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The Tower of Babel on the march

Every year, the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad organizes holiday camps for our young compatriots abroad. The following pages present a picture and give a general impression of such an event. Furthermore we introduce a book on Swiss emigration, whose proceeds will benefit that Foundation.

Arosa, Bellinzona, Aletsch Glacier, Lake of Geneva, Montreux, Lucerne; the happiest moments of this year's hiking camp for young Swiss from abroad.

In the forest, Samy lags behind somewhat. The walk from Fiesch in Upper Valais has been long and tiring. The boy, however, is not at the back of the group just because he is tired – he wants to let off some First of August fire crackers (secretly, of course). Samy is 10. His father comes from India, his mother from the Grisons. He lives in Nairobi in Kenya and talks perfectly Swiss German. Samy's pals walk along fast, for they are anxious to get to the chalet.

They are hardly at the chalet when Irma, the cook and at the same time a kind of mother to all, starts to cook. She says that the children are always very hungry. Light or dark skin – Irma's typical Swiss meals make all differences of race, language, culture and education disappear. They all agree that the meal is super and are particularly fond of Roesti and Fondue.

From glaciers to lakes

This hiking camp in Switzerland is part of the holiday programme for 1985, which the *Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad*, in co-operation with *Pro Juventute*, has put together. This summer, 266 children from 32 countries are spending their holidays in Switzerland.

From 20th July to 10th August,

30 young Swiss from abroad have crossed our country, by rail, coach, boat and on foot. Point of departure was Faellanden (ZH). From there they went to Arosa where they spent two nights in tents before travelling on to the camp site in Bellinzona. Soon, though, they left the mild Ticino again and crossed several passes and finally reached the *youth hostel* at Fiesch in the Upper Valais. From there they had a chance of admiring the Aletsch Glacier or even of trying their luck climbing. The 31st July was a very eventful day! The youngsters travelled by train to Lausanne, undertook a boat trip from Ouchy



Castle of Nyon

to Nyon and finally went by slow train to Saint-Cergue. The First of August in Saint-Cergue was a wonderful experience. Naturally, fire crackers were much in evidence, but some were left for the following day when the children had to pack their belongings again in order to leave for Les Paccots in the Canton of Fribourg. The last lap took young people by train via Montreux, Interlaken and Lucerne to Gersau on the Lake of Lucerne.

I joined the happy crowd in Ouchy, on the lovely white boat *General Guisan*. The children were happy. The other passengers watched and wondered when they heard the mixed crowd sometimes talk in French, then again in Swiss German or Italian, even English and Spanish, and their shouts could be heard all over the boat. They have one thing in common: Switzerland. Of course, they knew quite a bit about the country from their parents, but they have only got to know and appreciate it properly in the course of this hiking camp.

Living in Switzerland?

«It's fabulous that we can discover French-speaking Switzerland this time» says Babette Kourkowsky from Paris, who is taking part in a holiday camp for young Swiss from abroad for the fifth time. Every year, she meets her friend Ariane de Brémond from Washington, who is here for the sixth time. In winter, these two girls correspond and make quite sure that they apply for the same camp yet again. Ariane whose father comes from Aubonne, feels herself much more Swiss than American although she lives in the capital of the USA. Philippe Tahintzi, 16, with a smart moustache, lives in Southern Turkey. He speaks French, Turkish, English and Greek. When he was asked what he liked best in Switzerland, he answered: «Chocolate,

of course, the kiosks and... the smell of the Alpine pastures! The country looks so terribly small to me. But that's a good thing, for you can go everywhere in a short time. Maybe I should like to live here once I am very old. For young people, though, I find Switzerland too well-behaved, too quiet.»

Roland Schmid, 15, from Cali, Columbia, is particularly fond of the small villages, but would not like to live there. Enrico and Mario Rigamonti, Alessandro Corboud and Vincenzo Campione, all four from Milan, and their friend Sergio Bolis from Bergamo, prefer to spend their holidays in Switzerland rather than on the crowded beaches of Italy. Karin Witzig, 12, from Virginia, and Pamela Kocher, 15, from New York, are here for the first time. Both would like to come again next year. Talli Gablinger, 10, is the youngest of the group. She has unruly fair hair, freckles on her nose and lives in Herzalia in Israel. She only speaks Hebrew, but that does not dampen her high spirits. Her two elder sisters, Iris and Zwia, act as interpreter. John Capt from Casablanca is here for the fifth time already. He thinks this year's camp with travelling from one



(Photos: Claude Huber)

place to another particularly good. Salvador Santiago from Madrid, Christian Ruegg from Heidelberg and Thomas Arein from Lagos, Nigeria, are of the same opinion.

Our young compatriots from abroad had to get used to Swiss punctuality first of all. «This year's camp is one long trek from place to place» declared Dourgan, the leader of the camp. All accompanying persons talk two Swiss languages. In this wandering

«Tower of Babel», one gets along extremely well with one another. The participants are different, and yet somehow similar. «The children do feel themselves as Swiss, although the countries where they live have left their marks quite distinctly,» says Dourgan. «They vary as regards mentality, culture, education and diets, but they are very adaptable. A quality which is often lacking in us Swiss here!» ●

Marie-Josèphe Luisier

600 Years of Emigration

The long journey from mercenary to professional

Although the Swiss abroad are still closely tied to their homeland directly or indirectly, they are hardly considered of importance by the Swiss public. But even if they often represent only a small number in their country of adoption, the 350 000 Swiss living abroad belong to the most active, able and productive Swiss altogether.

Emigration has always been a very important aspect of our home and foreign policy, even though the first relevant federal law regarding emigration agen-

cies was passed only in 1880. Already in 1855, the Confederation used its influence voluntarily for the benefit of Swiss emigrants. So for instance, the official Swiss

representation of our country received grants in the United States of America for the support of emigrants of Swiss origin.

Every Swiss student knows at least something about the three most important epochs of Swiss emigration. The best-known is the chapter on the Swiss mercenaries before the French Revolution. From the 15th to the 19th centuries, there were Swiss mercenaries in almost all European armies. During those five centuries an estimated 2 million soldiers, 60 000 officers and 700 generals of Swiss origin served in foreign armies. The Federal Constitution of 1848 put an end to any service