently opposed the Olympic promoters. Reflecting on her reasons, she remarks "the enormous scale of the Games today" is incompatible with the protection of the Alps. She adds: "The Winter Olympic Games are not sustainable. The waste of energy and resources and the impact on the natural environment and landscape are huge." This "highly commercialised mega-event"



Silva Semadeni, SP National Councillor and figurehead of the opposition to the Olympics

was unsuitable for the mountain valleys: "My focus is on ensuring a gentler and self-determined development of the canton."

Sochi acts as a deterrent

Through her criticism Semadeni indirectly suggests that the referendum was not just decided in Grisons but also in the Russian city of Sochi. The approaching 2014 Winter Games in this sub-tropical seaside resort are generally viewed as grandiose, and the budget has rocketed from 8 to 44 billion Swiss francs. Semadeni says: "The Sochi Games with their dreadful incursions into nature and exorbitant costs serve as a deterrent to any right-minded person." The experiences of previous venues are also sobering, says Semadeni. They have left in their wake environmental damage, oversized infrastructure and mountains of debt for the public sector. Even sports fans concede that Sochi has influenced the Swiss perception of the Games. "Sochi is the absolute opposite of the plans organisers had in mind for the Olympic Games in Grisons," says the experienced sports journalist Thomas Renggli after a visit to Russia. Semadeni says: "If the Games are ever to take place in the Alps, the International Olympic Committee will have to amend its rules and focus much more heavily on existing infrastructure." The Games today are too

much of a "money-making machine for the IOC".

Structural obstacles

In Switzerland, the canton where the proposed venue is located makes the decision on an Olympic bid. But the Games overstretch individual cantons. After the rejection by the people of Grisons, IOC Executive Member René Fasel therefore proposed that these enormous structural hurdles be lowered: federal government

should firstly set aside three billion Swiss francs for the Olympic Games and then ask who would like to organise them. Fasel believes that many cantons would apply if this approach were adopted. But Fasel's concept was met with a lack of understanding. The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" accused him of failing to appreciate the principle of democracy: the proposed billion-franc loan could not just be conjured up but would also have required the approval of the Swiss people. This means that the two Winter Olympic Games that Switzerland hosted in 1928 and 1948 are unlikely to be added to any time soon.

MARC LETTAU is an editor with the "Swiss Review"

REBUFFED

The International Olympic Committee has its headquarters in Switzerland, in Lausanne. However, Switzerland does not receive preferential treatment when it comes to the awarding of Olympic Games, as there is a long list of failed bids. St. Moritz (for the 1936 and 1960 Games), Lausanne (1936, 1944, 1948, 1952, 1960) and Sion (1976, 2002, 2006) have made unsuccessful bids for Summer or Winter Games. Alongside these are the Olympic plans rejected by the people, such as in Zurich (referendum of 1969), Berne (1969, 2002), Valais (1963), Vaud (1986) and Grisons (1985, 2013).

Turmoil over defence policy

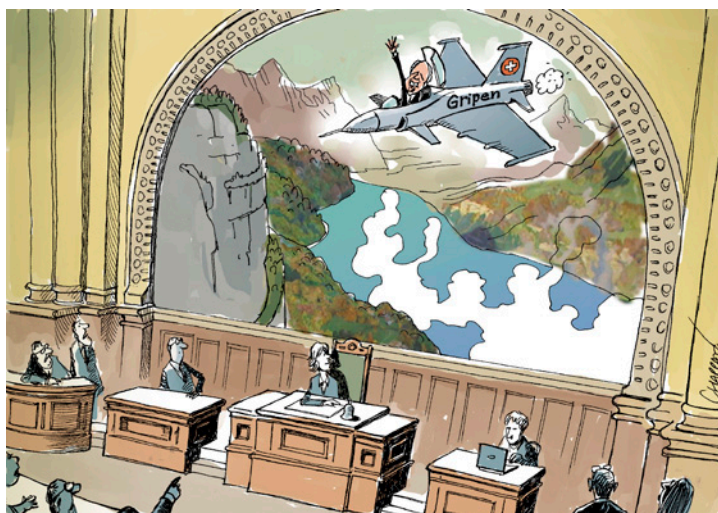
Swiss security policy is currently characterised by uncertainty. Parliament and the government are at loggerheads over military spending levels, there is a furore over Gripen fighter jets, and contentious referenda are coming up. A snapshot from the spring session in Parliament.

By Jürg Müller

Colonel Peter Forster, editor-in-chief of the magazine "Schweizer Soldat" (Swiss Soldier), is going into battle – against the Federal Council. It is toying with "a precious commodity – our national security", writes Forster in the newsletter "Pro Libertate". It is "scandalous" how the Federal Council disregards resolutions of Parliament, making "opposition to the government" necessary. The background to Forster's outburst is the row between the Federal Council and Parliament over military spending. Parliament wants to release more money to the armed forces than does the Federal Council. The wrangling over finances is symptomatic of deeper-lying uncertainty over the army's future role.

Crash landing in the Council of States

This uncertainty came to the fore during the spring session of the Federal Parliament. The procurement of the new fighter jets was on the Council of States' agenda. The row over the Swedish Gripen (see also "Swiss Review" 5/2012) appeared to have subsided; former critics, including conservatives, backed Minister of Defence Ueli Maurer shortly before the parliamentary debate. Only the left-wing parties unanimously opposed the purchase of the fighter jets. So, the crash landing that the proposal then suffered was completely unexpected: the Council of States approved the Gripen jets but rejected the lifting of the spending brake on which this motion depended. This effectively constituted a rejection of the Gripen proposal. This is a clear indication that some conservative politicians are also sceptical about the procurement of the jets. The sceptics argue that the current fleet is adequate for policing the airways, a major air battle over Switzerland is highly unlikely



to occur, even in the distant future, and the future of aerial warfare belongs to drones in any case.

Observers anticipate that the fighter jets will win the approval of the National Council in the autumn despite the reservations of the Security Policy Commission and also eventually secure the backing of the Council of States. However, the Swiss people will have the final say on the matter, as a referendum or initiative against the resolution is inevitable. The ambiguous decision of the Council of States and the lack of unity among conservatives represent major setbacks in the referendum campaign, which the fighter jet opponents will seek to exploit to the full.

Contentious defence policy proposals

It is not only the Gripen proposal that will cause emotions to run high and result in a fiercely contested referendum battle. A popular initiative from the Group for a Switzerland without an Army (GSoA) is seeking to abolish compulsory military service. The initiative was rejected by both the Council of States and the National Council during the spring session. But fundamental issues concerning the future of the army will be raised during the referendum campaign. And the GSoA should not be underestimated – 35.6 % of the electorate voted in favour of a radical call to abolish the army in 1989. In 1992, the GSoA collected over 500,000 sig-

natures against the purchase of the F/A-18 fighter jet within a month – a record in terms of collection period and number of signatures. The GSoA was then defeated at referendum, but just under 43% rejected the acquisition of the fighter jets. A shock outcome cannot therefore be ruled out on either compulsory military service or the Gripen jets.

Army planners face an unenviable task

The wrangling over the previously mentioned military spending levels is a further element of uncertainty. In 2010, the Federal Council set the ceiling at 4.4 billion Swiss francs a year in its army report and demanded a reduction in the number of troops to 80,000. Parliament wanted 100,000 men and a five-billion budget. The Federal Council put its foot down and is only prepared to raise the ceiling to 4.7 billion on finance policy grounds. In spring 2013, the National Council insisted on the 5-billion army budget. The majority found that the army's mandate would be compromised if this benchmark figure were not met. But a consensus on what this mandate should be is far from being reached. A parliamentary minority therefore argued that the ceiling could not be set without first discussing the current threat situation and the army's future challenges.

The forthcoming army reform will provide an opportunity for this. It should enter the consultation stage around the middle of this year. The parliamentary debate on the future development of the army will however not take place until next year. The army planners therefore face an unenviable task. They will remain on shaky ground for some considerable time to come.

JÜRIG MÜLLER is an editor with the "Swiss Review"

Light shed on a dark chapter in Swiss social policy

After years of concealing the facts, Switzerland is beginning to come to terms with the history of its contract and care home children. Until well into the 20th century, the authorities remorselessly “placed” tens of thousands of these children with farmers and institutions where they suffered violence and exploitation. Other victims of compulsory custodial measures in Switzerland are also now awaiting justice and compensation.

By Susanne Wenger



Former contract children with Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga

11 April 2013 at the Kulturcasino in Berne proved a momentous occasion. On behalf of the Swiss government, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga apologised to all the victims of compulsory care measures in Switzerland. Around 700 surviving former contract and care home children, those who were subjected to administrative imprisonment and those who were victims of forced sterilisation came to hear Sommaruga's words. “I apologise sincerely and from the

previously been hushed up – the fact that the supposedly good old days were in fact a harrowing experience for tens of thousands of children in Switzerland.

Boys and girls, usually from poverty-stricken families, were traded like cattle from the second half of the 19th century onwards and hired out to farmers and tradespeople. Most were subjected to hard labour and experienced a miserable existence. Others, including orphans, those born illegiti-

mate and the otherwise “morally compromised”, were sent to “salvation institutes” where authoritarian or overstretched educators would beat them rather than show them human kindness. There was a serious lack of supervision for such homes as well as for foster families.

