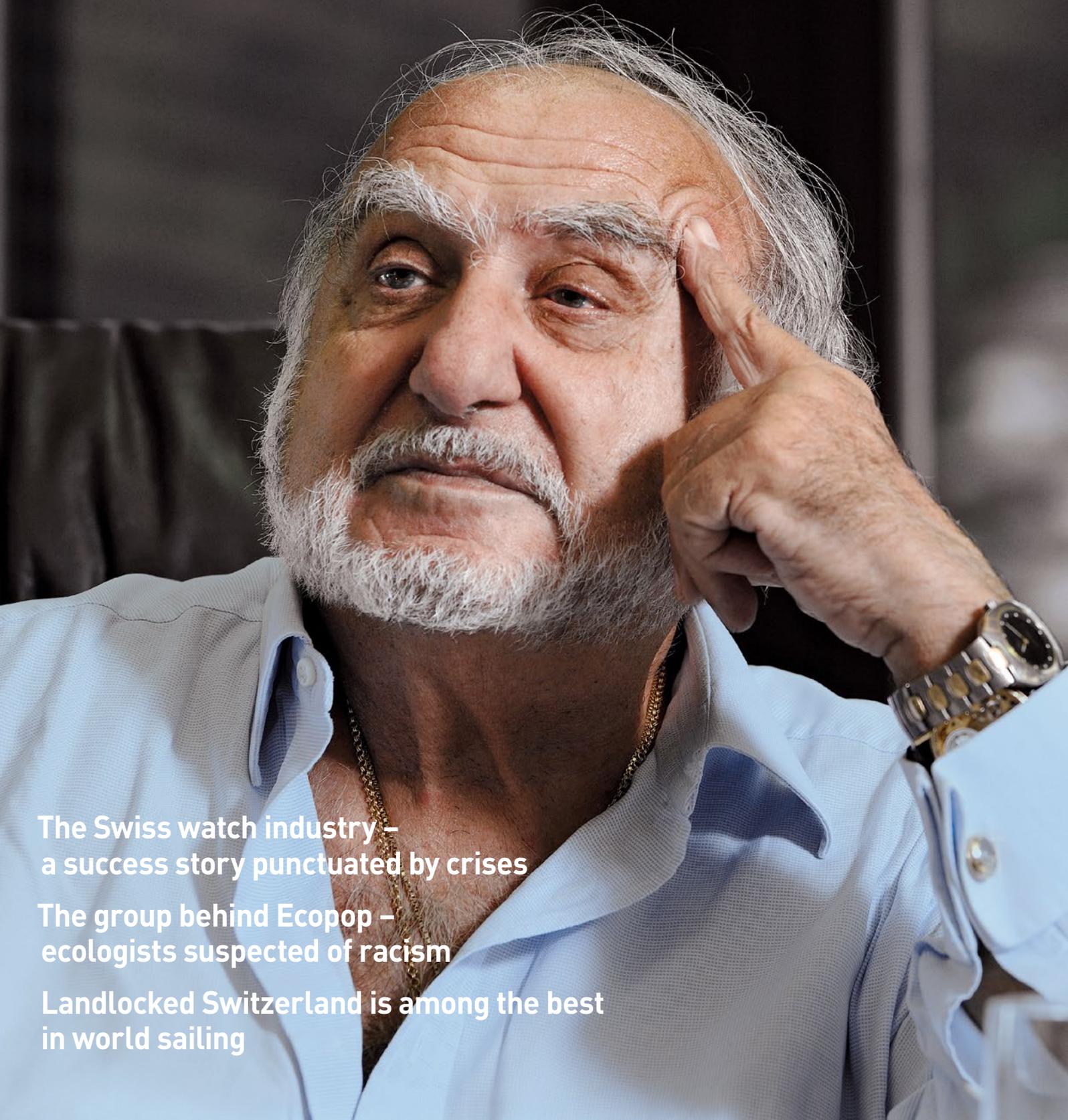


SWISS REVIEW

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
October 2014



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a success story punctuated by crises**

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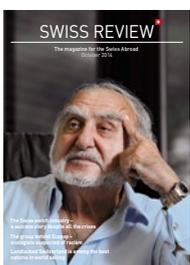
WE WANTED TO MAKE THE NEW LAYOUT FOR THE “SWISS REVIEW” MORE MODERN AND LESS STUFFY, TO give it a lighter touch and make it clearly structured. But our main goal when designing the new layout was to ensure that the “Swiss Review” is an enjoyable read – whether in print or electronic form. It was also clear that we would make no compromises on content. The “Swiss Review” is neither a lifestyle nor a people magazine. The task of the editorial team is to provide the Swiss Abroad with well-founded information and analyses from and about Switzerland. That this continues to be appreciated in the age of Twitter etc. is demonstrated by the response of many readers. We hope our readers will now also enjoy the new look we have given the publication.

The growing number of subscribers who read the “Swiss Review” as an e-paper can continue doing so via the existing app. An updated app, brought into line with the latest standards, will be made available for the first issue in the New Year. It will be much more user-friendly and will also run on smartphones.

Allow me now to touch upon the content of this issue. We once again address the topic of immigration. The Ecopop initiative, which we covered in the June edition, will be voted on in November. We therefore return to this topic now and explore the aspect of demographic development in depth. In addition to stricter immigration rules for Switzerland, the group behind the proposal is also calling for significantly greater financial resources to be used on family planning in the developing countries. This is a contentious issue and often results in heated exchanges. Listening to the politicians taking part in the debate, you increasingly find yourself asking how someone can be so convinced of their own opinion and have no doubts? It seems there is a general decline occurring in the ability to take account of complex circumstances and to value the opinion of others alongside one’s own convictions, though this in fact is a fundamental requirement for ensuring that Swiss democracy functions successfully.

The main theme in this issue is far afield of politics, however. The historian Stefan Keller provides insight into the fascinating history of the art of watchmaking and the development of horology in Switzerland.

BARBARA ENGEL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Cover photo:
Nicolas G. Hayek is regarded as the saviour of the Swiss watch industry. The Chairman of the Swatch Group died in 2010. Photo: Béatrice Devènes, Pixsil

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Look at the USA!

I just received the June edition of “Swiss Review” and wanted to comment on Switzerland’s immigration initiative. As an American by birth and a Swiss citizen by marriage, my advice to Switzerland is to look at the situation in the USA and take heed. We are fast losing our identity due to our immigration policies, or lack thereof. The USA was founded as an English-speaking country, and non-English speaking immigrants who came here early in the last century HAD to learn English, as did my Russian grandparents. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. The strain on our medical, governmental, and educational systems is enormous. I’m not the only person who feels we are becoming a one-party state due to the situation here.

JOAN PELLATON, LONG ISLAND, NY, USA

Gurlitt – Germany has to attend to its duty

The Museum of Arts in Berne should not accept the Gurlitt collection. Switzerland already has a bad record with stolen art hidden in banks, museums, etc. It is not up to Switzerland to find provenance of all these paintings. Germany has to step up and provide each object with the proper paperwork.

CHRISTIANE JOHNSON, REDDING, CA, USA

A realistic impression

“A falling tree makes more noise than an entire forest growing,” says the proverb. What a shame the “Swiss Review” (systematically) focuses on controversial issues, often contains provocative illustrations and shows political bias, not even to mention the “Quotes” section. How about some optimism! The editorial team seems to be very aware of environmental issues, which is great. But have they forgotten that our intelligence and capacity for thought have to be respected above all? The Swiss Abroad need to be given a realistic impression of their country. Help us, first and foremost, to see all of the “forest that is growing” – and not just a few dead leaves or branches that fall down. Thank you!

AURÉLIA LUGON, LITHUANIA

Grounds for celebration

As usual, I flicked through the “Swiss Review” and read some articles, including Barbara Engel’s editorial. Not that I would have flown to Switzerland immediately, but when I reached the final inside page my heart jumped for joy. Blocher’s resigned! Grounds for celebration indeed. Why not introduce a day of remembrance for the goat herders and their leader who try to pull the wool over the people’s eyes? The rest is quite obvious... Switzerland is now once again an option as a place to live.

HANS HAEBERLI, GERMANY

“Der goalie bin ig.” A Swiss film phenomenon by Sabine Boss



DER GOALIE BIN IG, (I Am The Keeper), by Sabine Boss (Switzerland, 2014), starring Marcus Signer, Sonja Riesen and Pascal Ulli. 1 hour 40 minutes. Also on DVD (fr,en,de), approx. CHF 22.00.

Directed by Sabine Boss, “Der Goalie bin ig!”, which won the 2014 Swiss Film Award for best fiction film, is a phenomenon. This gem of a movie, which recounts in flashback the story of a former junkie let down by his childhood friends, has been seen by over 120,000 people since its release. The film touches the hearts of the Swiss for a number of reasons. First of all, there is the language, Bernese dialect which rolls in the mouth of Goalie, a phenomenal loser, conveying some great lines in the process. These aphorisms and wordplay were crafted by Pedro Lenz, the Swiss author with a Spanish mother who wrote the novel (also in dialect) that inspired the film.

The character known as Goalie, whose name we learn at the end is Ernst, is something of a Swiss anti-hero. He is both naive and virtuous, a Christ-like figure as he atones for the sins of others without seeking vengeance. As a child, he takes the place of a nerd put between the goalposts (a position given to those who do not know how to play football) to save the boy from a hammering. The Goalie takes a beating in place of the weak and accepts the consequences, even though it later earns him no solicitude from the person whose skin he saved. As an adult, the Goalie serves a prison sentence for people who were not worth it. He discovers that his old friends have used him as bait but he refrains from violence, preferring to seek exile in the city (Berne). So he says goodbye to Schummertal and Regula, who decides to stick with an idiotic ruffian.

Cinema-goers have greatly enjoyed this touching, powerful Swiss film which, like all good stories, possesses universal values. The goalie is a scapegoat but is strong enough to escape when the time comes. As for the Switzerland portrayed in the film, it is not the most appealing depiction as the movie’s characters are limited and spineless, with the notable exception of the town cop and Regula, who opens her heart to the Goalie when he reveals the story of his nickname to her.

Sabine Boss’ direction is subtle and supported by haunting and exhilarating steel guitar music. It is good to see the soundtrack featuring the band Zuri West, the stars of Swiss rock in the 1980s, which is when the action takes place.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

A bird's eye view

Since the emergence of civil aviation, Switzerland has been documented comprehensively using aerial photographs. The images from a bird's eye perspective have not simply been consigned to the archives; they hang in many public buildings and private homes, and shape the visual memory of the country. In the early years after its foundation in 1931, the aerial photographs business was more lucrative than passenger flights for Swissair.

