

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1981)

Heft: 1777

Rubrik: Solidarity?

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Vote of confidence for government's plan

SWISS voters have rejected by a massive majority a controversial initiative aimed at improving the position of foreign workers in Switzerland.

In a nationwide poll on April 4 and 5, the electorate rejected the Solidarity (*Mitenand*) initiative by an overwhelming 83.8 per cent of the votes cast – the clearest rejection of any initiative in Switzerland over the past 30 years.

Primary aim of the initiative – launched by the Solidarity Movement – was to eliminate the status of seasonal workers. These workers make up a

110,000 labour force which are permitted to work in Switzerland up to only nine months a year, may not change their jobs, often lack proper housing, and are not allowed to bring their families with them – all in all a violation of basic human rights, claim the Solidarity supporters.

So the movement urged a new article in the Swiss constitution which would

guarantee all foreigners living in Switzerland the right to stay in the country if they so wish. And Solidarity also called for the improved integration of all foreign residents into Swiss society, proposing that they be granted the same rights as Swiss citizens – with the exception of voting rights.

Both the Swiss government and parliament had recommen-

ded rejection of the initiative, claiming that a planned new law on foreign workers would in itself be sufficient to improve the lot of non-Swiss. But this law is still before parliament – and it still retains the category of seasonal workers.

Voters in all cantons rejected the initiative, the “against” vote ranging from 92.9 per cent in Appenzell Inner-Rhoden and Glarus to “only” 55.7 per cent in the new Canton Jura. Rejection was generally higher in the German-speaking than the French-speaking cantons.

Swiss President Kurt Furgler described the result as an expression of confidence in the government's handling of the foreign worker issue, and said the planned new law still before parliament gave non-Swiss residents a better deal than comparable legislation in any other country.

But a leading member of the Solidarity movement said the result had again proved that most Swiss still consider foreign workers not as human beings but as a labour force to do “the dirty work that the Swiss themselves won't touch”.



Taking time to get into line

AT 2am on Sunday, March 29, all Swiss cuckoos in their carved wooden clocks were expected by law to chirrup thrice instead of twice.

For that was the moment when, at long last, Switzerland finally caught up with its neighbours and introduced summer time.

The government tried to bring in summer time three years ago. But the proposal was thrown out in a referendum called for by farmers of the Zurich Oberland. This time there was no opposition.

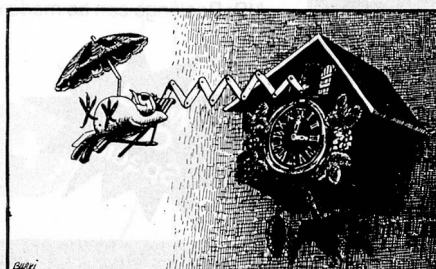
Twenty-two countries changed their clocks at the same time. Now that Switzerland has stepped into line the only country still out

of step in central Europe is Yugoslavia.

Reaction to summer time was favourable – except in country districts, where farmers complained that because cows were milked an hour earlier they yielded less.

But the Swiss Federal

Railways were delighted. Last year the difference in time between Switzerland and neighbouring countries meant they had to print a special timetable at a cost of Sfr. 700,000. This time all it cost was a few hours overtime, putting the clocks forward.



Basler Zeitung

Apparently, our policies no longer have anything in common with the ideal of morality and Christianity.



In French-speaking as well as German-speaking Switzerland the voters have swept away the initiative. The Swiss, who'll be taking their vacations in Italy, Spain, and Yugoslavia, have no reason to be proud of themselves.



The defeat of the initiative surprised no one. What was not expected, however, was the clarity of the result.

say NO – with a resounding 83.8 per cent

MITENAND!



Gei 87

"But my heart says Yes!"

JOURNAL DE GENÈVE

No! The Swiss people are NOT hostile to foreigners. What they ARE doing is keeping a distance to protect federalistic and regional balance, in order to preserve their national identity.

Der Bund

Grumbings about Swiss economic egotism and hatred of foreigners is not in order here. The majority of the people is apparently satisfied with the authorities' approach to the foreigners question; a policy which has a stabilising aim in boom years but is flexible enough to clearly protect native workers when the economic going gets tough. At a time when other western countries are plagued by unemployment, it's actually a "blessing" that in little Switzerland, 14 per cent of all job opportunities are still open to foreigners.

How the cantons voted

	For	Against	For %	Against %	Turnout %
Zurich	46,445	250,686	15.6	84.4	42.8
Berne	27,333	173,044	13.6	86.4	33.0
Lucerne	9,969	68,266	12.7	87.3	42.3
Uri	1,029	9,127	10.1	89.9	47.0
Schwyz	2,522	20,258	11.1	88.9	38.3
Obwalden	535	5,656	8.6	91.4	38.06
Nidwalden	794	7,294	9.8	90.2	42.7
Glarus	672	8,815	7.1	92.9	42.0
Zug	2,693	19,210	12.3	87.7	48.7
Fribourg	10,902	34,124	24.2	75.8	38.7
Solothurn	6,904	44,861	13.3	86.7	37.7
Basle City	9,528	41,125	18.8	81.2	36.5
Basle Land	9,481	43,233	18.0	82.0	38.8
Schaffhausen	4,453	24,910	15.2	84.8	70.9
Appenzell (AR)	1,257	10,715	10.5	89.5	39.0
Appenzell (IR)	244	3,200	7.1	92.9	41.0
St. Gall	8,426	75,215	10.1	89.9	36.5
Grisons	3,667	37,237	9.0	91.0	41.5
Argau	11,071	83,095	11.8	88.2	34.6
Thurgau	4,803	41,217	10.4	89.6	43.3
Ticino	12,918	59,469	17.8	82.2	47.3
Vaud	28,206	85,786	24.7	75.3	36.3
Valais	8,193	55,046	13.0	87.0	46.5
Neuchâtel	14,640	33,310	30.5	69.5	50.2
Geneva	19,735	61,663	24.2	75.8	45.07
Jura	5,903	7,417	44.3	55.7	32.8
Total	252,323	1,303,979	16.2	83.8	39.5