Single teenaged mothers and “work-shy” men were imprisoned for re-education. At the stroke of a pen, custodial care authorities arbitrarily decided who would be locked up for an indefinite period of time. Whether against the “morally corrupted”, the poor or the maladjusted – at one time the Swiss state adopted a hard line to ensure discipline and order.

At one time? All this took place not so very long ago. It was not until the 1970s that values and educational methods began to change, and with them the social care system. So-called administrative care behind bars actually continued until 1981. For a long time shocking stories were covered up by a veil of silence. That is until surviving victims finally summoned up the courage to reveal what had happened to them and



Photographs of contract children taken by Paul Senn in the 1940s, on display at the “Verdingkinder reden – Enfances volées” exhibition being held at various locations

to raise public awareness. One of those was Roland M. Begert from Berne. With his novel "Lange Jahre fremd" (Many years apart) published in 2008, the now 76 year old has become one of the leading voices of the former contract children in Switzerland. Begert describes how when he was born in 1937 he was taken from his mother, a divorcee, and put in a children's home. He was then sent to a farm as hired labour at the age of 12. After his schooling, his custodian forced him to undertake an apprenticeship in a foundry. Begert was often told that he was "nothing, a worthless vagrant". But the "vagrant" showed everyone who had ostracised him what he could do. He saved up to attend evening school, studied law and economics and spent 30 years as a grammar school teacher in the city of Berne.

The Swiss government issues an apology

"It was old Christian values, such as hard work and perseverance, which held me together and carried me through. I would not have achieved anything without them," recalls Begert today. He describes his fate without bitterness, but not all former contract and care home children possessed the strength to cast off the past. Many remain damaged and even traumatised. The historian Thomas Huonker from Zurich, who has been carrying out research in this field for years, has heard harrowing first-hand accounts of suffering, terrible punishments,

sexual exploitation and appalling humiliation. "The worst stories of victims who died young, committed suicide, suffered mental illness or who lost all hope can no longer be heard," Huonker points out. He was one of the first to call for official amends to be made.

Swiss President Alfons Egli actually made a start in 1986. He apologised to the Yeniche people for the government's involvement in the "children of the highway" programme. Compensation was also paid out. However, in 2005, the National Council deemed it unnecessary to come to terms with the history of the contract children. It was not until the victims could no longer be ignored and the magazine "Beobachter" took up their cause that progress started to be made again. In 2010, Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf asked for forgiveness from those put in administrative care. They were also to be legally vindicated, but at no cost – there was no financial compensation. Lucerne was the first canton to carry out academic research into the history of its children's homes. The climax of the process of coming to terms with the past in Switzerland has so far been the aforementioned commemorative event that took place in Berne in the middle of April.

Compensation for the victims?

But that does not mean the issue has been dealt with. "There is still a long way to go," says Zurich SP National Councillor Jacqueline Fehr, who has regularly submitted motions in Parliament. She wants an inspection of the records for all those concerned but also more funding for historical research. Compensation payments as recompense for the forced labour that the care home and contract children had to undertake or as repayment for the social insurance contributions that were missed out on remains a contentious issue. There is also talk of a hardship fund because many of those concerned live in difficult circumstances. Federal Councillor Sommaruga made no commitment, which caused general disappointment. "If the suffering of the victims is only to be recognised by acceptance of culpa-

bility but not by means of compensation, then their rights will have been violated again," remarks the historian Huonker. He points to other countries, such as Ireland, which have paid out in similar cases. Huonker estimates the cost to Switzerland at up to 1.5 billion Swiss francs. The Federal Council has, even so, appointed a special commissioner to examine all the outstanding questions.

The former contract boy Roland M. Begert says that it is not about money for him. He did not even personally feel the need for an apology but he acknowledges that it might be different for many others. "Those previously in care had their dignity restored at the commemorative event. I really felt that," he remarks. His main objective now is to ensure that people do not forget. The next generation has to know what happened in Switzerland, he says.

SUSANNE WENGER is a freelance journalist living in Berne

www.verdingkinderreden.ch
www.netzwerk-verdingt.ch

THE CONTRACT BOY DREAMS OF ARGENTINA

This dark chapter was also explored cinematically for the first time in 2011 by the director Markus Imboden in the film "Der Verdingbub" (The Contract Boy). Set in the 1950s, the movie proved a big hit with Swiss cinema-goers. In the first few weeks over 200,000 people went to see the disturbing story of the two Emmental contract children, Max and Berteli. Max plays the accordion to forget his miserable existence. He discovers Argentinian tango at school. At the end of the film, the young Max joins a ship that will take him to Argentina. Roland M. Begert from Berne, who was a real contract boy, knows of many

people affected who turned their back on Switzerland at that time. They were deeply disillusioned with a society and state that had robbed them of their childhood. SWE



in Switzerland



Between two worlds: books and literary figures among the Swiss abroad

By Charles Linsmayer

*Born in Ticino, she wrote love poetry in Argentina
that is still causing a stir 100 years on – Alfonsina Storni*

The Chilean Nobel Prize winner Gabriela Mistral called her Argentinean peer Alfonsina Storni a “bee-wasp who danced a frantic swirl around her own body before bleeding to death in a seemingly playful pirouette”. She was describing not just the difficult life but also the solitary death of this extraordinary woman who was born in the village of Sala Capriasca in Ticino in 1892 and was regarded as one of Latin America’s great poets by the time of her death in 1938.

“The frantic swirl which she danced around her own body” refers to the circumstances in which Alfonsina Storni’s poetry was produced. She arrived in Argentina in 1896, aged four, with her father who went on a downward spiral – from being a brewer he ended up the drunken landlord of the “Café Suizo” in San Juan, which soon went to the wall – and with her mother who provided the necessities as a seamstress and teacher. At the age of 13 she was working in a hat factory, and at 15 she went on tour with a theatre company. In 1909, aged 17, she entered the teacher training college in Coronda, from which she was almost expelled when it became known in which establishments she was earning her tuition fees as a dancer! She had begun writing poetry at the age of 12 – much to the annoyance of her mother, who clipped her around the ear for it – and did not relinquish her passion even after a bad experience of love. In 1911, the 19-year-old, now a teacher in Rosario, was having a secret affair with a well-known politician and fled to the anonymity of Buenos Aires to avoid scandal when she became pregnant. She gave birth to the “love child” in this city, where she also worked as a saleswoman and later as a secretary. In 1916, she published her first work “La inquietud del rosal” at her own expense. “May God protect you from the impatience of the rose

bush,” she declared to friends, “but I wrote to stay alive”. In 1925, in her remorselessly audacious work “Ocre”, she declared to her unfaithful lover: “It is not you who betrays me. It is my dreams alone.”

She had long been famous when she visited her birthplace in Ticino for the last time in 1930. García Lorca also admired her and described her forsaken dreams in the lines: “Oh you beast, you perfidious soul, have you hidden yourself away and built a nest in your longings.” These forsaken dreams are there for all to see in the “Poemas de amor”, published in 1926, in which she again evokes the love

affair of 1911 but now completely withdraws into the dream where the lover is only tangible as a “fantasma aeriforme”, an “illusion of air”. Death was a major theme not just here but in her entire opus. In “Ocre”, she mockingly contrives an epitaph for her grave: “The woman who sleeps beneath the earth/ and ridicules life with the epitaph on her grave,/ wrote, because she was a woman, on her grave/ another lie – I have had enough.”

But what about the “playful pirouette” from which she bled to death, according to Gabriela Mistral? “No puedo más” (“I can’t take any more”), wrote Alfonsina Storni on a sheet of paper in a hotel room in Mar del Plata before, suffering from terminal cancer, she sought her death in the sea on 25 October 1938. Her final poem “Voy a dormirme” (“I am going to sleep”) appeared in the “La Nación” newspaper on the day of her death. The verses sing the praises of death like a lullaby but contain a hint of sarcasm as though they are rebuffing a final lover: “One more thing:/ if he calls again,/ tell him his efforts are in vain because I’ve gone.”

**Quotation**

“It is midnight. The city separates me from you – a crowded black mass, rows of houses, forests of lost yet lingering words, invisible clouds of microscopically small bodies. But I unfold my soul beyond myself, I reach you, I touch you. You are awake, you quiver when you hear me. My soul is so close to you, how it quivers together with you.”

(From “Poemas de amor”, Buenos Aires 1926)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Alfonsina Storni’s “Poemas de amor” are available from Limmat-Verlag, Zurich in German and Spanish, translated into German by Reinhard Streit. Available in Italian and Spanish from Casagrande, Bellinzona, translated into Italian by Augusta López-Bernasocchi.

CHARLES LINSMAYER is a literary scholar and journalist in Zurich

A home full of wanderlust

Karl Fürchtegott Grob from Switzerland set off for Sumatra in 1869, engaged thousands of men to labour on his plantations and became incredibly wealthy within just a few years. The villa that he built on his return to Zurich is a lavish treasure chest of irritatingly un-Swiss opulence. The magnificent home of this contentious Swiss abroad is now set to become the new flagship building of the Swiss Heritage Society.