The "Switzairland" exhibition at the Museum Bellpark in Kriens runs until 22 November.

Thousands of photos are available online at the "BildarchivOnline" in the Federal Institute of Technology's library: <http://ba.e-pics.ethz.ch>



The Grande Dixence dam in the Val d'Hérens, 1964



The ice tongue of the Rhone glacier and the Furka Pass road, September 1973



Cup final on Easter Monday at the Wankdorfstadion in Bern



Inkwilersee between Inkwil and Bolken, 1976



Bannwald near Andermatt, 1968



Berne, 1973



The Aare and the Leibstadt nuclear power station, 1991



The history of a craft – Swiss made

The watch industry has rediscovered its lustre after major crises. It has been one of Switzerland's most successful sectors for years. A chronicle of folklore and marketing in the watchmaking industry.

STEFAN KELLER

Switzerland and its watchmakers – entire libraries could be filled with books on this subject. Famous inventors and horologists include Abraham Louis Breguet, who designed the tourbillon in the 18th century, and Adrien Philippe, who invented the winding crown in 1842. There were also talented watchmakers who chose to pursue different paths. Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, for example, was the son of a watch face enameller from La Chaux-de-Fonds. He learned how to engrave cases but in 1905 decided to focus on the visual arts and moved to Paris. He enjoyed a successful international ca-

reer under the name of Le Corbusier. Watchmaking was, of course, not originally a Swiss craft. Huguenot refugees from France brought it to Calvinist Geneva. It can even be dated back to a particular year. In 1587, the city council granted the Frenchman Charles Cusin citizenship at no charge on the sole proviso that he taught his trade to the local goldsmiths. Cusin was also courted by the Duke of Navarre, who later became King Henry IV of France, on account of his craftsmanship. The master craftsman soon vanished from Geneva, taking with him a large sum of money advanced by the government.

Horology nevertheless continued to flourish. A century later, there were a hundred watchmakers employing three hundred apprentices.

Every manufacturer had their own secret

From the outset, every watchmaker cultivated stories of their own little production secret and legendary status. Even in the 18th century, historians referred to them as artists rather than craftsmen. One such artist, who was self-taught, was the founder of the Neuchâtel watch industry. This was Daniel Jeanrichard, who grew up



in a hamlet called Les Bressels near Le Locle. Jeanrichard's father is presumed to have been a smith and his son is believed to have undertaken an apprenticeship as a goldsmith. Where he did this and what he intended to do with these skills in a place like Les Bressels is unclear from the historical sources.

In any case, in 1679, a widely travelled horse trader by the name of Peter visited the smithy in Les Bressels. He had a pocket watch from London with him which had got broken on the journey. When the horse trader saw some of the work produced in the smithy by the young apprentice Daniel, he gave him the watch and the youngster managed to repair it. What is more, the 14-year-old conceived the idea of making a similar watch.

Such craftsmanship was previously "completely unknown" in the

mountains of Neuchâtel, wrote the historian Frédéric-Samuel Ostervald, who, in 1765, produced a book on the principality of Neuchâtel, which still belonged to Prussia at the time. Daniel Jeanrichard spent a year working on the fine tools required and then on the springs, the case, the fusee and the balance. He put the watch together over the next six months. This was the first timepiece to be made in the principality of Neuchâtel.

Low production costs

Ostervald assures us that all this information is "absolutely correct" and "borne out by several artists". Indeed, in addition to several rather clunky watches furnished with the JeanRichard stamp, one of his sketchbooks also survived and his name is documented in Le Locle from 1712 onwards. The

Swiss luxury watches are made here: the Audemars-Piguet workshop in Le Brassus in the Vallée de Joux

sources indicate that he had begun to produce more watches and to recruit apprentices from the lowlands. He also taught his trade to his brothers and later to his sons. Daniel Jeanrichard – his statue today stands in the centre of Le Locle – is also credited with inventing a device for the manufacture of cogwheels, though this was more likely copied from a competitor in Geneva.

Watchmaking would certainly have been much cheaper at that time in the villages than in Geneva, not least because production there was not hampered by any guild laws. By 1765, when Ostervald's book was published, 15,000 gold and silver watches had already been exported from the mountain valleys of Neuchâtel. Thirty years later, the figure reached 40,000 pocket watches, joined by, in Ostervald's words, a "large quantity of sim-

ple and composite clocks". The villages of La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle grew into small towns, each with over 5,000 inhabitants, and an estimated 12,000 people made a living from the watch industry in the region.

Watchmaking was still a cottage industry. There was no central production facility. Manufacturing was divided into small work processes and assigned by the watchmaker to specialist craftsmen. These people usually worked at home on a farm or in a provincial workshop, received piece-rate pay and worked on demand with material supplied by the client. Only at the very end were the individual components assembled by the watchmaker.

A specialist for every work process

It was a fragmented, solitary and silent trade that these artists practised in the valleys around La Chaux-de-Fonds and soon also further south in the Vallée de Joux and the Bernese Jura. They hardly spoke whilst working, breathed carefully and sat with tremendous self-discipline on adjustable wooden stools at high windows. The slightest vibration could disturb their work. Despite the high degree of routine, it remained a profession that required thought. The watchmakers soon became the aristocrats of the workforce, at least that is how they saw it. And their ranks were constantly swelled. Production increased ten-fold between 1830 and 1850. They organised themselves politically, were left-leaning, however not Marxist but instead libertarian. They were among the founders of the anarchistic Anti-Authoritarian International that held its first conference in the Bernese Jura village of Saint-Imier in 1873. They stood for individual freedoms and fought against paternalism. And as long as their production was better and less expensive than everyone else's, they had nothing to fear from

Apprentice watchmaker Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The most famous child of a Swiss watchmaker is Jean-Jacques Rousseau from Geneva who grew up without a mother and whose failed father apprenticed him to an engraver. Rousseau's training as a timepiece engraver ended in 1728 when he turned his back on his quick-tempered master and the austere city at the first available opportunity. At this time, watches were still the most important source of income for the municipal republic of Geneva. Isaac Rousseau, his father, had lived in a Geneva colony in Constantinople from 1705 to 1711, working as a watchmaker to the Seraglio. Timepieces from Switzerland were already being sold worldwide. The Geneva traders had branches everywhere, including the Bosphorus, Asia Minor, Russia and the Indian Ocean. The philosophical oeuvre later produced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the watchmaker's child who went astray, is today regarded as a bedrock of modernity.

mechanisation which had already begun in the USA and had crippled the strong competition from Great Britain.

The competition in the USA

The World Expo opened in Philadelphia on 10 May 1876, showcasing American industry. The delegates from the watchmaking cantons returned both shocked and inspired. Jacques David from Saint-Imier described in a report how he had also visited the factories of Waltham Watch, Elgin Watch and Springfield Watch on his trip. He wrote that people needed to acknowledge that the Swiss industry had been overtaken. He brought American watches back with him to show to Swiss industrialists. These timepieces were not just cheaper but at least as good as their own.

The large factories in Waltham, Massachusetts, and other sites in the USA no longer operated on the basis of the pre-industrial workshop system but instead used modern production facilities where hundreds of workers put together watches from standardised components using machinery. Similar factories needed to be built in Switzerland, urged David, who was himself employed as an engineer at the Longines watchmaking workshop. "If they are not built here, then they will be constructed in the USA and there will be nothing left for us within a few years as the Americans are already selling their watches in our markets, in Russia, the United Kingdom, South America, Australia and Japan," he observed in his report.

The first crisis

David was proven right. The Swiss watchmaking industry plunged into a deep recession in the 1870s. This was the first of three severe downturns, each of which saw the industry teeter on the brink of collapse. The Swiss



had previously conquered market after market, whether it be Russia, where Heinrich Moser from Schaffhausen monopolised trade as early as in 1848, China, where Bovet from the Val de Travers dominated the south and Vacheron Constantin from Geneva the north, or Japan, where the Neuchâtel manufacturers established themselves soon after the opening-up of the country. This triumphal procession now came to a halt. Three quarters of all timepieces sold worldwide still came from Switzerland in 1870. Over the years that followed, however, cheap American products followed by industrially manufactured German ones even penetrated the Swiss market!



Watchmakers, also known as “rhabilleurs”, in an Omega workshop

The Swiss nonetheless managed to set up their own mass production remarkably quickly. The factories were no longer located in the mountainous parts of the Jura, which were unfavourable for transport, but instead in the region where the Jura meets the Central Plateau. The new watchmakers were no longer the “artists” of the past – these did continue to exist in the mountains but what they produced was now deemed expensive luxury goods. Unskilled workers were also taken on in the factories. A typical industrial working class emerged in Biel and Grenchen, two new centres of the industry. The workers organised themselves and elected left-wing municipal governments. Industrial dis-

ruptures, usually over wages, took place on an almost weekly basis. The number of factories increased ten-fold between 1882 and 1911, with wrist-watches produced for the first time in addition to pocket watches – the company Girard-Perregaux in La Chaux-de-Fonds was among the pioneers. Horology had arrived in the modern age.

Japanese competition

The second crisis that threatened the survival of the industry occurred immediately after the First World War. Sales to Germany and the countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire ground to a halt and exports to the new Soviet Union also ceased. The first

Karl Marx's description

In the mid 19th century, Karl Marx took a look at the industry in the Swiss Jura. He saw an “immense number of detail labourers”, who did not correspond to the idea of the modern industrial proletariat and whose professions he listed almost breathlessly on half a page: from “ébauche makers, watch spring makers, watch face makers, spiral spring makers, jewel hole and ruby lever makers, watch hand makers, case makers, screw makers, gilders with numerous subdivisions” to “steel polishers, cog polishers, screw polishers, figure painters and dial enamellers”. It took 54 different work processes to produce a watch in 1830. In La Chaux-de-Fonds, 67 different jobs carried out in different locations were distributed between 1,300 workshops and numerous households.

Japanese watches competed for customers in East Asia and Latin America, and many countries, such as Spain, levied high import duties. Switzerland’s main customer was now the USA, where it continued to face fierce domestic competition. By spring 1921, the export figures had been halved compared to the pre-war period and the number of unemployed watchmaking workers had risen from zero to 25,000. Prices were eroded and a recession took hold, which also hit the textile and machine-building industries and lasted intermittently into the 1930s.

The high-end luxury segment was barely affected. Rolex, originally established by a Bavarian as an import company for Swiss watches in London, for example, performed remarkably well: a waterproof watch called the Oyster – which remains a classic model to this day – was launched in 1926. LeCoultre in the Vallée de Joux was also doing brisk business. In 1929, the company unveiled the world’s smallest watch weighing less than a gram and, in 1931, the legendary Reverso sports watch with a case that could be swivelled by hand so that the glass faced inwards to protect it.

