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Autor: [s.n.]
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SWITZERLAND STANDS ALONE

The map shows clearly Switzerland's rather unique position as it is totally surrounded by countries belonging to the European Union. Even tiny Liechtenstein has abandoned Switzerland as it is joining in. So Switzerland, together with Andorra (the little white dot between France and Spain) stands alone, very much as it stood alone and surrounded amidst all the killing and destruction during world war two. But this time, the situation is quite different. This time Switzerland faces economical warfare. Can it survive this type of war all on its own? Only the future can tell.

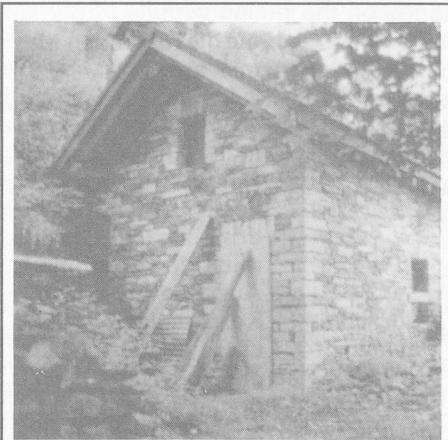
POOR EDUCATION

Here is a solid blow to all you Swiss who still think that we Swiss are tops in education and general knowledge. Sadly to say, but a recent international

survey conducted in Switzerland, Canada, The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Germany and the USA has shown that we Swiss are lagging behind all those countries with the exception of Poland. The objective of the survey was to test people on various skills and subjects: general reading, arithmetic, interpretation of diagrams, reading of timetables and geographical maps and, filling in of order and payment forms. Each person was graded from 1 (poor) to 5 (tops). In general the results were rather disappointing for the Swiss. Up to 19% of the Swiss participants did not get beyond the grade 1 and, compared to the other countries, the number of Swiss who reached grade 5 was well below the overall average. In the reading test, only 10% of the Swiss managed level 5. 70% of the Swiss who only had the compulsory schooling did not get beyond level 2 whilst in Sweden 70% of the people with the same schooling reached levels 3-5. What has gone wrong in Switzerland with our top class schooling system? Can the richest country in the world no longer afford to educate its citizens correctly or have the Swiss become so lazy and complacent that they no longer feel it necessary to be properly educated? A puzzling question.

NO MORE CHEAP HOLIDAYS IN TESSIN

To take advantage of the ever increasing demand for cheaper accommodation in the Tessin, many people who owned old stables and sheds on their properties started to convert them, mostly illegally, into some sort of temporary dwellings for tourists. These dwellings were quickly given the name of "Rustico". Rustico's soon sprung up everywhere in Tessin, most of them extremely primitive with regards to comfort. Most of them had no inside toilets or running water. Many were no more than just a shelter, a roof over your head, but their main attraction was that their rental was cheap. But now, the local authorities have stepped in and ordered many of these Rustico's to be pulled down. Grounds for these orders were that most of the Rustico's were built without any building permits and without regards to sanitary requirements. So your chances for a cheap holiday in Tessin look very compromised.



A typical Rustico, one of many that have been ordered to be pulled down.



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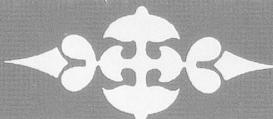
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