By Marc Lettau



Villa Patumbah and park in Zollikerstrasse, Zurich

It is sometimes hard not to wax lyrical. The Villa Patumbah in Zurich, for example, leaves even the most sober-minded of people awestruck because the home built between 1883 and 1885 in the Riesbach district is a truly extraordinary architectural treasure trove. At first sight, the villa resembles a Mediterranean palazzo with its spacious grounds. But upon entering the gallery, which leads into the villa, visitors are abruptly transported to a far-flung exotic location. The painted canopy reveals the colour and design schemes of Sumatra. You then step into the brightly coloured world of Art Nouveau – admittedly just for a brief moment, as your attention is drawn to the three heavy doors that provide access to the magnificent rooms of the “bel étage”.

The door on the left leads into the “master’s room” and takes you back to the golden age of the Renaissance. The inlays are ornate and the coffered ceiling follows rigid design forms. The door on the

right leads into a light blue and pink icing sugar world of Rococo – this is the “lady’s room” with its gaiety transformed into architecture. Angels of varying sizes, bordered by ornate stucco decorations, hover over the ceiling. Between the master’s and lady’s rooms is the lounge entirely furnished with dark walnut. Here visitors

encounter the stately gravitas of Gothic style. Anyone who dines here banquets in a hall of knights.

Climbing the stairs to the upper floors we approach the zenith of opulence. After Art Nouveau, Renaissance, Rococo and Gothic, here we find an exotic blaze of colour, a two-storey hall extending to the roof with painted pillars and balustrades. Far-eastern mythical creatures – lucky dragons – adorn the glass dome, which lets daylight into the hall. A large, round glass lens is embedded into the floor of the hall; the light entering through the lucky dragon glass dome is reflected by the lens into the lower-lying “bel étage”, undoubtedly to give the splendour even greater lustre.

But is this not something of a colonial mishmash? The ostentatiously exhibited wealth of a super-rich man? Or is it great architecture? Modern-day architectural critics are inclined towards the latter viewpoint because a wide range of distinctive styles have been skilfully interwoven here



Karl Fürchtegott Grob

in a confined space to produce a harmonious whole.

Fürchtegott the fearless

This project in Riesbach was undoubtedly a highly ambitious one, and the man behind it was Karl Fürchtegott Grob (1832–1893). This adventure-seeking baker's son from Zurich's Niederdorf district was enticed by the great wealth on offer in the Dutch colony of Sumatra. In 1869, he sailed to Sumatra with his business partner Hermann Näher and initially attempted to grow nutmeg. However, he quickly switched to the cultivation of tobacco, where money could be made easily. Five years after their arrival, "Näher and Grob" had already secured 25,000 hectares of land. The work was arduous. Tropical rainforests had to be cleared for the plantations. The local farmers effectively ousted by colonisation could not be enticed to work on the plantations. "Näher and Grob" therefore concentrated on imported labour. Around 1875, the two Swiss tobacco growers employed some 2,500 workers from China and 1,800 from Java and India.

Grob was something of a soldier of fortune among Western businessmen, according to the historian Andreas Zangger, who wrote his dissertation on the impact of the Swiss in Sumatra and revealed that while Switzerland did not possess any colonies of its own it nevertheless developed a form of Swiss colonialism. Grob seized his opportunity at the right time, says Zangger: "Grob profited from the tobacco boom in Sumatra more than any other Swiss. By entering the business early, he very quickly made a fortune, whereas others lost a lot of money." The soldier of fortune returned to Switzerland after ten years. He left Sumatra in 1880 with caskets filled to the brim. The date of his return journey was also fortuitous as the violent eruption of the Krakatoa volcano destroyed large parts of Sumatra just three years later. Twenty cubic kilometres (20 billion cubic metres) of ash and rock were hurled into the Earth's atmosphere, and tens of thousands of people died in the shower of lava and ash and in the tsunami caused by the volcanic eruption.

Back in Zurich

Back in Zurich, Grob married the much younger Anna Dorothea Zundel and looked for a good piece of land with a view of Lake Zurich. He commissioned the two eminent



villa architects Alfred Chiodera and Theophil Tschudi to build his grandiose home. He set the architects few restrictions and provided them with almost unlimited resources.

But Grob's vision extended beyond architecture. With his villa, this cosmopolitan, well-travelled and wealthy man reinforced a commonly held ideal of home in Switzerland – home meant a dwelling rooted in the familiar. Having departed as a baker's son and returned a wealthy businessman, he also wanted to build the villa to create a new societal home to underline his credentials as a member of Zurich's upper echelons.

Amid all this single-mindedness, his dream villa with its display of splendour became a home full of wanderlust. PATUMBAH, written in big letters beneath the roof, means "much-longed-for land" in Malay. Although Grob had returned home he had seemingly not cast off his wanderlust. Such longings ended eight years after moving into the villa. In 1893, Grob died of a tropical illness picked up in Sumatra.

Undeniable significance

A man explores the world, acquires great wealth and builds himself a splendid villa – and everyone marvels at the incredible building. If this was all there was to the story of Grob and his villa it would be

somewhat banal. However, the fact is that much of the villa's significance is only now coming to light. The Villa Patumbah actually also reveals the "pragmatic" Swiss attitude towards the extraordinary. The social welfare institution Diakoniewerk Neumünster set up a retirement home in the villa in 1930 – no far-eastern colour then, but an unostentatious grey: most of the interior rooms were painted white to avoid overwhelming the pensioners with too much colour, frivolity and opulence. Urban development has also had an impact on the villa. The view of the lake has long since disappeared. Patumbah and its grounds were increasingly becoming the "much-longed-for land" of property developers, with the villa itself at risk of demolition and at the centre of political and legal wrangling for many years.

Swiss heritage centre

Over the past three years, the whitewashed art in the villa has been uncovered layer by layer. After years of uncertainty, the Patumbah Foundation has managed to save the estate and to secure funding to maintain it. In 2009, it also became clear what purpose the renovated villa would be put in future. The Swiss Heritage Society founded in 1905 is renting the Villa Patumbah and



- Glass dome and paintings on the exterior façade
- Gallery on the upper floor
- Entrance hall
- Paintings in the lady's room (from left to right)

using it for its heritage centre. Visitors to the centre, which will open in August, are to gain an insight into Swiss architectural culture through an interactive exhibition and various educational initiatives. The estate, which represents all of Switzerland's buildings of historical importance to a degree, is likely to revive the debate on how the nation should deal with its architectural heritage. Karin Artho, an art historian and head of the heritage centre that is set to open, believes the villa with its chequered history is a "godsend" for heritage. She remarks: "A visit to the Villa Patumbah will be a highly enjoyable experience even for people not especially interested in heritage." You could not wish for a better introduction, she says.

New concerns

The opening of the heritage centre has been accompanied by a development that is already causing concern to heritage conservationists. Karin Artho says: "The change in energy policy, which everyone is calling out for, has to be supported but not at the expense of our cultural heritage." In broad terms, the heritage conservationists fear that the withdrawal from nuclear power will see the heritage preservation threshold significantly lowered. Artho points out that

the installation of solar power units on historical buildings is no longer taboo in many places. Switzerland's heritage-protected buildings are also under pressure from the "necessary trend towards more densely concentrated construction". Artho is particularly concerned about the growing pressure to stop renovating houses and instead to replace them with energy-efficient new builds. Patumbah therefore also has symbolic significance for them. "Authorisation had been granted to demolish this villa as well," she says.

Is heritage conservation seeking to preserve Switzerland's urban backdrop? Artho rejects this claim. "A country's heritage must change. Every generation should leave its mark. What is constructed today should reflect modern design," she says. Heritage conservationists are nevertheless fighting to preserve buildings possessing particular qualities and "period character". This certainly does not just include historical buildings, but often contemporary ones, too: "We are also endeavouring to protect buildings that most people have not yet even recognised as being significant." Heritage conservationists have no interest in simply preserving architectural culture. "Saving a building that is not going to be restored makes no

sense," Artho says. In the case of the Villa Patumbah, the heritage conservationists themselves will oversee the building's restoration.

The greatest slave owner of his time?

All's well that ends well? The newly renovated Villa Patumbah calls for more light to be shed on the background to Grob's wealth. Grob's success is certainly not explained by hard graft alone. Was he a callous employer? To put it bluntly, was he one of the greatest Swiss slave owners of his time? There can be no doubt that Grob, too, treated his workers in Sumatra in a heavy-handed way. Chinese day labourers were regarded more like machines than human beings. Contemporaries nevertheless also described Grob as "generous, dynamic and knowledgeable". It is therefore conceivable that he was only "moderately exploitative". It is also said that Grob's widow Anna Dorothea bestowed the Villa Patumbah on Diakoniewerk Neumünster because she could not bear the thought that her home had been paid for with the blood of slaves.

MARC LETTAU is an editor with the "Swiss Review"

www.heimatschutz.ch
www.stiftung-patumbah.ch

"The number of preconceptions about French-speaking Switzerland is incredible"

Do we really know the history of our country? Have we forgotten what it is that binds the nation together?