However, the manufacturers of cheaper goods everywhere now had to adapt. The empty factories were to be filled with industry more resilient to downturns. At the start of the 1930s, the left-wing municipal government in Biel financed the establishment of an automotive factory belonging to the US group General Motors to provide employment for the workers.

At the same time, the Société Suisse pour l’Industrie Horlogère (SSIH) and the Allgemeine Schweizerische Uhrenindustrie AG (ASUAG) emerged, two large firms supported by the Swiss Federal Council, which combined several companies or contractually obliged them to cooperate. From 1941, they enjoyed a national monopoly on the manufacture of

watches, while keeping the production of the individual brands separate. Under a “watch statute”, the sector was organised as a cartel and minimum prices acquired the force of law. This also aimed to ensure the survival of small companies.

It was essentially the state that intervened this time by regulating imports and exports, making the foundation or expansion of watch factories subject to authorisation until the post-war period and thus establishing decentralised structures. The disappearance of further foreign competition both during the Second World War and as a result of the subsequent division of Europe benefited the Swiss and led to an upturn.

It was nevertheless not long before the next severe crisis hit. History seemed to repeat itself in the 1970s. The Swiss again appeared to have been overtaken by technical advancement, and the competition was once again not just cheaper but also better. This time the recession – made worse by the oil crisis – lasted for over 15 dramatic years. Half of the companies disappeared from the market, and over half of all jobs were lost.

In the golden age of the economic boom after the war, two-figure dividends were regularly paid on the share capital. Exports had risen from 25 million watches in 1950 to over 80 million by the mid 1970s. The cartel of

the pre-war period fell apart in the 1960s but, with the large trusts SSIH and ASUAG, the peculiarly Swiss arrangement survived: The individual companies were associated with one another but were at the same time competitors.

Emerging from the crisis with quartz and luxury goods

The dollar plummeted in the 1970s and export prices increased enormously without revenues rising. The Japanese and the Americans not only produced far less expensive watches from much larger factories but also came up with a completely new technology – the electronic watch with a quartz movement. The expertise required had existed in Switzerland since the 1960s but had never been followed up.

SSIH and ASUAG soon faced bankruptcy. Companies like Omega and Tissot belonged to SSIH. Aside from a few luxury brands, all watchmakers purchased their movements from ASUAG. The two ailing conglomerates were combined in a spectacular merger in 1983. Many people believed this was a “last-ditch attempt” to save the watch industry.

It was precisely at this point that the most recent successful chapter in the great Swiss watchmaking saga began. The key figure in the new company was Nicolas G. Hayek. He was a



The legendary Reverso sports watch has been made by Jaeger-LeCoultre in Vallée de Joux since 1931

management consultant and very familiar with streamlining measures. He argued that although the Swiss market share of international business had fallen below 10%, this was only in terms of units. If revenues were considered, Switzerland had a 30% share and as much as 85% in the luxury watch segment. Against a background of Swiss despair, Hayek, who was from Lebanon, contended that the watch industry was a “sleeping giant”.

He pursued a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, he launched the inexpensive quartz watch Swatch, consisting of just 51 components and manufactured by machinery. It achieved cult status over the forthcoming decades with its pop designs. On the other – marketing is everything – the traditional legendary status of the Swiss luxury watch, of watchmaking artists, as Frédéric-Samuel Ostervald had once described them, was revived. The strategy pursued by Hayek, who died in Biel in 2010 aged 82, was successful. His children and grandchildren in charge of the Swatch Group still announce new record sales figures each year.

The first Swatch was launched on the market in 1983 and quickly achieved cult status



STEFAN KELLER IS A JOURNALIST AND HISTORIAN. HE LIVES IN ZÜRICH.

Wealthy foreigners and fair taxation

The issue of taxes, fairness and wealthy foreigners will be decided on 30 November. There will be a vote in Switzerland on the future of flat-rate taxation. Emotions are running high in the debate.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Until just a few years ago, hardly anyone was bothered by flat-rate taxation, which has been applied to wealthy foreigners in Switzerland for the last 150 years. It first became an issue in 2009 when, at the instigation of the Alternative List (AL), a small left-wing party, the tax was abolished in the canton of Zurich following a popular initiative. The cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Schaffhausen and Appenzell-Ausserrhoden subsequently followed suit. The AL, supported by the Social Democrats and the trade unions, is now attempting to abolish the tax at federal level. The initiative seeking to abolish “the scandalous tax privilege of foreign millionaires”, will be put to the vote on 30 November. The Federal Council and the parliamentary majority are opposed to the abolition because they want to retain “an economically important instrument for attracting businesses to Switzerland”.

Pressure from the OECD

The opponents of the flat-rate tax are angered that wealthy taxpayers are taxed not on their income and wealth, but on their standard of living and housing costs, which is why it is also officially known as lump-sum taxation. Only foreigners who live in Switzerland but do not work there are entitled to this. According to the most recent figures available from the end of 2012, there are 5,634 flat-rate taxpayers nationwide generating total tax revenues of 695 million Swiss francs. That corresponds to just over one percent of total revenues from taxes on income and wealth in Switzerland.

The pressure on the flat-rate tax is not just coming from the left. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is also calling upon Switzerland to abolish this type of tax. The advocates of flat-rate taxation no longer appear entirely happy either. In 2012, the Federal Assembly approved a tightening of the criteria and increase in the assessment base.

But they do not intend to go any further: the Zug cantonal councillor and president of the cantonal finance directors, Peter Hegglin, warns against “throwing the baby out with the bath water” because lump-sum taxation is “significant economically and in terms of regional policy”. Mountain and tourist regions would be particularly badly affected by the abolition. It is not just the fiscal implications that are significant for the communes in these regions. “More important than the tax revenues is the impact on employment, which is dependent on lump-sum taxation in these areas,” remarks Hegglin. This tax creates thousands, if not tens of thousands, of jobs in regions outside of the major centres owing to investment and consumption by the wealthy.

“Sophisticated form of tax evasion”

SP National Councillor Susanne Leutenegger Oberholzer, on the other hand, believes that “flat-rate taxation blatantly violates the principle of equality before the law because the constitutional principle of taxation according to economic capacity is flouted”. A legitimate tax assessment could never be based on living costs

but only on income and wealth, otherwise the system would be left wide open to abuse, she argues. Ingvar Kamprad, the founder of Ikea, “paid the canton of Vaud a ridiculously low 200,000 Swiss francs a year in tax on assets of over 30 billion until he moved away”, observed Leutenegger Oberholzer in the National Council. What is more, “180 super rich subject to flat-rate taxation in Gstaad pay only four million francs in tax”. Flat-rate taxation was “nothing other than an especially sophisticated means of tax evasion”.

The consequences of abolishing flat-rate taxation are unclear. As the distribution of flat-rate taxpayers across Switzerland varies greatly, the Federal Council estimates that the impact of abolition would be “low overall” but “might be very significant for individual cantons and communes”. Around half of the 200 or so former flat-rate taxpayers in the canton of Zurich moved abroad or to another canton after the 2009 vote. One well-known example is the Russian oligarch and multi-billionaire Victor Vekselberg, who left the canton of Zurich for the canton of Zug, where he now also pays flat-rate tax.

Roger Keller, spokesperson for the canton of Zurich’s finance department, points out an interesting phenomenon to “Swiss Review”: of the former flat-rate taxpayers who remained in the canton, 55 paid more and 47 paid less tax than under the flat-rate system.

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

End of the line for single health insurance

On 28 September, voters rejected the initiative “for a public health insurance fund”, with just under 62 % of votes against, the third time in 20 years voters have said “no” to a single health insurance system. The fact that the topic comes up again and again is due to a latent unease about the health insurance landscape in Switzerland, with its high premiums, the annual quest for the most cost-effective insurance fund and advertising campaigns bordering on aggressive. Despite this, voters have judged the risks involved in changing the system as too high, most likely due primarily to projected costs. The pressure brought by the referendum has nevertheless sparked some reform activity. Parliament has decided to tackle the issue of the spread of risks in health insurance so as to curb the pursuit of “good risks”.

The VAT initiative put forward by the restaurant and hotel industry garnered an even more resounding “no”, with 71.5 % of voters rejecting it, so restaurant diners will continue to pay the customary VAT of 8 %, and not the 2.5 % that applies in the takeaway sector. (JM)

Gold as a nest egg?

“Gold remains the foundation of a stable Swiss franc,” contends SVP National Councillor Luzi Stamm, one of the figures behind the gold initiative. Contrastingly, “gold is no longer significant in monetary policy,” writes the Federal Council in its dispatch. The people will decide this battle of opinions on 30 November. The “Save our Swiss gold” initiative calls for the National Bank to be obliged to hold at least 20 % of its assets in gold. The share stands at just over 7 % today, which is high by international comparison. It also calls for the gold to be stored in Switzerland and made unsaleable. Those behind the proposal see gold as a kind of nest egg: the popular initiative would ensure that “real assets” are available as well as paper currency.

The Federal Council and opponents of the initiative argue that adoption would restrict the Swiss National Bank’s capac-

ity to act. This would make it more difficult to ensure price stability and stable economic development. It would no longer be possible to credibly implement measures such as the minimum exchange rate against the euro or effective provisions to ensure financial stability. While gold could contribute to a balanced distribution of balance sheet risks with diversification of currency reserves, in itself the precious metal is one of the most volatile and high-risk investments. A higher proportion of gold would also mean a lower profit distribution to federal government and the cantons as gold does not yield a profit.

The initiative was launched by SVP representatives but is also a contentious issue within the party. The popular initiative was rejected unanimously by the Council of States and by a large majority in the National Council. (JM)

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Ecopop – the two sides to the initiative

An immigration initiative will be put to the vote for the second time this year on 30 November. It is not just more radical than the initiative against mass immigration adopted in February, it also contains a highly controversial demand in relation to development policy.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

What has immigration to Switzerland – primarily from Europe – got to do with family planning in Africa? Very little to nothing in the view of some, but a great deal according to those behind the Ecopop initiative. Entitled “Stop overpopulation – safeguard our natural environment”, it adopts both an environmental and a global approach, calling for fewer people in Switzerland and worldwide. “The initiative is a small step towards a world able to function well economically with a stabilised and, over the long term, decreasing number of people,” remarks Ecopop Vice-President Sabine Wirth.

