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Swiss Abroad, reserve now the 23rd of April 1982, the day of «Switzerland's work abroad» at the Muba in Basle. Application forms will follow in one of the next issues.

The Swiss Film Yesterday and Today

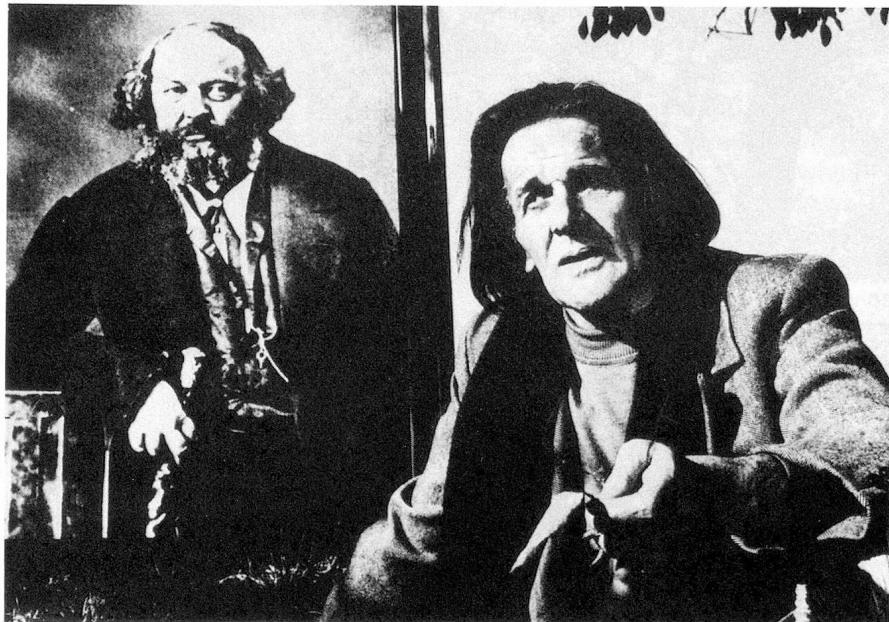
After these two successes, the French speaking Swiss cinema finally existed. The films obtaining an international audience multiplied: *Le retour d'Afrique* (1973), *Le milieu du monde* (1974), *Jonas* (1976), *Messidor* (1978) by Tanner; *L'escapade* (1973), *Repérages* (1977) by Soutter; *L'invitation* (1973), *Pas si méchant que ça* (1975) by Goretta; *Les vilaines manières* (1972), *Un homme en fuite* (1980) by Simon Edelstein; *La fille au violoncelle* (1973) by Yvan Butler; *Le pays de mon corps* by Champion; *Le grand soir* (1976) by Reusser; *Les indiens sont encore loin* (1977), *Le chemin perdu* (1979) by Patricia Moraz; *La mort du grand-père* (1978) by Jacqueline Veuve; *Les petites fugues* by Yves Yersin. Lagging a few years behind, the German Swiss cineasts, who went through a sort of «underground revolt» or made social documentaries, turned to fiction and, in their turn, earned fame both inside and

outside of Switzerland: *Pazifik* (1966), *Wir Bergler...* (1974), *Grauzone* (1979) by Fredi M. Murer; *La mort du directeur du cirque de puces* (1973), *L'homme à tout faire* (1976), *Alzire* (1978) by Thomas Koerfer; *Tauwetter* (1977), *Das Boot ist voll* (1980) by Markus Imhoof; *L'extradition* (1974), *Kleine frieren auch im Sommer* (1978) by Peter von Gunten, *Hannibal* (1972), *Das gefrorene Herz* (1979) by Xavier Koller; *Mulungu* (1974), *Schilten* (1979) by Beat Kuert; *Die plötzliche Einsamkeit des Konrad Steiner* (1976), *Der Erfinder* (1980) by Kurt Gloor; *Alfred R* (1972), *Das Unglück* (1977) by Georg Radanowicz; the documentary films of Richard Din do (*Naive Maler* 1973, *L'exécution du traître à la patrie Ernst S.* 1976), of Alexander J. Seiler (*Siamo Italiani* 1964, *Die Früchte der Arbeit* 1977), etc. as well as Daniel Schmid whose talent became evident in the «Munich School» (Schroeter, Fass-binder) and Maximilian Schell,

Scene from the movie «The Sudden Loneliness of Conrad Steiner» by Kurt Gloor.