The historian Georges Andrey, author of the bestseller *L'Histoire de la Suisse pour les Nuls* (Swiss History for Dummies), has just published *La Suisse romande, une histoire à nulle autre pareille* (French-speaking Switzerland, a history like no other). With a style of writing that will appeal to the general public, this native of Fribourg offers numerous new discoveries and clears up a number of preconceptions about the makeup of our country.

Interview by Alain Wey

You say in your conclusion that you wanted to clear up and dispense with received ideas about French-speaking Switzerland. So you're keen to set the record straight...

I collected a huge number of opinions and preconceptions about French-speaking Switzerland. Among other things, my team and I discovered *combourgeoisie* agreements. These are alliances between towns designed to provide mutual defence, to open up markets and, in the event of a conflict with a third party, for one town to act as mediator. There was therefore already a French-speaking Switzerland in the Middle Ages thanks to these treaties, which came into being between the 13th and 16th centuries. The citizens of Fribourg created alliances, for example, with the people of Payerne, then with those of Avenches and Berne.

How would you define French-speaking Switzerland?

It is the region of Switzerland where French is the dominant language but not the only one. German speakers have never said that Valais is a German-speaking canton. So Haut-Valais counts as French-speaking. And that means that the people count as "French-speaking", even though they speak German, just like the people of Sion in the canton of Fribourg. I did not write this history of French-speaking Switzerland in terms of a supposed conflict between French-speaking and German-speaking people. That is a false view of history because the *combourgeoisie* agreements focused on Fribourg and Berne, both founded by the House of Zähringen (1157 and 1191). The network of *combourgeoisie* agreements was built around this French- and German-speaking partnership between Berne and Fribourg. Later it spread to Biel, Neuchâtel, then Lausanne, Geneva and even Solothurn, Lucerne and Zurich.

We should not say that French-speaking Switzerland is a territory defined by separateness from the German-speaking part: that is not the case. Which is not to say that there aren't differences, but the main thing is that there is a single entity – the Swiss Confederation or previously the Helvetic Republic. It has to be said that the Helvetic Republic (1798–1803) was a real high point for Swiss national sentiment.

Between 1798 and 1815, Switzerland was occupied by France under Napoleon. What effect did this occupation have on national cohesion and what are the common misconceptions about this period?

It is what is known as the "black legend". The period from 1798 is considered to be a shameful episode in our national history. The land of William Tell a vassal of France? According to this black legend, nothing good happened between 1798 and 1815. It is even said that the 1803 Act of Mediation was Napoleon imposing his will without consulting the Swiss people, which is completely untrue. The Paris Consultation from November 1802 to February 1803 represented three months of hard, difficult negotiation between Bonaparte and the Swiss cantons, which consisted of two belligerent camps – the rebel army and the republican, government army. Napoleon therefore negotiated a new political state for Switzerland – a reunited Switzerland – with not 13 cantons as under the Ancien Régime, but 19. The subject and allied territories – Grisons, Saint Gallen, Aargau, Thurgau, Ticino and Vaud – were elevated to the status of sovereign cantons in 1803. And in these six new cantons, you have the four national languages. It was a great honour for them. This was all confirmed in 1815 with the Federal Pact. We accepted the entity constructed by Bonaparte, to which we add

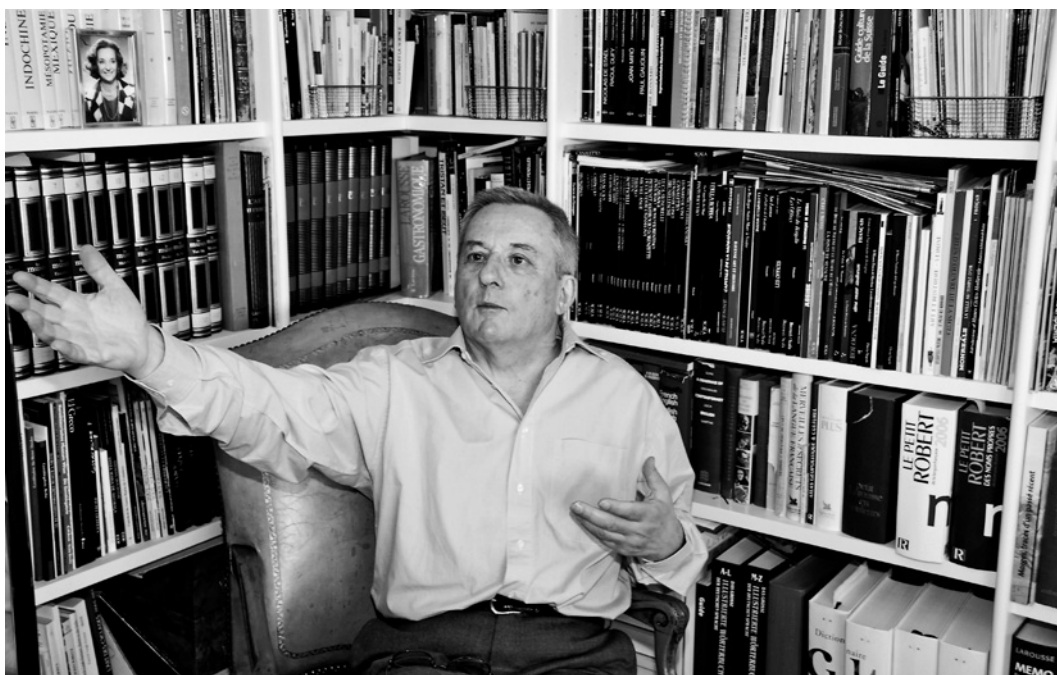
–ed the territories that had belonged to France – Valais, Neuchâtel and Geneva.

Yet historians have long decried this period in history.

Yes, it is condemned in all textbooks on Swiss history. They talk only about occupiers and the occupied. They forget about the advent of modern democracy and all our modern freedoms. Today, we are reappraising events more objectively. In terms of domestic institutions, modern Switzerland was born not in 1848 but in 1798. The problem was that there was no federalism. Centralism does not suit Switzerland. And who was the first to recognise that? Bonaparte! At the second session of the Paris Consultation he said: "Nature has made your country federal." He therefore demolished what the French Directorate had set up in 1798 in order to create a new federalism. If 1803 is celebrated in six cantons, it is because Bonaparte made the old Swiss of the 13 cantons recognise that the districts that had been allied with or subject to them were now also equal Swiss cantons. For once, this has to be said, loud and clear.

What is the secret to Switzerland's unity? What is the magic ingredient that holds the country together?

The desire to live together. We have constantly been creating links ever since the medieval *combourgeoisie* accords. It was the Reformation that broke this early solidarity. When the Bernese arrived in Lausanne in 1536, they made the people understand that they could not keep their alliance with Fribourg because the city still adhered to the old faith. The Reformation therefore had a dramatic effect. The second upheaval was the Sonderbund War – the Swiss civil war of 1847 – and the third the "Röstigraben" of the First World War.



Emeritus historian Georges Andrey, 75, was academic advisor to the Department of Foreign Affairs (until 2000) and Professor of Media History and Modern History at the University of Fribourg (until 2005).

What happened in Switzerland in 1914-1918?

The Helvetic consensus between French-speaking and German-speaking lands – between Francophiles (who supported France) and Germanophiles (who supported the German and Austro-Hungarian empires) – was falling apart. There was a very clear division. The German-speakers created the term “Röstigraben”. In French-speaking Switzerland, the term most often used is “dissent”. Then, in the inter-war period, French-language historians and journalists talked of a “moral divide”. This crisis was partly caused by the appointing of one Ulrich Wille as General of the Swiss Army, who was born in Hamburg, did not know a word of Swiss German and was married to a Bismarck. What did they think in Paris and London when they saw the attitude of the Swiss Federal Assembly? They thought: the Swiss are not neutral. Today, we are convinced that the Federal Assembly chose Wille, a Germanophile through and through, because it was confident that the Central Powers would be victorious. The period 1914-1918 is curious because on the one hand it cemented the French-speaking Swiss identity and on the other it represented a major crisis for coexistence between French-speaking Switzerland and German-speaking Switzerland.

Do you think the history of Switzerland is taught adequately in schools?

No, it is taught badly and isn't given enough importance. In school timetables, the number of lessons on Swiss history is ever decreasing. You realise that the method of teaching does not give pupils an overall view of the history of Switzerland in terms of a narrative. The chain of events is not clear. First there were three cantons, then four, then eight, then 13, 19, 22 and finally 23. At the very least, you need to explain that. Teachers are abandoning political history and concentrating on social and economic history. When young people leave school, they do not know much about Swiss history.

Are the Swiss badly informed about their history?

So it would seem. I know a grammar school teacher in Liestal and he teaches almost no Swiss history. He spends more than half the time on the Second World War, the atomic bomb and the concentration camps. They teach the dramatic events, but who governs in Switzerland, what our past is, where we come from, how there came to be French speakers in Switzerland, all that is not taught. If we do not explain history, we cannot understand why we are all together. That's dangerous.

Dangerous?