Ecopop makes two demands to achieve this objective: “Annual net immigration to Switzerland should be restricted to an average of 0.2 % of the permanent resident population, and 10 % of state development aid should be used to promote voluntary family planning” (see also articles in the 2/2013 and 3/2014 issues of “Swiss Review”). On the one hand, therefore, the initiative calls for much tighter immigration restrictions than the “initiative against mass immigration” of the Swiss People’s Party (SVP), which was narrowly adopted by the Swiss people on 9 February 2014, because it provides for a rigid quota framework. On the other, it pursues population and development policy objectives.

Ecopop: “deteriorating quality of life”

Sabine Wirth justifies the call for rigorous restrictions on immigration by arguing that Switzerland has grown by

around 1.2 % a year since the introduction of the full free movement of persons, with 80 % being generated by immigration. “With such high population growth, all efforts to reduce per-capita consumption and increase the efficiency of technology are ineffective over the long term. Quality of life is declining along with the quality of the environment,” says Sabine Wirth, citing traffic congestion, increasing accommodation costs, urban sprawl and the extinction of species.

If immigration were reduced to 0.2 %, this would equate to net immigration of around 16,000 people a year instead of the 80,000 to date. This would mean even less room for manoeuvre in negotiations with the EU than there is at present. The free movement of persons would not stand a chance anymore.

Opponents of the initiative: “misleading and damaging”

The initiative has been met with almost unanimous opposition in Parliament and from the political parties, including the SVP. During the National Council debate, SVP migration expert and National Councillor Heinz Brand remarked that this drastic initiative was not feasible for practical reasons. National Councillor Tiana Moser (Green Liberals) believes the popular initiative is “misleading and damaging”: damaging to the economy and misleading because no environmental problems would be resolved in this way; per-capita consumption is more important than the number of people.

It is not just the initiative’s immigration element that is proving con-

troversial; the same can be said of the demand for family planning measures in the developing world, which has received less attention in the public debate. During the debate in Parliament, Council of States member Paul Rechsteiner of the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP) asked: “What would we say if another state stipulated population control measures for Switzerland in the form of family planning in its constitution?” He considers this an “alarming master race ideology”.

Ecopop touches a raw nerve

What is the situation beyond the political rhetoric? The fact that demographic development presents a global challenge is not in dispute. It is also evident that growth is taking place almost exclusively in less developed states. Ecopop Vice President Wirth says: “In countries like Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, women have six or seven children on average, the first usually as a young teenager. This makes escaping the poverty trap more difficult.” Voluntary family planning, namely sex education and free access to contraception, has been a UN human right since 1968 and is part of the Millennium Goals. “The UN is seeking to achieve several objectives through voluntary family planning – empowering women, accelerating economic development, improving the health and quality of life of those concerned, stabilising the political and social structures and, not least, helping ensure sustainable environmental quality.”

Ecopop touches a raw nerve here because rapid population growth in

very poor countries significantly impairs development prospects: food security is not ensured, the infrastructure is hopelessly overstretched, and the education and healthcare systems are under pressure. The salient point, however, is that population growth is a consequence of these failings. Poverty results in large numbers of children because children are welcome in such circumstances as extra workers and as carers during illness and old age, thereby helping to safeguard livelihoods.

Combating poverty is more effective

This is where criticism is levelled by development organisations. Alliance Sud, the Swiss Alliance of Development Organisations, maintains that “the decision to have lots of children is rarely voluntary but is instead the expression of economic constraints and a lack of rights. These are the issues that need to be tackled”. In other words: “Ecopop ignores the structural causes of population growth.” The development organisations are convinced that the key prerequisite for reducing birth rates in

Africa is strengthening the position of women. The education of women and girls means they do not have children too early. The reduction of infant mortality through improved healthcare provision also demonstrably results in smaller families. The same is true with employment opportunities.

The Federal Council takes a similar view, as it explains in its report on Switzerland’s commitment to promoting health and sex education in developing countries (30 May 2014): “A paradigm shift has taken place since the World Population Conference in Cairo in 1994. Previous programmes attempted to influence population dynamics in various countries primarily through government-prescribed family planning measures and by issuing contraception. This approach has proven either problematic or fairly ineffective. Instead, the main factors for positively influencing global population development include the effective and targeted combating of poverty, gender equality, and the education and empowerment of women. Within the framework of its international cooperation, Switzerland acts according

to this comprehensive perception and, in so doing, makes a contribution to the control of population dynamics.”

The Ecopop initiative therefore proposes methods that put the cart before the horse, have not proven effective or been well received in the Third World, or have even been counter-productive. The effective reduction of global environmental issues to population growth is also a problematic aspect of the Ecopop initiative. “It overlooks the huge differences in the consumption of resources,” notes Alliance Sud. “If you think the Ecopop initiative’s demand through to the end, you would have to target a radical reduction of the population in rich countries and of the wealthy elite in poor countries. It is not the number of people that is the decisive factor in environmental pollution but rather their consumption of resources.”

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

What does “overpopulation” mean?

The term “overpopulation” is ubiquitous in the demographic debate and also appears in the title of the Ecopop initiative. Yet, nobody can provide a precise definition of when a territory is overpopulated. Is Monaco overpopulated with a population density of 17,889 inhabitants per square kilometre? Or Germany with 226 and Switzerland with 198? In contrast, Nigeria, Africa’s most populous country, has “just” 165 inhabitants per square kilometre. Overall, the African continent’s population density is actually below average – 36 people per square kilometre (south of the Sahara), compared with the global average of 53 people.



The group behind Ecopop is seeking to cut the birthrate in Africa with more funding for family planning

He became a poet in a moment of great turmoil – Karl Stauffer-Bern

A forbidden love affair resulted in tragedy for the famous portrait artist and etcher

CHARLES LINSMAYER

Between 1874 and 1888 in Germany he became someone who would remain in the memory of future generations. Karl Stauffer-Bern was born on 2 September 1857 in Trubschachen. He lived in Munich until 1879 where he succeeded in taking the step from surface painting to the academy of arts; and from 1880 in Berlin, where he won the academic exhibition's gold medal in 1881 with a portrait of the sculptor Max Klein, paving the way for a glittering career as a portrait artist. Firstly as an illustrator and painter and later as an etcher, he produced portraits of the poets Gustav Freytag, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer and Gottfried Keller and of the artists Adolf Menzel and Peter Halm. However, in summer he swapped his studio in Berlin's Tiergarten district for the conservatory of Villa Belvoir in Zurich, made available to him by his Bernese school friend Friedrich Emil Welti, the son of Federal Councillor Emil Welti and husband of Alfred Escher's daughter, Lydia.

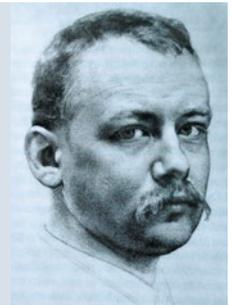
From Germany to Italy

Stauffer's second adopted home was Italy where he was only afforded a brief stay marked by terrible tragedy between spring 1888, when he opened a sculptor's studio in Rome, and 24 January 1891, when he took his own life in Florence with an overdose of chloral hydrate. His relationship with Lydia Welti-Escher, whose portrait he had painted at Belvoir, turned into a love affair which saw the lovers flee to Rome after his joint trip to Florence with the Weltis in 1889. Here Stauffer drew up hybrid plans for a classical temple city which was to be built with Lydia's huge inheritance. Before this materialised, Welti succeeded in persuading his father, Federal Councillor Welti, to intervene, which led to Lydia being interned on mental health grounds by the Italian authorities. Stauffer was accused of the rape of a mentally ill person and transported to Florence as a prisoner. There, in the prison on the Arno, he began to write poetry in great despair and conveyed his love and the injustice he had suffered in harrowing verse which bore testament to his turmoil but also his talent: "I know the LORD has borne down heavily upon me in recent weeks and I have become a poet with my heart and soul."

In a state of turmoil, the prisoner evoked Belvoir Park and the blossoming love which had been his undoing: "There where you tolerated my words / And gave me love and grace / And captivated me with glances / There where the lake smiles at its shore." Stauffer was acquitted but was a broken man and suffered terribly because of Lydia's betrayal. He was unaware that she, having been put into a psychiatric hospital in Königsfelden by her husband, told her doctor in February 1890 that she could have imagined the relationship continuing: "I only wish our relationship could continue to achieve something of beauty and significance and to produce important work together but I don't want to be with him permanently."

When she heard of his death, she sent a wreath with the inscription "For the Manes of my unforgettable friend". She only outwardly acquiesced to the conditions under which she could leave the mental hospital. She gave Welti 1.2 million Swiss francs of her fortune, but with the rest set up – clearly in memory of Karl Stauffer – the "Gottfried Keller Foundation" for the promotion of the arts and entrusted the Swiss confederation with its management. Then, on 12 December 1891, she followed Stauffer to her death by opening the gas tap at her villa in Champel near Geneva.

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR
AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH



"I have subdued my imagination for 32 years and talked to conceal my thoughts. God wanted to make a builder of me. Oh magnificent architecture, what rags the Barbarians drape on your classical limbs! You are my love, and I will fight for you on foot and on horseback with a lance and a sword until they kill me. They have captured all the Goddesses and turned you into a whore, but your youth remains eternal."

FROM STAUFFER-BERN'S FLORENTINE DIARY



A valley that is an open-air museum

The Muggio Valley in the south of Ticino was voted “landscape of the year 2014”. The region’s museum of ethnography has been endeavouring to restore and preserve this cultural and natural heritage for over thirty years. A hike through this natural paradise and its picturesque villages.

ALAIN WEY

Hilly forests, terraced pastures, picturesque villages and buildings from another age. Hikers ramble into a different era through the mountains and hillsides of the Muggio Valley. Nestled between Monte Generoso on the shores of Lake Lugano and Monte Bisbino, and towering over Lake Como, this region is a natural paradise opening up to the southern lowlands. Last May, it was crowned “landscape of the year 2014” by the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation (Fondation suisse pour la protection et l’aménagement du paysage). This prize is recognition above all of the surveying and restoration of

cultural assets that have been carried out for over thirty years by the valley’s museum of ethnography. Its curator, Paolo Crivelli, aged 63, has been involved in the initiative from the outset. “The museum is the valley,” he declares. “You have to do some walking of course!” That is an understatement - it climbs from 300 to 1700 metres above sea level. At its foot, the urban area of Mendrisio appears to belong to a different world, such is the contrast with the small villages typical of the valley. A host of buildings designed for working in the alpine pastures and the subsistence farming by the inhabitants of long ago have also been saved from oblivion. It is

time to set out on the route past stone houses, red-tiled roofs and welcoming grottos.