famous actor and director, who prefers to work in Germany or the USA rather than in his own country. This international recognition however, poses in 1980 unspoken problems related to the survival of the national film movement and the preservation of its authenticity. The reason they were admired for was their emphasis of sincerity in the matching of form and content, which could be called their own style. Now, however, the markets for which these films are of interest have grown. The initial reticence was replaced by critical success, which became commercial success, with the risk of drawing the cineast into the trap set by foreign distributors, requiring them to improve the consumer value of the film by using well known stars, thereby increasing production costs and bringing about the transition from craft to industry. Favourable conditions for such a metamorphosis were unable to come together in 1980 because the Confederation continues to give the seventh art too little aid. By treating them as poor relations, the state forces her creative artists to look for the necessary support abroad, through cooperation contracts which can, however, sadly rob them of their own identity. *Repérages* (1977) with Trintignant, Delphine Seyrig and Lea Massari, keeps its local colour; However, *La Dentellière* (1977) by Goretta has nothing specifically Swiss about it any more. It is a French film, just like the following one which the author made in Paris in the Autumn of 1980, *La provinciale*, whilst Tanner was making a new film in Ireland, without Swiss financing and in English. It is not the least of paradoxes that Swiss film makers are going abroad whilst the Swiss film director Jean-Luc Godard, who has had a brilliant career abroad, has returned to his native country to make the film *Sauve qui peut (la vie)*, a title which rings like an alarm signal and also like a cry of hope.



Excerpt from the movie «The Death of the Director of the Flea-Circus» by Thomas Koefer.

The creative cineasts (both beginners and those who already have 10 years of experience in this work) hope that their status will finally be recognised by a rich and free state, which ought to give them financial support in excess of the alms which are presently being distributed. They also hope for legislation which will allow better distribution of their work. Furthermore they should be guaranteed continuing freedom to criticize, without which enthusiasm for scenery, democracy and deep historic vocation would be utterly worthless. During the entire silent era and up to the sixties (which coincided with the «New Wave» in France and the awakening of the national film movements, thanks to new recording techniques for sound and pictures) the Swiss cinema used the photogenic quality of the countryside. The cineasts wanted to serenade the beauty of the Alpine panoramas, using as an excuse the romantic themes from the 19th century literature or the most important themes from the national history. This aesthetic attitude led logically to an art form which was based on the idealisation of reality, a fact

which meant that it was little different to the seventh international art form in Hollywood or Moscow. During this whole long period, the object was to give the public tranquilising entertainment spectacles and this applied particularly as the Second World War drew near.

During this conflict, the authors in neutral and protected Switzerland were forced into the job of stabilising the bond of the confederative society, by glorifying even more the countryside and the earth as the unity of spirit, despite cantonal, language or religious differences. Even after peace returned, most of the producers and cineasts continued to illustrate this official ideology, not seeing that the general conditions in Europe and the rest of the world had changed.

Formed by the film clubs, politically sensitive to world problems, the generation which was growing out of adolescence or approaching its twentieth year, hoped to make films which would question the type of cinema which was based on self-satisfaction, a good conscience and sentimental folklore.

Up to this time, it appeared that Switzerland on the screen identi-



Scene from the movie «Repérages» by Michel Soutter.

fied herself with some sort of paradise, i. e. that she avoided apparently all of the economic, political and social contradictions which were strongly felt in other countries. It now became obvious that she could no longer avoid the issue: the insurgence of guest workers saw to that. Gripped by a fever of productivity and depending on the strength of the franc, the country needed workers. These were initially imported from Italy. The presence of these proletarians, who were often housed in miserable barracks on the edge of town or by the side of a motorway under construction, suddenly made a class difference visible, which until that time (excepting the years between 1930 and 1940) had almost always remained hidden. In addition, these workers brought with them a different mentality, less strict, more open than the restraint and reserve, the voluntary self-effacement in the character of the solitary, average Swiss citizen. As a result, they soon provided food for thought for the young intellectuals and artists, who were thus forced to take a new look at the meaning of their actions and crea-

tive work: they had to get away from the easy speeches of admiration and bear critical witness! This development appeared particularly in the relationship of the new generation of film makers to the countryside. They no longer filmed the harmony of the Alps, but turned to the cities, or rather their suburbs: in this respect Michel Soutter went his own way and concerned himself with the bush landscape on the banks of the Rhone, the meadows of the Genevan countryside and the grey, snow-dressed gardens. Most of the other directors chose similar scenery and very much later, when Schmid filmed the mountains or lakes of primitive Switzerland (in *La Paloma*), or Tanner did this in *Messidor*, it was with a view to making the pictures into clichés and showing their subject ironically.