Yes, because there is the danger of diluting national identity. You end up saying, why shouldn't Europe consist of an even greater number of states? You could make

states out of states. It is one possible scenario. A Europe of 27 could very well become a Europe of 50. So why shouldn't there be a German-speaking Switzerland, a French-speaking Switzerland and an Italian-speaking Switzerland all existing as microstates? We already have Luxembourg, Monaco, and San Marino. The potential for splits, for example in Belgium, or for Spain and Catalonia, cannot be ruled out. At that point, the idea of a voluntary nation will risk being lost and we will end up giving priority to language.

ALAIN WEY is an editor at «Swiss Review»

BOOKS: *La Suisse romande, une histoire à nulle autre pareille!*, Éditions du Belvédère, Fleurier, 2012. *L'Histoire de la Suisse pour les Nuls*, First Éditions, Paris, 2007. *Schweizer Geschichte für Dummies*, Wiley-VCH Verlag, Weinheim, 2009.

A new age for surfers

Over the last 10 years, the sport of kitesurfing has become a permanent feature on Swiss lakes, but it remains restricted to very limited areas. The Federal Assembly has now decided to lift its ban at national level. We get the lowdown from kitesurfing teacher Marc Maurer and talk to Fribourg native Manuela Jungo who finished 5th in the World Cup in 2012.

By Alain Wey

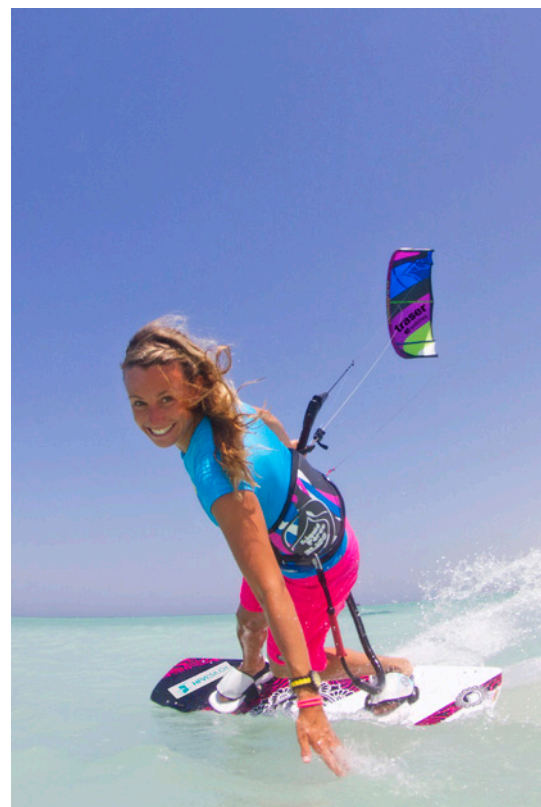
Carried by the wind, they glide and skip over our lakes and over distant seas. For more than a decade, kitesurfers have been winning over fans in Switzerland with their unique blend of surfing and power kite. The enthusiasm for this sport is so great that it has become political, with tough restrictions in place on some Swiss lakes. In other areas the sport is banned completely due to the danger it represents to other lake users. The ban is opposed by a committee of enthusiasts who took their case all the way to Berne. They argue that the discipline has developed enormously over the last 10 years, with rigorous safety regulations in place and training offered by specialist schools. Last December, the Federal Assembly lifted its ban on kitesurfing on Swiss lakes. Now the cantons have to define zones. Mario Kaufmann, vice-president of the Swiss Kitesurfing Association (Kitegenossen or Kitesurferklub Schweiz), estimates that it will take until 2014 for the cantons to endorse the national decision and to choose the parts of the lakes where kitesurfing will be allowed. For now, kiteboarders have a few areas in Switzerland where they are allowed to practise their sport, but they frequently cross the borders to neighbouring countries in order to give free rein to their passion without getting caught up in the “traffic jams” that are all too often seen in Switzerland.

Lac Silvaplana is the Mecca

“Kitesurfing is not a crime”: the famous cry of skateboarders in the 1980s has now been light heartedly reappropriated by kiteboarders. The sport was invented in France in 1996 and quickly went on to conquer Europe and Switzerland. Inflatable tubes have improved the stability of the kites and made it possible to start out directly in the water. The board itself can look like the traditional iconic surfboard, but also like a wakeboard. Marc “Fish” Maurer, 48, fell under the kite-surfing spell in 1998 in Tarifa, Spain and in Venezuela. He runs the Kiteswiss School in

Zurich. “The really great thing about this sport is that you can also do it in the snow in winter with a snowboard or skis (snowkiting),” says Maurer. Or on the land with a skateboard fitted with extra-big wheels. What’s more, you don’t need a lot of equipment, like you do for windsurfing, says Maurer. A native of Zurich, he runs intensive week-long kitesurfing courses for his students in Egypt, Morocco and Brazil, where the limitations imposed by the natural features of Swiss lakes (trees, cliffs and winds that can change direction very quickly) are no longer an issue. “Understanding the winds, knowing the safety rules and being able to assess the weather conditions are essential when you’re learning,” says Maurer. In Switzerland, the most highly prized spots are on lakes Constance, Neuchâtel, Biel and Silvaplana (Grisons). “On Lake Geneva, it gets difficult because there can be as many as 20 different wind directions,” he says. The Kitegenossen Association also offers a map of spots and places where kitesurfing is permitted.

Lake Silvaplana remains the Mecca for kitesurfing in Switzerland, with the Kitesailing School and the Swiss Kitesailing Association. The Swiss “King of the Lake” championships have taken place in October in Portalban on the southern shores of Lake Neuchâtel since 2003, and the organisers have been working closely with the experts in Silvaplana since 2008. Kitesurfing offers several competitive categories, the main ones being freestyle (with jumps) and speed racing. The International Sailing Federation had announced that kitesurfing would replace windsurfing at the 2016 Olympic Games, but this announcement was subsequently withdrawn. However, the question is likely to arise again in 2020. With more than 3,000 kitesurfers, Switzerland could certainly hope to win a few medals!



Manuela Jungo in action

www.kitegenossen.ch

"You can achieve anything if you really want it!"

Interview with Manuela Jungo

Manuela Jungo, 29, has been competing in the kitesurfing world cup (www.prokite-tour.com) since 2012, where she finished in fifth place in the freestyle discipline. A native of Düdingen, in the canton of Fribourg, Manuela Jungo is the only Swiss woman in the world-class category and is able to make a living from her sport through sponsorship deals. "My career path is different from that of many other elite athletes," she says. "I first studied economics at university and then worked as a manager for a watch-making company in Biel. Then I took a big break from work so that I could go kitesurfing every day, and I'm still on that break!"

How did you get started?

I discovered kitesurfing in 2006 when I went to learn English in Hawaii as part of my studies. That was where I saw a kite-surfer for the first time. I was completely enthralled. Then, during my long summer vacation I went to the Dominican Repub-

lic, where I worked as a marketing assistant in the mornings and learned to kitesurf in the afternoons.

Where do you go kitesurfing in Switzerland?

On Lake Biel. From La Neuveville and Ipsach. When I worked in Biel, I was sometimes able to take a couple of hours' lunch break to go and kitesurf. Then, in 2010, I resigned from my job so that I could go and kitesurf at a suitable location every day. I trained hard and I made quite a bit of progress. Then I found sponsors who provided the financial backing for my passion. I had my first go at the World Cup in 2012, an event where I could measure myself against the best in the field. I am the first Swiss woman to take part in the whole World Tour.

How did 2012 go for you?

I made a start with the competition in Dakhla in Morocco, going in fifth place. I even won my head-to-head against the then world champion. At the Mondial du Vent in France, I was awarded best newcomer. And in Haikou, in China, I reached fourth place. The standard of the four best world-class competitors is very high but they have all been competing in the World Tour for more than four years. For me, it is an amazing success to be one of the top five in the world. Last March, I finished fifth again in Dakhla. My goal for 2013 is to defend my place as fifth in the world.

So from March to December, you are travelling all over the world. Where are the next competition destinations after Morocco and France?

Italy and Germany, Spain, Egypt, China, New Caledonia and Australia.

How are competitions organised?

They take place through knock-out rounds. Two kitesurfers go head-to-head for seven minutes. You can do 12

tricks, from 23 different categories. Out of these categories, you choose five that will earn you points. The competition is also strategic as you choose what risks to take depending on the strength of your opponent. There are also all the meteorological and technical aspects to take into account. For example, I have to decide which kite I will use: there are different sizes depending on the strength of the wind (11 m2, 9 m2, etc.)

When you practise an extreme sport, there are bound to be falls...

Yes, it's inevitable. When I'm trying out a new trick, I might fall anything up to 500 times before I succeed. Sometimes when I'm training, I end up falling all the time. I always want to get better, but you can only do that if you fall so you can then learn from your mistakes. Sometimes it is difficult, especially as I don't have a coach. But the pleasure I get from this sport always gives me fresh motivation. It's the joy of being in the water, the sense of freedom and the ambition constantly to learn and improve!

What is the atmosphere like in the kitesurfing world?

During competitions we are like a family because there are not that many of us in this sport. There are around 15 women and 30 men. We are all friends. Lots come from Europe, and there are others from New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, etc. It is very interesting comparing our different experiences and cultures.

What is your philosophy?

You can achieve anything if you really want it. When I gave up work so I could practise kitesurfing intensively, lots of people had doubts about my decision. You always have to try new things and not rest on your laurels. That's how you keep moving upwards. You have to live your dreams – not just talk about them but make them happen!