A river runs through it

On the outskirts of Chiasso, hikers arrive at the Grotto del Mulino in the Breggia Gorges Park, which is situated at the bottom of the valley, where they can taste local cuisine (nostrano) and enjoy a delicious white wine from Mendrisiotto, a region in southern Ticino that produces most of the wine in the canton. This is Switzerland’s largest geopark. These steep gorges are sculpted by the river Breggia which rises in Monte Generoso



The view from Monte Generoso (left) and the mill at Bruzella

and runs through the centre of the entire valley before entering Lake Como. Here the rock stratifications and ammonite fossils are around 400 million years old. It is very humbling. Upstream the bridge of Castel San Pietro provides a breathtaking view of this geotope of national interest. During the ascent, the forests and villages keep rolling by. Hidden in the deciduous trees in a haven of tranquillity cradled by the Breggia, the watermill at Bruzella is one of the valley's highlights. "In 1983, the museum acquired

this 13th century building and we spent over ten years restoring it," explains Paolo Crivelli. "The former miller was still alive and a young woman on the museum committee learned the trade. Since 1996 Irene Petraglio has been the manager of the mill, which has been returned to work-

ing order. We started to use a traditional corn seed again known as the 'rosso del Ticino' which is in great demand in the region today for making polenta."

The museum is the valley

Having arrived at Cabbio (667 m), it is hard not to be captivated by the village's charm. Amidst the stone houses, Theseus-like tourists quickly get lost in the labyrinth of its narrow cobblestoned streets. It is here, close to the church, that the Muggio Valley's museum of ethnography set up its information centre at the beginning of the 2000s in a former artists' house, known as the Casa Cantoni. "The idea of setting up a museum of ethnography to promote the region's culture was conceived in 1980 following the canton's acknowledgement of the valley as a mountain region," recounts Paolo Crivelli. "It is a kind of open-air

eco-museum aimed at highlighting the cultural heritage found in the landscape." All of the traditional assets of the valley and Monte Generoso have therefore been explored, studied, inventoried and, in some cases, restored. One example is the "neveres", stone silos buried in the ground which were filled up with snow in winter to preserve the milk in the alpine pastures during the warmer seasons. The "roccoli", stone towers for catching birds, and the "graa", buildings used for drying and smoking chestnuts, are others. This is going back to a time when the people of the region lived on the alpine pastures in the summer and in the villages during the winter.

Scudellate and a panorama of the Pô valley

The climb continues. After Muggio, a long and winding road leads to Scudellate, the valley's highest village,





A herd of Haflinger horses lives wild in the summer on the Alpe Squadrina and the Alpe Pesciò

perched on the sides of Monte Generoso at over 900 metres above sea level. The view from here is magnificent. Visitors can see as far as the Pô valley and even Milan. In good weather conditions, the Apennines mountain range can be seen along with Monte Viso and Turin. This landscape was enjoyed by the early British tourists who started visiting in the 1850s.

The abandoned customs house in Scudellate is a curiosity that invites hikers to explore episodes of smuggling. “From an historical perspective, the border existed but at the same time didn’t,” remarks Paolo Crivelli. “People and animals moved across it without paying it much attention. It was only during the First World War, and then the Second World War in particular, that it became really impassable.” Smuggling went on until the 1970s. Coffee and cigarettes were transported from the Muggio Valley into Italy and rice, for

example, was brought into Switzerland. There is now only one bridge to cross to reach Italy and the village of Erbonne. On the pastures around “Squadrina” and “Pesciò”, around 20 Haflinger-breed horses live in complete freedom during the warmer seasons after their transhumance from Monte Bisbino to Monte Generoso. There is something magical

about this place. Just like the charm of the grottos, which are a good place to quench your thirst at the end of the hike. In Mendrisiotto they say this Swiss-Italian fusion impregnates the entire region and the character of the people.

www.mendrisiottoturismo.ch

ALAIN WEY IS A FREELANCE JOURNALIST

Landscapes: a cultural identity and a foundation

Preserving, maintaining and showcasing landscapes worthy of protection in our nation is the objective of the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation (Fondation suisse pour la protection et l'aménagement du paysage) which was founded in 1970 by Pro Natura, Patrimoine suisse, the Swiss Association for

National Development, the Swiss Alpine Club and the Swiss Tourism Federation. It seeks to preserve our cultural identity and history in harmony with nature, humankind and sustainable development. Its initiatives include the restoration of traditional irrigation canals, the conservation of terraced landscapes, the revitalisation of chestnut groves and the renewal of pathway landscapes. The Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation has awarded a

“landscape of the year” prize since 2011 to raise the profile of Swiss landscapes that are little known, worth exploring or under threat. This award was presented to the Val Sinestra in lower Engadine (canton Grisons) in 2011, to the Birsparck landscape (region along the Birse, cantons Basel-Landschaft and Solothurn) in 2012, to the Geneva countryside in 2013 and, finally, to the Muggio Valley in 2014. www.sl-fp.ch

Charming the crowd into parting with their cash

The Swiss are increasingly warming to the idea of crowdfunding or the collective financing of projects and innovative ideas. Creative artists are particularly taken with this trend.

MARC LETTAU

Those who travel seek the unfamiliar. But what happens when there is nothing remote or exotic left in the world? What if the world loses its “edges” as a result of globalisation? Wouldn't every location then become the “centre of the world”?

The Rotpunktverlag publishing house in Zurich is currently exploring such issues. This enterprising firm plans to publish a book providing answers next year. This will be full of essays, interviews, portraits and photographs. The “Die Mitte der Welt” (Centre of the World) book project is so time-consuming and expensive that the publisher tried out crowdfunding for the first time. It succeeded in raising a significant share of the funds required because a “crowd” of interested book-lovers were willing to pre-finance the yet-to-be-created book. They purchased it in advance before it had even been produced. What is more, the financial target set by the publisher was smashed.

An alternative view of consumption

This has proven a positive experience for Sarah Wendle from Rotpunktverlag as she is only too familiar with funding shortages in the culture sector: “To be honest, making books without external injections of capital is becoming increasingly difficult for small, independent publishers. This is especially true of books that are not mainstream and are moreover expensive to produce.” Works which do not really conform to the norm or are difficult to grasp in terms of content and

form often do not receive any support from public bodies or private foundations.

Wendle believes that crowdfunding is more than just an additional source of finance. “The whole concept is essentially based on the notion of ‘we can do this together.’” In her view, crowdfunding is also an expression of the growing awareness of “alternative consumption”. People who support the realisation of a project in this way are close to the creator, enabling something special to flourish in niche areas and “ultimately taking the initiative”.

The publisher is very confident that crowdfunding will become increasingly important in Switzerland, especially in publishing but also in music and film production by independent artists. “The opportunity ex-

ists in this sector to clearly show what is achievable with the money,” she remarks. It always concerns “something tangible”.

The amount doubles from year to year

A clear trend has emerged. The amount raised by means of crowdfunding in Switzerland has increased two-fold since 2011. It had already reached 11 million Swiss francs in 2013. Professor Andreas Dietrich from the University of Lucerne is predicting a crowdfunding volume of 24 million Swiss francs for this year. Around half of this funding will go towards cultural and sporting projects. Start-up companies will receive the other half. Dietrich believes it is primarily companies which “have a sim-

The principle of crowdfunding: donating money in the hope of achieving some good



Crowdfunding websites

Cultural, social and sporting projects:

We make it
<https://wemakeit.com/>
 "Basel Model"
<https://wemakeit.com/basel>
 100 days
<http://www.100-days.net/>
 I believe in you
<http://www.ibelieveinyou.ch>

Business ventures:

Investiere.ch
<https://www.investiere.ch/>
 7crowd
<https://www.7crowd.ch/>

ple product everyone can envisage" that will benefit from the boom. However, the "crowd" that invests in start-ups differs from that which supports cultural projects. It is primarily financial experts seeking alternative investment opportunities who back start-ups. Whereas it is idealists who tend to support authors, film-makers, theatre directors, cabaret artists, children's book illustrators and designers – out of a passion for the idea and as an expression of public-spiritedness.

The nucleus of the crowd that supports a cultural project is generally the creator's own family and circle of friends and acquaintances, explains Rea Egli, co-founder of the "we make it" crowdfunding website, which was set up in 2012 and is now firmly established in Switzerland. She starts from the premise that a project will receive the desired support if over two thirds of the amount required can be raised from the person's own circle. The just under one third remaining is contributed by people who come across the project by chance and support it spontaneously. People with a great idea but without an extensive personal network may find it difficult to achieve their objectives via crowdfunding. What is more, project organisers are not immune to the disheartening experience of only reaching those who already support them anyway. For example, the Residential Housing Community for Young People in Rafz (Zurich) raised the record amount of 54,000 Swiss francs. However, Mario Schmidli, a Board Member of the Rafz Assisted Living Association, indicated that there was not a single name among the donors that he did not already know: "This was a sobering experi-

ence as I had hoped to attract new financial backers via crowdfunding."

Well-established principle of patronage

Crowdfunding in Switzerland is far from as popular as it is in English-speaking countries, for example. Is this explained by the fact that Switzerland is a small nation divided into various language regions? Lea Egli of "we make it" is optimistic and does not see any disadvantage to Switzerland's size or structure: "The Internet knows no boundaries. Campaigns can be launched in various languages and across national borders." The nation's culture is the decisive factor. "Switzerland, for example, is very well acquainted with the notion of donations and patronage and has a great many associations," she says. People are used to demonstrating their commitment to initiatives rather than simply "liking" them.

Successful "Basel Model"

The principle of patronage is very well established in one region of Switzerland in particular – Basel. In this city with its strong tradition of patronage, crowdfunding projects also enjoy above-average success. There is an explanation for this. Basel set up Switzerland's first cantonal crowdfunding website, which also received strong backing from Philippe Bischof, the director of the canton's department of culture. "The site's success has far exceeded our expectations," he explains. "I am obviously delighted as it means many interesting cultural projects can be supported and implemented." Over 70% of the projects presented receive the support they are looking for here. In particular, the independent film and music scene receives a great deal of goodwill and support. Bischof believes that this also thankfully dis-

pels concerns that have existed from the outset. "It is certainly not just popular or mainstream projects that are successful. Many experimental initiatives and high-quality niche productions also receive support."

