

Foreigners' law : It's back to the ballot box

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Foreigners' law: It's back to the ballot box

THE citizens of Switzerland will soon be summoned to the ballot box to vote on yet another "foreign worker" issue.

The Right-wing National Campaign party, Nationale Aktion für Volk und Heimat, has easily collected enough supporting signatures to contest the new foreigners' law approved by parliament only this summer.

The new law improves the status of foreign workers in Switzerland, allowing them to become resident here after they have worked in the country over a four-year period for a total of 32 months, instead of 36 months as before.

It is the relaxation of this provision that has provoked one of the National Campaign's strongest objections. The party describes the move as "indicative of the basic trend" of the new legislation, and it accuses the Swiss government and parliament of dishonesty over promises to cut back the number of foreigners resident in Switzerland.

The party hopes that popular rejection of the new law will force the government to reduce progressively the proportion of foreigners here, currently 14 per cent of the population.

The same party was responsible for three other "foreign worker" initiatives between 1970 and 1977, but each was defeated by the Swiss electorate. This time the party has collected nearly 84,000 supporting signatures – well over the 50,000 required to force a nationwide vote. Most of the backing came from the cantons of Basle, Berne and Aargau.

A date for the vote has not yet been announced but it could be as early as next spring.

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A SUSPECTED Armenian extremist, jailed in Geneva since the June 9 killing of a Turkish consulate employee, is to remain in detention while Swiss authorities complete their inquiry.

Twenty-three-year-old Mardiros Jamkodjian is accused of murder and the unlawful possession of explosives. No date has yet been set for his trial.

His arrest gave rise to the "June 9 Organisation", which has claimed responsibility for a series of bomb explosions in four Swiss cities and attacks on Swiss property abroad.

Media reports meanwhile quote the

Beirut-based Secret Armenian Army for the Liberation of Armenia as ordering a halt to the attacks on Swiss targets until the outcome of Jamkodjian's trial is known. It claims that the arrested Armenian was not responsible for the Geneva killing.

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MOST Swiss probably know that their landlocked country has a merchant navy. But how many readers realise that the fleet is this year celebrating its 40th anniversary? Or that its first ship was British-built?

The first vessel to sail the seas under the Swiss flag was built in Sunderland in 1913. It came under Swiss ownership in 1941 as a result of wartime measures by the Swiss government to ensure the maritime transport of essential goods.

Until then, Switzerland – surrounded by warring neighbours – had had its cargoes carried by the ships of other neutral nations. But when these countries also became involved in the hostilities, Switzerland launched its own merchant fleet. Despite clearly visible Swiss markings, several vessels were damaged or even sunk during the war.

The Swiss fleet now totals 33 tankers and freighters and is 51st in size among the merchant navies of the world. Their crews total about 800 men, just over half of them non-Swiss.

The ships operate mainly from North Sea or Mediterranean ports. Their home port is Basle – a port they can never sail into because it is more than 500 miles from the open sea.

The Swiss fleet is privately owned, with no foreign capital involved. Its existence is guaranteed by the government in case of supplies to Switzerland ever being en-

dangered in times of international crisis.

Now, the government has announced a 40th anniversary bonus for the fleet – a Sfr 300 million credit for construction and purchase of more seagoing vessels.

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A 36-YEAR-old Italian has been imprisoned, fined and banned from Switzerland for what the prosecution described as the biggest individual fraud case in Swiss history.

Flamboyant financier Franco Ambrosio was convicted by a Lugano court on charges of swindling Sfr 129 million from the Swiss subsidiary of Italy's state-controlled Banco di Roma. He was jailed for five and a half years, fined Sfr 100,000 and banned from Switzerland for 15 years on completion of his sentence.

The investigation was touched off by a letter left behind by a deputy director of the Lugano subsidiary, who committed suicide in 1974 after an audit revealed huge uncovered credits.

According to trial testimony, Ambrosio at one time had two tons of gold – also purchased with uncovered credits – deposited at the bank as security. The prosecution described the multi-million franc fraud as "an unmatched act of financial piracy."

Naples-born Ambrosio was one of the fast rising stars in Italy's intricate world of finance. He started out in the carpet trade at the age of 20, then moved to the business capital of Milan. Within a few years he had acquired control of several companies, owned several villas, a private plane and a fleet of Rolls Royces



and other expensive cars, and lived in luxury with his wife and five children at the fashionable resort of Portofino.

He sponsored racing cars and entertained politicians and pop stars at extravagant parties which filled the jet-set columns of the Italian press.

He was arrested last year after landing in his private plane at Lugano Airport en route for Milan.