ALAIN WEY is an editor at "Swiss Review"





OSA advice

Why are some Swiss nationals living abroad able to vote electronically while others are not?

Many Swiss nationals living abroad are eagerly awaiting the chance to vote electronically. In practice they are often unable to exercise their right to vote due to lengthy delays in the postal system making it impossible either to receive their voting papers in time or to send them back before the deadline. Electronic voting would offer a solution to this problem, which is why the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad launched a petition in 2012 asking for the introduction of electronic voting for all citizens to be established by the 2015 federal elections. This petition was handed over to Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter at the last Congress of the Swiss Abroad.

Authority for organising elections lies with the cantons. That means that it is each individual canton that is responsible for deciding how people can vote. Some cantons have launched electronic-voting pilot projects. The cantons that have gone down this road are Aargau, Berne, Basel-City, Fribourg, Geneva, Grisons, Lucerne, Neuchâtel, St Gallen, Schaffhausen, Solothurn and Thurgau. Having been one of the first cantons to take action in this respect, Zurich has now temporarily suspended the option of electronic voting for its citizens until an internet voting system can be introduced for the whole population.

Many Swiss nationals living abroad who exercise their right to vote in the above-mentioned cantons are therefore able to have their say via the internet provided they live in one of the countries of the European Union, Liechtenstein, Andorra, Northern Cyprus, Vatican City, Monaco, San Marino or countries that are signatories to the Wassenaar Arrangement. That covers nearly 90% of Swiss nationals living abroad. This explains why some people can vote electronically while others cannot.

More and more cantons are working on the possibility of offering internet voting to Swiss citizens living abroad and it is therefore to be hoped that increasing numbers of Swiss nationals living abroad will be able to take advantage of this additional voting option soon.

With regard to federal government, a third report on electronic voting is ex-

pected to be published by mid-2013. This government report should draw conclusions from past experiences and suggest some avenues that can be explored in the future.

For more information:

Federal Chancellery website: www.bk.admin.ch

> Thèmes > Droits politiques > Vote électronique

www.wassenaar.org

SARAH MASTANTUONI, Head of the 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.

I was 15, and it was my first time away from home

In 1978, José-Walter Sutter from Spain attended a walking camp organised by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA). He grew up in Spain. He talked to Simone Riner about his experiences and his relationship with Switzerland.

How did you come to take part in the camp in Switzerland?

In my family we always had a strong awareness of our roots. That trip to Switzerland was an important experience and a good opportunity to get to know my homeland better, practise the language a



José-Walter Sutter comes from Alt St. Johann in the canton of St. Gallen. He lives in Murcia in southeastern Spain, where his parents also live. Sutter works in IT training and is very keen on sports, being an athletics and basketball coach. His father, Carlos Sutter (77), was a professional footballer with Real Madrid in 1956/57.

bit and, of course, meet other Swiss living abroad.

What did you do at the camp?

We met up in Berne, where we started off from, and we hiked a stretch every day. We also travelled by rail, bus and boat. We visited places like Charmey, Gruyères, Châteaue d'Oex, Erlenbach, Interlaken and Thun.

What was a typical day like?

We started walking after breakfast, and about halfway to our destination we would stop for lunch. We didn't walk as one big group but in smaller groups, each with its own leader. After we arrived at our destination we usually had time to chat or play sport before dinner. On occasion, we were able to go to a café or disco in the evening. But we always had to be in bed early because we needed to recover after a long day's hiking and sightseeing.

What are some of your favourite memories?

The people at the camp were really nice, especially the girls. I also loved the scenery in the Alps, swimming in cold lakes and rivers, and, of course, playing football in the evenings in spite of the long mountain walks.

Were you ever homesick, being alone and so far from home?

I was 15, and I had travelled to Switzerland on my own. It was my first time away from home without my parents and brothers. I felt a little homesick now and again, but I also had the same feeling once the camp was over because I left a lot of friends behind.

Are you still in touch with any of the people you met at the camp?

I corresponded with one of the leaders, Elisabeth König, for a while, but we lost touch quite some time ago.

And what is your relationship with Switzerland today?

I'm still in touch with a few cousins and their families, but we see each other very rarely. We're planning to meet up next summer in the Sierra Nevada in Grenada. I follow Swiss news in "Swiss Review" and online, on swissinfo, for example. That's how I recognised myself in an old photo of the

walking camp that appeared in “Swiss Review”!



Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

Alpenstrasse 26

3006 Berne

SWITZERLAND

Tel +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01;

www.sjas.ch

Information about the winter camps will be published in the next “Swiss Review”. You can register for the winter camps online at www.sjas.ch from mid-September 2013.

DEPENDENT ON DONATIONS

For many years, the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) has been organising camps to give children with Swiss roots all over the world the opportunity to discover their homeland. The organisation is particularly keen to give children from lower-income families a chance to visit Switzerland. To continue this tradition, it depends on donations.

Why not become a donor for the ZEWO-certified Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad?

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Youth seminar at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad

This year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad will be devoted to the question of Switzerland's role in a globalised world. Traditionally, the congress is preceded by a seminar for young people, and OSA hopes to welcome as many young Swiss abroad as possible to Davos for what promises to be an exciting and entertaining week.

Young people today are born into a globalised world. They take it for granted that they encounter the same consumer brands all over the globe. In India, people listen to the same songs on their smartphones as in Australia. People in Scandinavia wear the same summer fashions as in North America, and in southern Europe the films at the cinema are the same as in South America.

Young people have to learn to forge their future lives in this fast-moving, networked and high-tech world. In today's globalised economy, they are consumers, competitors and contributors. At OSA, we believe that young people have a great deal to contribute on this year's topic.

New media

One particular focus of the seminar will be the importance of communication in a globalised world. Thanks to new technologies we can now access information at any time and from any location. If something major happens somewhere in the world, news of it is available instantly everywhere. We can take part in discussion and debate in real time. So, new media will be a very important topic in the young people's seminar.

Of course, the time in Davos – a famous holiday resort and conference venue –



should also be fun, full of activity and entertainment. Hiking, a dip in Lake Davos, ball sports and games are all part of the programme.

Finally, the group will take part in the Congress of the Swiss Abroad and present the results of their project week to the audience.

You can sign up for the seminar and all the other offers for young people online: www.aso.ch



Get closer to heritage.

Our heritage is unique and you can play a part in protecting it. Conserving our precious buildings for future generations means protecting them, breathing life into them and repair. Your will, through a bequest or legacy, adds another stone to the work in progress. You can find out about this from your notary or order the information from Schweizer Heimatschutz: www.heimatschutz.ch. You can also call us on 044 254 57 00 where our managing director, Adrian Schmid, will be happy to answer your questions.

Schweizer Heimatschutz, PO Box 1122, 8032 Zürich
adrian.schmid@heimatschutz.ch, 044 254 57 00, www.heimatschutz.ch



SCHWEIZER HEIMATSCHUTZ
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 PROTECZIUN DA LA PATRIA



Switzerland vs. globalisation?

The issue of globalisation and its consequences for Switzerland will be the central topic of the 91st Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Davos.

In an increasingly globalised world, Switzerland must strengthen its position both in order to remain competitive economically and in order to be able to continue to play a role on the international political scene. Banking secrecy cannot survive for much longer and our country is not a member of the European Union. What strategy should be adopted in such a situation? What assets does Switzerland have and how can they be used to best advantage?

The Swiss abroad are perhaps our country's trump card in understanding the

challenges that lie ahead. Switzerland should make better use of the international mobility of its citizens.

This congress aims to demonstrate the importance of human networks in the context of globalisation. This means explaining that individual action is of vital significance alongside collective action, whether on the part of the State or businesses or in terms of cooperation within international organisations. Individual networks themselves are also becoming more international and are contributing to this move towards globalisation.

Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, head of the Federal Department of Finance, will also be taking part in the congress. She will focus on the impact of the globalised economy and will highlight the significance of the Swiss abroad for our national economy. Some 10% of our national population lives abroad. Also present will be Franz von

Däniken, former Secretary of State and Political Director of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. He will look back over past years to point out the developments that have led to the current situation with regard to globalisation. He will also explain the major challenges facing Switzerland over the coming years.

Workshops led by experts and federal parliamentarians will provide an opportunity for delegates to express their views and to debate the issue of globalisation from the points of view of migration, the economy and whether or not to participate in international institutions.

This will be also be an occasion to socialise and enjoy cultural events.

*More information and registration documents can be found on our website:
<http://aso.ch/en/offers/congress-of-the-swiss-abroad/2013>*

91st Congress of the Swiss Abroad: 16 to 18 August 2013, Davos Congress Centre

Switzerland vs. globalisation will be the main topic of debate at the 91st Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Davos. Among the speakers will be Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf.

More on this topic and the latest information on the 2013 Congress can be found in German at: www.aso.ch/de/angebote/auslandschweizer-kongress.

Put the Congress dates in your diary today. We look forward to seeing you!

Please send me the registration documents for the 91st Congress of the Swiss Abroad (16 to 18 August 2013 in Davos).