The authorities lending their full support to crowdfunding raises the question as to whether they hope that crowdfunding can make up for the increasingly scarce public resources available for culture. Bischof categorically dismisses this notion: "The public authorities cannot make such calculations." He adds that it is imperative that "politicians do not think that crowdfunding can replace grants and infrastructure funding". Crowdfunding campaigns generally only last a few weeks and concern individual projects. Bischof points out that effective and beneficial cultural policy has to guarantee support over longer periods of time. Crowdfunding can therefore "only ever be thought of as additional to public cultural funding. Crowdfunding complements cantonal cultural funding in those areas which do not necessarily meet the traditional funding criteria".

Bischof outlines an ideal scenario: Project organisers could seek public funding while at the same time using the cantonal crowdfunding website: "It is important that the commitment is unconditional." Public promoters of culture have to fulfil their mandate without speculating on whether artists could raise the necessary funds by charming the crowd, he says.

Switzerland: a true nation of sailors

Thanks to their victories in ocean racing and the America's Cup, the Swiss have established themselves at the top of international sailing. Love of the sea is alive and well in Switzerland. The combination of lakes with technology and money is working wonders.



STÉPHANE HERZOG

Pierre Fehlmann, Stève Ravussin, Bernard Stamm, Dominique Wavre and Ernesto Bertarelli. Do these names mean anything to you? They are almost certain to. They are all Swiss sailors who have achieved success at the highest level – in ocean racing in the case of the first four and tactical sailing in the case of the last, Alinghi having won the oldest sporting trophy, the prestigious America's Cup, on two occasions. Further back in history, there was the Swiss-American skipper and countess Hélène Pourtalès, who won two gold medals at the Paris Olympics in 1900. Then there was Louis Noverraz, the great sailor from French-speaking Switzerland (see opposite) who flew the Swiss flag in international competition for several decades. "We are a mountain nation with famous sailors," sums up This Oberhänkli, curator of an exhibition on Swiss sailing at the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne, which runs until mid October 2014. The SUI-100, the boat which won the America's Cup in 2007, is on public

display. But the museum also has in its possession the model of the *Mérit*, the vessel of the father of Swiss ocean sailing, the above-mentioned Pierre Fehlmann.

With its ten entries in around-the-world competitions, eight of which were completed, Dominique Wavre believes "outstanding sporting results have been achieved for such a small nation, especially in ocean sailing where lots of French-speaking Swiss have excelled over the past 20 to 30 years, influenced by the exploits of the French sailor Eric Tabarly". This phenomenon, in which Dominique Wavre has played a part as the person who set up the sailing training centre in Geneva, has in turn "inspired young people and had a snowball effect". This suggests that we have by no means heard the last of Swiss sailing.

Battling the elements

Long-distance regattas, such as the Vendée Globe and the Solitaire du Figaro, have tremendous public appeal.

The start of a sailing regatta on Lake Geneva – the UN building is in the background

"It's a natural endurance sport where you're battling against the elements and the weather," says the Geneva-based sailor. "When it's winter in Switzerland, there we are sailing in South Africa or Australia! It also presents an opportunity to talk about the environment. It is successful because the Swiss love outdoor activities, like hiking and skiing, but also competition."

The Swiss are not satisfied with just following the Vendée Globe online. "They love cruising in the Mediterranean and there's not a bay where Cruising Club Suisse vessels are not harboured," points out Dominique Wavre who has always been able to rely upon the support of his compatriots and consulates when faced with glitches and damage. In his view, the most striking example is the *Bol d'Or* event (on Lake Geneva) in which between 500 and 700 boats take part each year. "If you count the five-strong crews as well as the families following the race from a distance, 50% of the population of French-speaking Switzerland takes

an interest in this regatta,” he estimates.

Lake Geneva is the focal point

Head of a communications agency specialising in sailing and the author of several books on sailing*, Bernard Schopfer sums up the success of Swiss sailing and its appeal in a few words – the lake, technology and money. “The Swiss have contributed to the rise of this sport internationally thanks to Swiss money and boats constructed in Switzerland with Swiss technology,” he underlines. At the centre of this equation is Lake Geneva. “People have sailed on the lake since the 14th century, if not before, and the first regattas date back to the 19th century when transport vessels competed with one another,” explains this maritime expert.

“Lake Geneva is the national centre for competition in Switzerland. It is a wonderful location and a bit like a small sea,” he adds. “Technology-based shipyards have been set up on its shores, firstly constructing wooden vessels in the last century – with manufacturers such as Luthi and Amiguet – and carbon ones today made, for example, by Decision S.A which has built boats for the America’s Cup and the Volvo Ocean Race. These sailing vessels are highly regarded all over the world.”

Bernard Schopfer observes that there is a sense of continuation between the sea and the mountains amongst the Swiss, as well as a great love of nature. “Many Swiss people, for example, attend the procession of traditional tall ships in Brest. They have a maritime culture like the Bretons,” he laughs. And while owning a boat is expensive – which is why sailing is a sport of the rich – it is always easy to sail. “Many owners of beautiful boats are constantly looking for crew members, including to go to sea. There is a long tradition of social di-

versity on board boats. Since 1900, owners have recruited deckhands from the Eaux-Vives and Pâquis districts, places where people would be very unlikely to pass through the doors of the sailing club, but once on board everyone was treated equally,” recounts the author of “Légendes du Léman” published in 2012.

Eighty days without proper sleep

The future of Swiss sailing appears promising, even if its greatest achievements at the Olympics and on the ocean were some time ago. Bernard Schopfer points to the exploits of two sailors, Justine and Elodie-Jane Mettraux, who will take part in the next Volvo Ocean Race in November 2014 as part of the SCA team. “They are part of the Alinghi generation which has led the way in the sport,” remarks the former journalist who was head of communications for this red-and-white syndicate.

But how do you go from the lake to the sea and from the safety of the shores to the fearsome immensity of the oceans? “It is a shock to the system but it’s all relative,” explains Dominique Wavre. “You go from one environment where you are safer because of the proximity of the ports to one where endurance is of paramount importance. For example, in an event like the Figaro single-handed race, you spend almost 80 days without proper sleep. But if you have a competitive spirit, you will want to take on international opposition and that obviously takes place at sea.”

* “La légende du Léman Bol d’Or Mirabaud”, Bernard Schopfer, Slatkine, 2012.

STÉPHANE HERZOG IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”



The Swiss skipper Dominique Wavre in action on the Vendée Globe

Some milestones in Swiss sailing:

- 2013: Justine Mettraux finishes second in the Mini Transat with the best female performance in the event’s history;
- 2013: Dominique Wavre completes his third “Vendée Globe” with a seventh place finish. He has taken part in ten around-the-world sailing races, which is a record.
- 2003: the Swiss Alinghi syndicate wins the America’s Cup in Auckland;
- 2002–2003: Bernard Stamm wins the “Around Alone” race. He beats the record for a solo Atlantic crossing during the first stage;
- 1998: Stève Ravussin wins the “Route du Rhum” race in the small trimarans class;
- 1994: Laurent Bourgnon wins the “Route du Rhum” solo event;
- 1988: Laurent Bourgnon is victorious in the Figaro solo event having entered the competition for the first time;
- 1985–86: Pierre Fehlmann is the winner of the Whitbread Round the World Race (now the Volvo Ocean Race) with UBS-Switzerland;
- 1968: Louis Noverraz wins a silver medal with his fellow crew members Bernhard Dunand and Marcel Stern at the 1968 summer Olympics in Mexico (in the 5.5-metre international class);
- 1900: Hélène, Hermann and Bernard de Pourtalès win gold medals at the Paris Olympic Games in the Lerina sailing boat (1–2-ton class).

The Congress of the Swiss Abroad

The varied offering at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad attracted around 320 Swiss Abroad this year as well as several visitors from Switzerland.

Swiss living abroad met up for this year's congress in Baden, in the canton of Aargau. The theme of "information technology and social media: opportunities for the Swiss Abroad" was discussed by Otfried Jarren, professor of journalism at the University of Zurich, as well as Federal Councillor Alain Berset, head of the Federal Department of Home Affairs. The former pointed out that the systems of nation-state democracies were reaching their limits owing to digitisation in the media society, which can also be referred to as the information society, knowledge society, network society or multi-option society. He also observed that "positive, emotional and personalised content predominates" in the use of social media, whereas content in politics is determined by a relatively small number of players. Jarren said that he did not wish to and could not predict whether this would lead to greater democracy and possibly more revolutions.

Federal Councillor Alain Berset began his address by stating that "the world would be a poorer place without the Swiss Abroad". He named many institutions worldwide that would probably not exist without Swiss people living abroad. These included the Ritz Hotel, Chevrolet, the Golden Gate Bridge and Madame Tussaud's. He also emphasised that the 730,000 Swiss Abroad play a significant role as "ambassadors" of Switzerland. He expressly referred to the many Swiss schools abroad which do



Federal Councillor Alain Berset at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Baden

not just provide education but also create a "cultural, social and emotional relationship with our country". "The Swiss Abroad understand foreign countries. But they also understand Switzerland and perhaps sometimes better than we Swiss at home. This is because distance allows you to appreciate what really matters," remarked Berset. "In this globalised world, you have to be able to see things from another person's perspective because we all know that misunderstandings, misinterpretations and breakdowns of communication occur all the time."

The Federal Councillor finally joined a group of young Swiss Abroad for a discussion to which journalists were not invited.

OSA advice

I am Swiss and live abroad. I have a close relationship with Switzerland and would like my estate to be administered through Switzerland. Is this possible or does it have to be done in my country of residence? Where can I deposit my will?

The country of residence is generally responsible for inheritance proceedings, which is why the laws of that country usually also apply in the case of inheritance following a death.

In theory, it is also possible to specify in a will that the inheritance should be governed by Swiss law and that the Swiss authorities should be re-

Meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad

On 15 August, the day before the Congress of the Swiss Abroad, the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) met in Aarau for its second ordinary annual meeting of 2014. The Council adopted two resolutions by a large majority. The first concerned mandatory registration for Swiss Abroad within the framework of the new law on the Swiss Abroad. Through this law, which is currently being debated by Parliament, federal government wishes to dispense with the present obligation for Swiss Abroad to register with an embassy or consulate. The CSA clearly expressed its wish for this obligation to be retained. The second resolution contained the call on the government to oblige the Swiss Post Office's financial institution, PostFinance, which is run similar to a bank, to give all Swiss citizens abroad the opportunity to hold an account with them. The Council discussion once again highlighted the fact that the Swiss banks are closing the accounts in Switzerland of many Swiss Abroad.

Adrian Beer from Madrid, who holds dual Swiss-Spanish citizenship, was elected by the Council as a new member of the Executive Board of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad.

sponsible for dealing with it. However, anyone wishing to specify this should check with the competent authorities in the country of residence beforehand whether such a regulation will be recognised. This is not an option for real estate; succession in this case usually has to be governed by the law of the state on whose territory the property is located.