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FOREIGN students at Zurich University will have to pay higher fees from this winter. The fees will rise to Sfr 1,000 a year by 1986 in addition to the annual Sfr 600 which every student has to pay. The extra fee applies only to foreign students whose parents are not resident in Switzerland.

Some 1,750 foreign students are currently enrolled at Zurich University, of which 1,200 will have to pay the new fee.

University authorities and student bodies in the city have expressed their opposition to the increase.

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A FRENCH doctor walked into a Geneva restaurant, dined deliberately on deadly mushrooms - and lived to tell the tale.

General practitioner Pierre Bastien ate the poisonous fungi to prove that an antidote he has developed would work. A few hours after the meal he suffered the expected stomach pains and later spent a sleepless night in his hotel. But the following day he pronounced

himself "fighting fit".

The 57-year-old doctor said he had chosen Geneva for his experiment as the city of the World Health Organisation. But both the WHO and Geneva University refused to allow the experiment on their premises, so he carried it out instead in the restaurant of Swiss television.

His remedy consists of antibiotics, an anti-diarrhoea preparation and two other medicines. But, he says, not enough hospitals are following his method.

The British medical journal *Lancet* has expressed scepticism, and the Swiss Toxicological Centre in Zurich said sufficient proof was still lacking.

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TOURIST guides promise that the nearest automobile is three miles away. But "car-free" Zermatt, the famed resort at the foot of the Matterhorn, is faced with mounting traffic problems.

A mushrooming number of battery-powered "electromobiles" competing with horse-drawn sleighs threaten to create chaos in the village's narrow, winding streets. The vehicles have become growingly popular with the locals for private transport, and drivers repeatedly manage to push their vehicle beyond the 12 miles an hour speed limit.

After receiving what one official said was an "enormous number of complaints" from tourists, the village council has now taken action. In a first move, the number of electro-

mobiles has been frozen at the present 205. And a commission has been charged with studying further measures, including lowering the speed limit to a more leisurely 9 mph.

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AS A Berne-based Briton still struggling with Schwyzerdütsch, I should be the last person to make fun of the multi-lingual Swiss. I have long been an admirer of the way so many Swiss cope with their various national languages, not to mention their often excellent command of English as well.

But with humble apologies to my host country, I can not resist publishing the following letter. It was sent by a Swiss property company to English-speaking tenants when they moved into a new apartment block in Berne. And it's authentic:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A nice swimming pool takes a lot of work to do especially a good care! Please help us to have in order this place. Hair and fat are very bad for a filter, in this case we peg you in advance to douche and to wear a bathing-cap. Do you know, that people are living below this terrace, please help not to make a lot of noise.

Radios are not allowed there and cigarette-end will go in the ashtray, many thanks for your help!

Danger is to great for children without adults. We have got a lovely play-ground in the park for our girls and boys. We wish you a lot of sun, clean water and much pleasure in our swimming pool.

Yours very truly

SWISS SOCCER

Football League tables up to and including October 4

'A' Division

	Pl	W	D	L	Gls	Pts
Servette	8	8	0	0	31:	9 16
Young Boys	8	5	2	1	16:	7 12
Xamax	8	5	1	2	14:	5 11
Zurich	8	3	5	0	11:	7 11
Grasshoppers	8	4	2	2	17:	8 10
Basle	8	4	2	2	9:	5 10
Sion	8	3	3	2	16:	13 9
Lucerne	8	4	0	4	17:	18 8
St. Gallen	8	3	1	4	14:	17 7
Bellinzona	8	2	3	3	8:	16 7
Aarau	8	2	2	4	12:	18 6
Chiasso	8	1	3	4	6:	12 5
Nordstern	8	2	1	5	10:	18 5
Lausanne	8	2	0	6	11:	16 4
Bulle	8	1	2	5	10:	23 4
Vevey	8	0	3	5	9:	19 3

'B' Division

	Pl	W	D	L	Gls	Pts
Grenchen	7	4	3	0	13:	6 11
Wettingen	7	4	3	0	15:	6 11
Chénois	7	4	2	1	12:	5 10
Winterthur	7	4	2	1	14:	7 10
La Chaux-de-Fonds	7	3	2	2	14:	7 8
Fribourg	7	2	4	1	9:	6 8
Locarno	7	3	1	3	17:	12 7
Biel	7	3	1	3	11:	10 7
Ibach	7	1	5	1	7:	10 7
Lugano	7	2	2	3	13:	14 6
Frauenfeld	7	1	4	2	6:	8 6
Mendrisiostar	7	2	2	3	8:	11 6
Altstätten	7	1	3	3	4:	9 5
Berne	7	1	2	4	9:	20 4
Aurore Biel	7	1	2	4	6:	18 4
Monthey	7	0	2	5	4:	11 2

Lines separate championship leader, relegation and promotion zones.