My address is:

Surname: _____ first name: _____
Address: _____
Country: _____ postcode/city: _____
Email: _____

Please write clearly in block capitals

The registration documents are available in two languages: ☐ German ☐ French (Please check the box of the language required.)

Send the completed form to: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad Communications & Marketing, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND, Fax: +41 (0)31 356 61 01 or email us at communication@aso.ch





The HB-SIA on a flight above Zermatt

"An idea born in Switzerland"

The solar powered aircraft designed by aviation pioneers Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg is the best advertisement for Switzerland as a global leader in innovation. This solar aircraft, registration code HB-SIA, therefore officially represents a modern Switzerland that has more to offer than cheese and chocolate. The pilots wear the Swiss crest on their jackets and systematically highlight the project's Swiss origins when making public appearances.

The latest stage of the project – Solar Impulse's "Across America Mission" stretched from San Francisco (California) via Phoenix (Arizona), Dallas (Texas) and other stops along the way to Washington D.C. and New York City. The slogan used was, "An idea born in Switzerland". Presence Switzerland took advantage of the opportunity to promote its interests and conducted an information campaign during the "Across America Mission" together with the Swiss representations in the USA.

Feat of technical ingenuity

With its enormous wingspan, which at 63.40 metres equates to that of an Airbus A340, and its relatively light weight, equivalent to that of a mid-size car, the solar aircraft possesses unparalleled design and aerodynamic properties. The aircraft, which is fitted with 11,628 photovoltaic cells, is designed for day and night flights at an average speed of 70 kmph. The objective behind the Solar Impulse project is to make a contribution to research and innovation in the field of renewable energies and to highlight how clean technologies can reduce the consumption of natural resources and dependence on fossil fuels.

Following its maiden flight at the end of 2009, the first 26-hour night-time flight took place in July 2010. The first intercontinental flight was made between Europe and Africa two years later, in June 2012, when Solar Impulse flew to the Moroccan capital of Rabat with a stopover in Madrid. The vision of flying over long distances without fossil fuel had thus become a reality. The long-term objective is to fly around the world in 2015 with the second prototype aircraft HB-SIB.

Federal government actively supports the project

In line with the 2012–2015 strategic objectives for national communication, the Federal Council aims to use the project's international media coverage to highlight Switzerland's prowess in the fields of innovation, science and education. Presence Switzerland has therefore concluded a contract with Solar Impulse on behalf of the Federal Council. The federal government has supported Solar Impulse technically, administratively, logistically and financially since the launch of the project. In collaboration with the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport, this support also includes the use of hangars at the military air bases in Dübendorf and Payerne. Solar Impulse is constructing the second prototype of the solar aircraft in Dübendorf, and test flights will be carried out in Payerne.

Images of the "Across America Mission" and full information on the pilots and Solar Impulse can be found at <http://solarimpulse.com>

*Press release on the collaboration between federal government and Solar Impulse
<http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/recent/media/single.html?id=47752>*

A new directorate at the FDFA

The Directorate for European Affairs (DEA) was established at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs at the beginning of 2013. However, the new directorate does not mean that the FDFA will be undertaking any additional new tasks – the DEA is actually the new name for the former Integration Office, the federal government's centre of expertise for European policy issues. Only the name and its organisational integration have changed; the DEA is no longer attached to two departments (FDFA/FDEA) as the Integration Office was, but is instead completely integrated into the FDFA.

The cantons, as well as offices and organisational units throughout the entire federal administration, maintain contact with EU bodies and institutions based on their field of expertise. These are key contact partners in foreign and economic policy for Switzerland as a non-member state because neighbouring states have fully or partially transferred powers to the EU or because pan-European affairs are coordinated by the EU. The DEA's main responsibilities include bringing these strands together, coordinating relations and conducting negotiations in conjunction with other federal offices. It ensures clarity and coherence in Swiss policy on Europe. It also provides the public with information on Switzerland's European policy and the European integration process.

Consolidation and development

One of the DEA's main tasks is the systematic and efficient implementation and application of existing bilateral agreements. The Directorate also conducts negotiations on new bilateral agreements with the EU together with the offices responsible. Negotiations are currently taking place in the fields of electricity and emissions tra-

ding. Negotiations are also being conducted regarding collaboration with the EU on chemical safety. Swiss involvement in various EU programmes will also have to be renewed shortly in the areas of education and research and the MEDIA film promotion programme.

A further important aspect of the relations between Switzerland and the EU are the so-called institutional issues. These include the adoption of EU law for existing bilateral market access agreements as well as their monitoring and the resolution of any potential disputes between the EU and Switzerland. Both sides are seeking a solution to these issues in order to renew the bilateral approach. Initial exploratory talks have been held, and a joint report is set to follow. On the basis of this report, the Federal Council and the EU will decide, independently of one another, on the initiation of negotiations on this matter.

From Integration Office to DEA

The DEA was founded in 1961 as the FDFA/FDEA Integration Office to coordinate relations with the then European Economic Community (EEC). A tightly-knit set of treaties has been developed with the EU over the years. Milestones include the 1972 free trade agreement between Switzerland and the EU's predecessor organisation, the EEC, and bilateral agreements I and II of 1999 and 2004.

Even though economic and monetary union remains the key focus of EU activities, these also today include matters such as the free movement of persons, Schengen/Dublin, education and research, air and land transport, and peace-building efforts. The Integration Office's remit has therefore expanded. As a result, the Federal Council adopted a resolution during the 2011 administrative reform to integrate it entirely into the FDFA as the DEA.

Information on Swiss policy on the European Union: www.europa.admin.ch/index.html?lang=en

ABC OF EUROPEAN POLICY

The "ABC of European policy" is now available as part of the FDFA's ABC series. With a keyword-based glossary, the publi-



cation explains the most important terms in European policy and provides an overview of political and economic relations between Switzerland and the EU.

It can be ordered free of charge in German, French, Italian and English at www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch or from BBL, Verkauf Bundespublikationen, CH-3003 Berne.

All publications in the ABC series can be found at www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/doc/publi.html

Publications



Who sits in Parliament? How is legislation drawn up? What does the Federal Council do? Where do federal government's 38,000 employees work? What are the Federal Supreme Court's responsibilities? Answers to

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Online registration for Swiss citizens
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www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris

these and other questions can be found in “The Swiss Confederation – A Brief Guide”, a brochure published by the Federal Chancellery. It is aimed at everyone interested in the Swiss system of government.

“The Swiss Confederation – A Brief Guide 2013” can be ordered free of charge in German, French, Italian, Romansh and English at www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch or from BBL, Verkauf Bundespublikationen, 3003 Berne, Switzerland.

Important notices:

Passports from 2003 expire this year

Remember to renew your Swiss passport early at the embassy or consulate general where you are registered. Once you have submitted your passport application, you can book an appointment to record your biometric data at a suitably equipped representation abroad or at a passport office in Switzerland.

PLEASE NOTE: Embassies, consulates general and the passport offices in Switzerland have already recorded a sharp rise in passport applications – up to 40% more applications than usual in some cases – with longer waiting times. Your Swiss representation will be happy to inform you about the procedure and the estimated amount of time that you should allow for the issuing of a new passport.

Address

Inform your embassy or consulate general of your email address and mobile phone number or of any changes to them. Register at www.swissabroad.ch to ensure you do not miss any communications (“Swiss Review”, newsletters from your

representation, etc.). The latest “Swiss Review” and previous issues can be read and/or printed out at any time at www.revue.ch. “Swiss Review” (and “Gazzetta Svizzera” in Italy) is sent elec-

tronically (via email or as an app for iPad and Android Tablet PCs) or as a printed edition free of charge to all households of Swiss citizens abroad who are registered with an embassy or consulate general.

ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

The proposals for the federal referendum on 22 September 2013 had not been announced by the time of going to press.

All information on the proposals (voting pamphlet, committees, party information, e-voting, etc.) can be found at www.ch.ch/abstimmungen. The final referendum date in 2013 is 24 November.