The new European succession regulation will enter into force on 17 August 2015 in all EU states except for Denmark, Ireland and the UK. This regulation also applies to Swiss residing in EU states which adopt the EU inheritance law. The new succession regulation stipulates that, in the event of death, the inheritance law of the coun-



try in which the deceased was last domiciled will apply. This will also apply to real estate. The regulation nevertheless also provides for the opportunity to choose by will the inheritance law of the country of which the person writing the will is a citizen.

It should be noted that the inheritance arrangement (how the estate is divided) and inheritance tax (which tax rate applies) concern two different areas. The information above only relates to the inheritance arrangement and not inheritance tax.

As far as depositing a will is concerned, we generally recommend contacting the Swiss representation (consulate or embassy) responsible for the place of residence abroad. It is possible to deposit a will there in certain cases. Swiss representations will also provide the contact details of local notaries. If you are unable to contact the embassy by telephone, you can also enquire using the FDEA helpline:

Consular Directorate, helpline: Tel.: +41 800 24-7-365, helpline@eda.admin.ch

OSA'S LEGAL DEPARTMENT

OSA'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.

This winter's offers for youngsters

New Year ski camp in Sedrun (Grisons), 27 December 2014 to 5 January 2015
The popular ski resort in the Grisons mountains is a hit with young Swiss abroad. The camp enjoys cult status with those who like celebrating New Year in the snow.

Language courses in Berne and Fribourg, 5 to 16 January 2015

Four lessons of language tuition in the mornings, joint activities in the afternoon and a welcoming host family. We will inspire you to learn a Swiss national language – German or French.

Easter camp in Davos, 5 to 12 April 2015

We spend a week in Davos over Easter where we enjoy skiing and snowboarding before the snow disappears. Top-class slopes await us for spring skiing – want to join us?

Winter and summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

There are still some places left on our New Year ski camp in Lantsch/Lenz

Date: Saturday, 27 December 2014 to Monday, 5 January 2015

No. of participants: 45

Cost: CHF 900 (contribution to the camp)

Ski or snowboard hire: approx. CHF 150

Registration

Full details of the winter camps and the registration form can be found at www.sjas.ch. Reduced contribution rates will be granted in justified cases. The form required for this can be requested on the registration form. We would also be pleased to post you our information brochure on request. The winter camp in Lantsch/Lenz in the canton of Grisons is the only FYSA offer in the 2014/15 winter season.

Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

Registration for the summer camps begins in January 2015

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND, Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01

Email: sjas@aso.ch, www.sjas.ch

Educational offers

We can provide you with an insight into the Swiss education system. Friendly host families await you, and you can travel around Switzerland on your own with the general travel pass.

Further information on the offers can be found online at www.aso.ch or at www.swisscommunity.org.

Federal Youth Session, (10 to 16 November 2014)

In Switzerland, Youth Parliament sessions are organised solely by young people. A session takes place every year in the Federal Palace where young people express their views on current affairs and set out their demands to Switzerland's decision-makers. The Youth Session always involves Swiss abroad. This is a unique opportunity to take a look behind the scenes of Swiss politics. Issues such as Switzerland and Europe, food waste, gender equality and racism are on the agenda this year with the promise of riveting debates. Are you interested? Find out about it from us as soon as possible.

www.aso.ch > Offers or www.swisscommunity.org. > Youth

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www.revue.ch

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Electronic voting: Greater security thanks to verifiability

“Security over speed” is the approach being pursued by the Federal Council with electronic voting.

With this in mind, the Federal Council has amended the legal basis for electronic voting and stipulated more precise security requirements for the systems in line with technical developments. This follows on from the third report on electronic voting in 2013 in which the government set out its strategy for gradual expansion and defined the necessary conditions.

Only once the new security requirements have been implemented will the cantons gradually be able to increase, upon application, the number of voters permitted to use e-voting (currently all Swiss Abroad and 30 % of the cantonal electorate). A key element of the new security requirements is *verifiability*. This means it must be possible to check whether a vote has been correctly transmitted, registered and counted. This will enable systematic manipulation to be identified in good time and with sufficiently high probability, namely before the publication of an election or referendum result, while safeguarding the secrecy of the ballot.

Verifiability will be introduced in two stages. *Individual verifiability* will enable voters themselves to check that their vote has been transmitted as they intended, using individual *verification or check codes*. Eligible voters will receive the applicable code lists with the voter identification card. There will be one code per list designation and per candidate for elections, and one code per possible answer for referenda. After casting the vote but before definitively depositing it into the electronic ballot box, a code will be sent back to voters for every candidate voted for or answer submitted (yes, no, blank) which they can compare with the code on their check list. If the codes match, this will indicate to voters that the vote has been transmitted as they intended, in other words without manipulation. They can then definitively deposit the vote into the

electronic ballot box. Individual verifiability will be deployed by all e-voting cantons for the first time at the federal referendum on 8 March 2015. The introduction of individual verifiability will give the cantons the opportunity to apply to the Federal Council for an increase in the limit from 30 % to 50 % of the cantonal electorate.

Universal verifiability is a check to ensure that the vote has been correctly registered and counted in the electronic ballot box. This check will be carried out not by the voters themselves but by validators (trustworthy third parties, such as the Electoral Commission, election observers, volunteers or interested parties) using mathematical means of verification.

If a system is both individually and universally verifiable, this is referred to as *complete verifiability*. Implementation in the three Swiss electronic voting systems is scheduled for 2016. The cantons will then be able to request that the Federal Council abolish the cantonal limit meaning they can provide electronic voting to all their eligible voters.

In addition to the introduction of verifiability, the cantons will also have the systems audited by an entity authorised by the Swiss Accreditation Service (SAS).

Zurich and Glarus (re-)introduce electronic voting

The canton of Zurich was one of the three pilot cantons in the electronic voting project but it ended the trials in 2011. On 1 January 2014, the canton of Zurich joined the Electronic Voting Consortium. The canton of Glarus followed suit on 1 July 2014. Both cantons are intending to give their Swiss citizens abroad who are eligible to vote the chance to cast their votes electronically for the first time in March 2015.

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Electronic voting at the 2015 National Council elections

Electronic election was successfully deployed in the four cantons of Basel-Stadt, St. Gallen, Grisons and Aargau at the 2011 National Council elections. 22,000 eligible Swiss voters abroad had the opportunity to vote electronically. This option is to be made available to even more eligible Swiss voters abroad at the next National Council elections. All cantons involved in the electronic voting project have made a declaration to the Federal Chancellery that they will offer electronic voting at the National Council elections on 18 October 2015.

The vast majority of eligible Swiss voters abroad will be able to take part in elections and referenda electronically

With the introduction of e-voting in Zurich and Glarus, from March 2015 fourteen cantons – Berne, Lucerne, Zurich, Glarus, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel-Stadt, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Grisons, Aargau, Thurgau, Neuchâtel and Geneva – will provide their compatriots abroad with the opportunity to vote electronically. So, for the first time, a large majority of the approx. 135,000 Swiss Abroad registered on an electoral roll will be able to use e-voting. In Neuchâtel and Geneva, some of the electorate living in the canton will also be able to cast their vote electronically.

Council of States elections for the Swiss Abroad

Eligible Swiss voters abroad from the canton of Basel-Stadt will also be able to take part in the Council of States elections for the first time on 18 October 2015. The cantonal parliament approved a corresponding amendment to the cantonal constitution and law in November 2013. This means that Swiss Abroad are now entitled to vote in Council of States elections in twelve cantons – Basel-Land, Basel-Stadt, Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Grisons, Jura, Neuchâtel, Schwyz, Solothurn, Ticino (only for voters whose home canton is Ticino) and Zurich.

FEDERAL CHANCELLERY, NADJA OBRESCHKOW,
HEAD OF THE ELECTRONIC VOTING CANTONS AND OPERATIONS SUB-PROJECT

Canton of Zurich: New central electoral roll for the Swiss Abroad

From autumn 2014, the city of Zurich will administer a central electoral roll for the Swiss Abroad on behalf of the canton. As of the vote on 30 November 2014, all Swiss citizens entered on the electoral roll



Kanton Zürich

in the canton of Zurich who reside abroad will thus receive their voting documents from the city of Zurich. The city will also count the votes. The election and referendum results of Swiss living abroad will therefore no longer be added to the results of the Zurich communes but instead shown as a separate constituency. The results of the "Swiss Abroad" constituency will be available from 12 noon (CET) on voting Sundays at www.wahlen.zh.ch

Unchanged point of contact for the Swiss Abroad

The point of contact for registration and de-registration as well as changes of address in the electoral roll will remain the Swiss representation where the Swiss Abroad are registered. General information on the opportunity to vote in the canton of Zurich at federal level and at Council of States elections is published at www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ausland-ch

Basis for e-voting trials

The new central electoral roll will enable e-voting ballots to be implemented efficiently. The canton of Zurich plans to give the Swiss Abroad entered in the electoral roll the opportunity to vote electronically as an alternative to the written vote from 8 March 2015. The previous e-voting system is currently being developed further in cooperation with a consortium of eight other cantons in order to meet federal government's latest security requirements and to improve user-friendliness.

STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE CANTON OF ZURICH,
EDITH WIEDERKEHR, HEAD OF ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

Canton of Glarus: E-voting for the Swiss Abroad

The Cantonal Council in Glarus gave the green light for the introduction of electronic voting for eligible Swiss voters abroad in summer 2014. Glarus thus became the fourteenth canton to approve the introduction of e-voting. Preparations at the Cantonal Chancellery are in full swing. The objective is to enable the approx. 600 eligible voters in Glarus residing abroad to cast their vote via the Internet for the first time on 8 March 2015. They will receive a new voter identification card containing additional details. The opportunity to vote in person at the ballot box or to use the postal vote will continue to exist.



The system that will be used is the one originally developed by the canton of Zurich, which has since been deployed by nine cantons (Electronic Voting Consortium consisting of the cantons ZH, AG, SG, GR, SO, TG, SH, GL and FR) and is constantly being improved. The electoral roll for the Swiss Abroad will continue to be administered by the Glarus communes, which means there is no change in terms of registration for the Swiss Abroad.

The canton of Glarus also plans to enable the Swiss Abroad to vote electronically at the 2015 National Council elections. The Cantonal Council will decide on how to proceed after five trials. The long-term objective is the introduction of the new voting system for the entire electorate in Glarus.