With the same idea, there is a similar displacement, as with the countryside, of the heroes whose stories are told. It is a surprising fact that the young film does not frequently show young roles. On the contrary, it appears rather to try to show the fate of old people, who,

just like the guest workers, are those who are mainly left out of the blissful civilisation of economic growth and the profit-making society. The working population tends to look upon them as a quantity to be ignored, because they are unproductive, and appears satisfied that the perfect functioning of the social insurance scheme is sufficient to master the problems of the third phase of life. They show no feelings towards the old people. Because it is used to believing that money is the basis of human relationships, the bourgeoisie, on the arrival of technocracy, believes it is being generous in placing its parents into inviting specialised institutions, without taking account of the bonds of affection. This type of cynicism, which betrays the truth about a society which hides itself behind misleading appearances, was swiftly sniffed out by the film makers. For this reason we will not list the films which are concerned with aged central figures: Tanner's film, *Charles mort ou vif*, rebels against a world which is preparing

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to reject the old and where the success of a businessman suddenly appears to him as a terrible inner defeat.

Since these important moments of rebellion, of questioning traditional set values, since the explosion of critical generosity, not without humour, which have made the Swiss film highly regarded and have brought it an international audience, a lot of enthusiasm has

been lost due to the state of financing of the productions, poorly subsidised by the state, which has led imperceptibly to a sort of standardisation as seen in Czechoslovakia. The desire to create, the wish to think about the present national situation, and the talent are not lacking, but the structures born from success now prevent the development of a seventh national art form from pursuing the path

which characterised it from 1970 to 1980. The film makers must not give up hope of contriving the means of continuing to express themselves. Perhaps they will even have to accept the poverty which is imposed upon them and which may, helped by willpower, sincerity, true poetry and selfconfidence, turn into an artistic and social victory as in the years from 1964 to 1970.

Association Joseph Bovet

Fribourgeois du dehors

Fondée en 1957

L'année du 500^e anniversaire de l'entrée du canton de Fribourg dans la Confédération touche à sa fin.

Pour nous, Fribourgeois du dehors groupés au sein de l'Association Joseph Bovet, qui compte 37 sociétés en Suisse et une société de membres individuels domiciliés à l'étranger, les jours de fête des 20 et 21 juin 1981 resteront gravés dans les mémoires,

avec le samedi 20 juin

l'assemblée des délégués dans la salle du Grand Conseil,
– le souper au restaurant de la Grenette et
– le festival «Terres de Fribourg»

et le dimanche 21 juin

la messe célébrée par Mgr. Mamie, évêque du diocèse et trois autres prêtres, dont un Fribourgeois missionnaire au Cameroun, et chantée par les chœurs-mixtes de nos sociétés,

– le cortège riche en costumes et couleurs avec les drapeaux des sociétés et de nombreux chars représentant nos régions d'adoption, ainsi qu'un groupe de Fribourgeois de l'étranger avec des drapeaux des pays d'adoption,
– le banquet dans la halle du comptoir de Fribourg auquel prirent part 1370 personnes,
– les productions des fanfares et groupes de danse, et en apothéose l'arrivée des descendants des colons fribourgeois de Nova Friburgo (Brésil).

Plusieurs fois l'émotion nous a étreints et des larmes ont coulé sur les joues des vieux Fribourgeois ayant quitté leur terre d'origine depuis longtemps et revenus au pays pour ces jours de fête.

L'année prochaine sera l'année du 25^e anniversaire de la fondation de l'Association et de l'inauguration du monument à la

mémoire de l'abbé Bovet à Bulle; les 18 et 19 septembre 1982 (Jeûne fédéral) nous fêterons ces deux anniversaires à Bulle, et nous vous invitons à participer avec nous à ces journées.

Peut-être pourrons-nous aussi organiser une ou deux rencontres avec vous les Fribourgeois de l'étranger pendant les mois de juillet et d'août dans notre beau canton d'origine; dites-nous si vous venez en Suisse l'an prochain et à quelle date.

Resserrer les liens entre vous, Fribourgeois exilés dans le monde entier, et votre canton d'origine est notre seul but, et nous vous prions de nous annoncer à votre président

central. Quelques lignes échangées de temps à autre, les statuts de l'AJB, les circulaires que vous recevez régulièrement, une rencontre à l'occasion d'un voyage que vous ferez au pays, sont autant de contacts que nous devons favoriser. Pour terminer, votre président central vous présente ses vœux sincères pour que 1982 soit pour tous une excellente année. Puisse Dieu nous accorder santé, joie et paix. Continuons à être les ambassadeurs de notre cher canton d'origine là où nous vivons et restons lui fidèles dans l'esprit des beaux chants de l'abbé Bovet «Le vieux chalet» et celui des «Suisses à l'étranger».