POPULAR INITIATIVES

The following federal popular initiatives were launched in the first few months of 2013 (deadlines for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- Lebensschutz stopft Milliardenloch (Protection of life to plug the billion-franc hole) (26.08.2014)
- Für eine faire Verkehrsfinanzierung (For fair financing of transport) (05.09.2014)
- AHVplus: für eine starke AHV (AHVplus: for a strong old-age and survivors' insurance system) (12.09.2014)
- Mehr Ausbildungsplätze in der Humanmedizin – Stopp dem drohenden Ärztemangel! (More training places in human medicine – stop the impending shortage of doctors!) (09.10.2014)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at: www.bk.admin.ch under Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

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

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Little gems



Chinese warriors in Berne

Something unusual is going on at the Historical Museum of Berne. The turreted façade of the traditional building on Helvetiaplatz is concealed by a specially erected entrance pavilion. No effort has been spared to create a fitting reception for the “eighth wonder of the world” in the Swiss capital. At the special exhibition entitled “Qin – The Eternal Emperor and his Terracotta Warriors”, visitors can see ten of the 8,000 or so original life-size figures and other objects from China. The Terracotta Army is one of the world’s most spectacular archaeological discoveries. The warriors come from a huge burial site dating from the time

of Qin (259–210 BC), first discovered in 1974. Visitors can explore the exhibition with the help of explanatory texts, films, audio guides and an extensive catalogue, which bring to life a crucial period in Chinese history. Emperor Qin is a somewhat controversial figure. The first emperor of a unified China, he had no qualms about imposing his policies, started the building of the Great Wall, and standardised coins, weights and measures as well as the Chinese script. JM

The exhibition can be seen at the Historical Museum of Berne until 17 November. Opening times: Tue-Sun 9am–6pm. www.qin.ch



From conservative to cool

Everyone knows braces are useful and practical. But did you know they can also be cool, casual and even elegant? They can be worn by anyone from toddlers to grandfathers, and they have become a popular accessory among trendsetters. Just under four years ago, clothing designer Anna de Weerd and former electrician Markus Elmiger, both from Lucerne, turned their love of braces into a business. They called their label “Treger”. All their braces are hand-crafted. They are available in a range of widths, in elastic or fabric, and with different patterns, from discreet to



eye-catching. The braces are secured to the trousers with clips or fine nappa leather tabs and, of course, Swiss materials are used wherever possible. All models can be ordered online, and de Weerd and Elmiger also accept custom orders. Standard “Treger” are priced at between CHF 59 for children’s models and CHF 89 for exclusive adult models. BE

www.treger.ch

Telling it like it is:

the phenomenon of Dölf Ogi

He may have left the national government more than 12 years ago, but Adolf Ogi remains as popular and omnipresent as ever. And if you read “So wa(h)r es”, the biography of the former Federal Councillor published to coincide with his 70th birthday, you will easily understand why. Ogi’s lasting appeal has nothing to do with PR and everything to do with the authenticity of this exceptional politician. The story is told in a fascinating way, peppered with anecdotes and scenes from his life, as well as a few previously unknown facts. The authors succeed in showing how Ogi “works”. How he overcame tough situations with unconventional methods, for example, not just in the Federal Council but also in his encounters with major international figures. A whole chapter is dedicated to the close relationship between Dölf Ogi and Ruth Dreifuss, also a member of the Federal Council but with the Social Democratic Party rather than Ogi’s Swiss People’s Party. The selection of photos, in the style of the “Schweizer Illustrierte” magazine, will please those who like pictures. They are all well-known faces, from Bill Clinton to Vreni Schneider, and all are with Dölf Ogi. JM

Georges Wüthrich, André Häfliger: “Dölf Ogi. So wa(h)r es” (in German). Ringier AG (“Schweizer Illustrierte”) and Weltbild Verlag; 2012; 176 pages; CHF 39.90 (incl. DVD)
In French: “Dölf Ogi, c’est formidable!”, Editions Attinger, Hauterive; 2013; 180 pages; CHF 42



Bulletins

National Council opposes closure of representations abroad

Plans by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) to close the Swiss embassy in Guatemala and the consulate general in Chicago were met with opposition in Parliament. At the end of April, the National Council, by a large majority, called upon the Federal Council to abandon plans to close the two representations. The vote was triggered by proposals presented by the Council's Foreign Affairs Committee and National Councillor Roland Büchel (SVP). He is also a member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

Fewer asylum applications

Asylum applications fell by 19.6 % year-on-year to 5,759 in the first three months of 2013. Compared with the final quarter of 2012, the reduction amounted to 9.6 %. These figures were provided by the Federal Statistical Office. The Federal Office for Migration has indicated that the fall in applications is due to various measures introduced by federal government to avoid clearly unfounded and multiple applications. 3,508 people whose asylum applications were rejected left Switzerland in the first quarter of 2013.

Energy efficiency initiative

The signatures for the so-called energy efficiency initiative were submitted in mid-May. This popular initiative demands that power consumption in 2035 must not exceed 2011 levels. Federal government and the cantons would be obliged to implement measures to attain this target. The proposal's initiators say that the collection of the signatures required (100,000) was easily achieved.

Construction boom in prospect

Significantly more planning applications were submitted and ap-

proved in Switzerland last year than in the previous year. Consent was granted to 71% more planning applications in the last three months of 2012 than in the same quarter of 2011. The construction of 22,260 homes in total was approved between October and December. According to the Federal Statistical Office, 75,600 homes were under construction at the end of December.

Less wine being drunk

276 million litres of wine were consumed in Switzerland in 2012. That is 6.6 million litres or 2.2% less than in 2011. Consumption of domestic wine fell by as much as 3.5%. The market share of Swiss wine stands at 36.3%, with that of white wine twice as high as that of red. Wine production in 2012 was over 10% below output in 2011 due to less than ideal weather conditions.

Research into causes of death

62,649 people died in Switzerland in 2010, according to the Federal Statistical Office. Several illnesses were the cause of death in over 80% of cases. The most common cause of death in people aged over 80 is cardiovascular disease, whereas in those below the age of 80 it is cancer.

Population continues to grow

8,036,900 people were living in Switzerland at the end of 2012. That is 82,300 or 1% more than in the previous year. The birth surplus of 17,500 and the increase in immigrant numbers by 64,800 contributed to the rise in the resident population. The number of foreign nationals stood at 1,869,000 at the end of 2012, which was 53,000 more than at the end of 2011. The gender distribution is 4.1 million women and 4 million men.

Quotes

"Such arrogance! Once an idiot, always an idiot."

Philippe Müller, President of the Swiss FDP, about a manager he does not wish to name

"Conceive complex ideas, but express them simply, not the other way round."

Franz Josef Strauss (1915–1988), German CSU politician

"A few black sheep are usually enough to tarnish the image of all those who conduct themselves properly."

Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann on World Consumer Rights Day

"The destiny of the nation depends on its nutrition."

Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

"The issue of international law versus the rights of the people will be on the agenda."

Toni Brunner, SVP President, on his party's plans for the coming months

"Security is not achieved by erecting fences but rather by opening doors."

Urho Kaleva Kekkonen (1900–1986), Finish politician and President of State 1956–1982

"Common sense can make up for almost any level of education, but no level of education can make up for common sense."

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), German philosopher



Few Swiss could fail to recognise Franz Hohler since everyone has come across him at some point in their lives. Generations of children have seen him on television playing the cello and telling stories, the politically minded have hailed him at anti-nuclear demonstrations, and those of more mature years enjoy listening to his walking tales. Now aged 70, on 12 May he was presented with the 2013 Literature Prize at Solothurn's Literary Days. The jury said: "With his off-the-wall humour and passionate commitment he has always stood up for the invisible, the weak and the child." Franz Hohler's work has been translated into many non-Swiss languages: in Hindi, for example, his story "The Cake" is called "Dhokha"; in Korean his "If I had a Wish" is "Nae suouan eun", and in Arabic "Jungle Desk" is "Roula le edrel". His subtle, philosophical brand of humour is world-famous. He writes of himself and other humorists: "People say that humorists are either deadly ill or deadly serious, but actually I'm quite cheerful sometimes."



Ballenberg, the open-air museum of rural culture, Bernese Oberland

Long live traditions!

This summer, become a craftsman, a specialist in local gastronomy or turn back the clock.

A summer devoted to living traditions

Switzerland Tourism is celebrating living traditions throughout the whole of the summer, giving people the chance to (re)discover typical regional events, such as Herens cattle fights with their heavyweight combatants, which keep thousands of spectators enthralled in Valais in the spring. We are paying homage to traditional craftsmanship with numerous offers enabling visitors to learn about the carving of Tschäg-gätta wooden masks (carnival characters) in the Lötschental area (Valais) or to master the art of sgraffito, used to decorate the houses in the Lower Engadine. The museum of rural life in Ballenberg, near Interlaken, enables you to see the craftsmen at work.

Delicacies with a fascinating story

There is often a fascinating story hidden behind each regional specialty, such as that of absinthe. In the Val-de-Travers, visitors can follow the "Green fairy", along a route which reveals all stages of the drink's manufacture and its eventful history. Throughout the whole of Switzerland, dozens of cheese dairies in the high mountain pastures enable visitors to discover the work of master cheesemakers such as Moléson (Fribourg) or, in the Vaud Alps, to follow the cheese route entirely dedicated to the Etivaz AOC.

The valley of time

Precision watchmaking has molded the history of the Vallée de Joux since the 17th century. At La Chaux-de-Fonds, set out in the tracks of watchmaking pioneers and even become a watchmaker and discover the secrets of assembling a watch.



Tip 1

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **AL90295**

The secret of holes

Throughout the region of Emmental, discover the secrets of the manufacture of the famous cheese with holes along a new route that can be followed by bicycle or electric bicycle. Your guide: the new iPhone app, which points out all the points of interest on the itinerary.



Tip 2

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **A173519**

Just like the olden days

The Muggio valley in the canton of Ticino is a true open-air museum. Mills, shelters for the drying of chestnuts and other relics of everyday peasant life in past centuries are located throughout the valley and have now been interconnected by a number of walking trails.



Tip 3

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **A45840**

Network Switzerland:

Hotel de l'Aigle, Couvet

Register at MySwitzerland.com/aso from now until 30 June 2013 and win a 2-night stay for 2 people at the Typically Swiss Hotel de l'Aigle in Couvet in the Val-de-Travers, to discover the traditions of the Jura.



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



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