CHANCELLERY OF THE CANTON OF GLARUS,
ANINA WEBER AND MICHAEL SCHÜEPP

HELPLINE FDFA

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Publications

The brochure “Switzerland – EU: Free movement of persons. Salaries, immigration, AHV/IV... Questions and answers” has been updated. It provides information on the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons and answers questions on salaries, employment, business, immigration and social welfare institutions in relation to the free movement of persons.

The updated anthology of information sheets entitled “The Switzerland-EU Bilateral Agreements” has been published. It provides an overview of Swiss policy on Europe and explores the key bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU. The regularly updated information sheets can be found at www.eda.admin.ch/europa

The brochure and anthology can be ordered free of charge in German, French and Italian (art. no. 201.600.D, 201.600.F, 201.600.I and art. no. 201.337.d, 201.337.f, 201.337.i) from FOBL, Federal Publication Sales, CH-3003 Berne, www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch.

They are also available electronically on the website of the Directorate for European Affairs (DEA) at www.eda.admin.ch/europa/publikationen or can be ordered there.



Notice

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The latest issue of “Swiss Review” and previous issues can be read and/or printed out at any time at www.revue.ch. “Swiss Review” (or “Gazzetta Svizzera” in Italy) is sent free of charge to all households of Swiss Abroad who are registered with an embassy or consulate general either in printed format or electronically (via email or as an iPad/Android app).

Federal referenda

Three proposals will be put to the vote on 30 November 2014:

- Popular initiative of 19 October 2012 “Schluss mit den Steuerprivilegien für Millionäre (Abschaffung der Pauschalbesteuerung)” – (Stop the tax privileges for millionaires (abolition of flat-rate taxation));
- Popular initiative of 2 November 2012 “Stopp der Überbevölkerung – zur Sicherung der natürlichen Lebensgrundlagen” (Stop overpopulation – safeguard our natural environment);
- Popular initiative of 20 March 2013 “Rettet unser Schweizer Gold (Gold-Initiative)” – (Save our Swiss gold (gold initiative)).

All information on the proposals (voting pamphlet, committees, party statements, electronic voting, etc.) can be found at www.ch.ch/abstimmungen.

Referendum dates in 2015: 8 March, 14 June, 18 October (federal elections), 29 November.

Popular initiatives

No new federal popular initiatives had been launched by the time issue no. 5/2014 of “Swiss Review” went to press.

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

FDFA official communications officer:
 Peter Zimmerli, Relations with the Swiss Abroad
 Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
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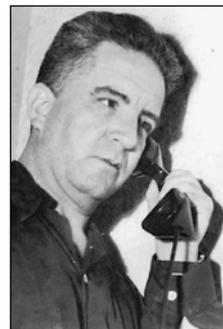
129 encounters

“I would die if I were no longer able to write,” Julien Green once said. The French author with roots in the USA is one of 129 writers featured in the book “Schreib oder stirb” (Write or Die). You will come across many famous names while reading it. These include Heinrich von Kleist, Richard Wright, Franz Kafka and Simone de Beauvoir, but many little known or completely unknown authors, such as **Ciro Alegría**, Henry Parland and Munsch Premtschand, are also covered. In short portraits, always restricted to precisely two pages, Charles Linsmayer – the author of our literature series on the Swiss Abroad



– outlines the life and work of the writers. Despite the brevity of the articles, Linsmayer succeeds each time in recreating a world. The 129 life stories are 129 encounters of a very special kind.

■ **CHARLES LINSMAYER:** “Schreib oder stirb! 129 Schicksale von **Ciro Alegría** bis **Stefan Zweig**”; Verlag elfundzehn, Eglisau; 280 pages with pictures. CHF 36.00 / € 32.50



Ciro Alegría



Stefan Zweig

Shedding light on Switzerland’s relationship with the international community

Switzerland’s relationship with countries abroad and its international role is a perennial issue. People may sometimes wish, especially since the referendum of 9 February 2014, that it would go away. However, a small book on the subject is highly recommended here. It was written over a year ago by **Joëlle Kuntz**, one of the most high profile journalists in French-speaking Switzer-



Joëlle Kuntz

land, and is entitled “La Suisse ou le génie de la dépendance” (Switzerland or the art of dependence). Former ambassador **Benedikt von Tschärner**, who was once head of the Swiss mission in Brussels, has translated it into German and written a foreword.

Over eight chapters, Kuntz explores Switzerland’s relationship with the international community and the difficult path between dependence, on the one hand, and autonomy and neutrality, on the other. **Joëlle Kuntz** has a profound

understanding of the topic but writes the book not as an historian but instead as a journalist. She chooses the essay form but also allows herself to make pointed remarks and to take the occasional swipe. This book is an insightful read.

■ **JOËLLE KUNTZ:** “Die Schweiz oder die Kunst der Abhängigkeit – Zwischenruf”; Verlag NZZ Libro, Zurich 2014.



Multimedia statistics

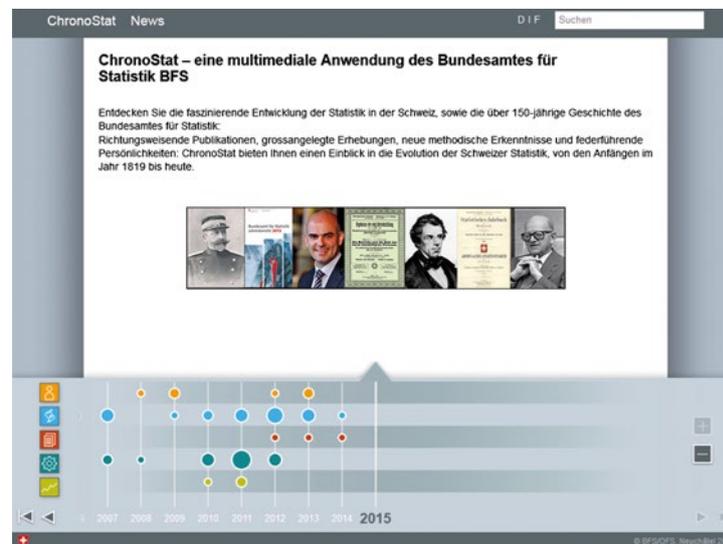
It has a rich history and provides the media and therefore the Swiss public with new information almost every day – the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) based in Neuchâtel. How much meat does the average Swiss couple consume? What age do they reach on average? What do they call their children? How many cross-border commuters are there? How healthy are Swiss babies? All of this information and much more besides is documented statistically – the FSO has since 1860 had the task of monitoring Switzerland, its economy and its society and of publishing the results.



From this rich history of the emergence and growth of public statistics in Switzerland, a selection of important milestones has now been made publicly accessible. The application is available online under the name ChronoStat. The story began in 1816 when **Jean Picot**, a professor in Geneva, published his “Statistics of Switzerland”. Further links are often provided alongside

the details in the timeline, making a great wealth of information accessible.

http://www.portal-stat.admin.ch/timeline/chronostat_de.php#
www.bfs.admin.ch > ChronoStat > Timeline ChronoStat



Poverty in Switzerland

590,000 people were classified as poor in Switzerland in 2012, according to the official definition. That equates to a proportion of 7.7%, according to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO). This figure has fallen by 1.6% since 2007. It has nonetheless risen by 0.3% compared to the previous year. Anyone with less than 2,200 Swiss francs a month to live on as an individual is considered poor in Switzerland. The threshold stands at 4,050 Swiss francs for two adults with two children. As might be expected, the unemployed are particularly affected by poverty. The poverty rate is 20% here. Other risk groups are single parents (16.5%) and adults living alone (17.9%).

Federal Council opposed to unconditional basic income

The Federal Council believes that the popular initiative for an unconditional basic income would jeopardise the social contract and solidarity in Switzerland and have an adverse impact on the economy. The Swiss government therefore decided at the end of August to present the popular initiative to Parliament without a counterproposal. The initiative had been submitted in October 2013. It calls upon federal government to ensure a basic income for all persons living in Switzerland of 2,500 Swiss francs a month for adults and 625 francs for children and young people.

How are income and wealth distributed?

Switzerland remains an island of prosperity in Europe for the majority of the population. This is according to the Federal Council report on the distribution of wealth published at the end of August. This indicates that average incomes in Switzerland are very high and have increased further over the past 10 to 15 years. The discrepancy between the highest and lowest incomes is below average by European comparison. The report states that the disparities have been relatively stable since the end of the 1990s.

Sites for travellers

Four new transit sites will be made available to Swiss travellers for their caravans in the canton of Berne from this autumn onwards. These sites are nevertheless temporary. Permanent residential and transit sites will not be provided for another two to three years. The new temporary residential and transit sites are located in Sumiswald, Interlaken, Rohrbach and Muri near Berne. They will replace the sites which the Yeniche people at the end of April after they had occupied part of the exhibition grounds in Berne.

Belinda Bencic

She reached the quarter-finals of the US Open at Flushing Meadows beating two top-ten players on the way. The 17-year-old Swiss Belinda Bencic was eventually knocked out by Shuai Peng of China. The player from Flawil in canton St. Gallen has emerged as the new star in the world of tennis. Nick Bollettieri, the legendary American tennis coach, believes Bencic could even herald a new era in women's tennis.



I wonder about the way we can lie, putting reason on our side.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE (1905–1980),
FRENCH AUTHOR AND PHILOSOPHER

It is disgraceful that people in Switzerland can hold barbecues against refugees of war.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR SIMONETTA SOMMARUGA AFTER 400 RESIDENTS IN
AARBURG ORGANISED A BARBECUE AGAINST ASYLUM CENTRES

There has never been such a dramatic situation since the Second World War.

MARIO GATTIKER, HEAD OF THE FEDERAL OFFICE FOR MIGRATION,
ON THE FLOW OF REFUGEES

The passport is the noblest part of a person. It is not created as easily as a person is. A person can be created anywhere, in the most frivolous way and without good reason, but a passport cannot. It will be recognised if it is good, but a person can be as good as a passport and not receive any recognition.

BERTOLT BRECHT (1898–1956), GERMAN DRAMATIST

Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind.

ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879–1955), PHYSICIST AND NATURALISED SWISS CITIZEN

The truly good man first practises what he preaches and then preaches what he practises.

CONFUCIUS (551–479 BC), CHINESE PHILOSOPHER

Let us leave nothing untried for nothing happens by itself. All men's gains are the fruit of adventure.

HERODOTUS (484–425 BC), GREEK HISTORIAN



Switzerland.
get natural.

Swiss cities
to enjoy.

Lugano, Ticino

Discover our delightful and surprising Swiss boutique towns: The lovely Old Towns with their feel-good character and cultural diversity are inviting places to spend some time. [MySwitzerland.com/cities](https://www.myswitzerland.com/cities)