

# The canton of Vaud

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Compatriots who would like to read the National Festival Message delivered by the President of the Swiss Confederation may apply to our Embassies or Consulates.

## The Canton of Vaud

### Biographical note on the authors

Both are Vaudois, Marcel Ney is Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad and Lucien Paillard is his Deputy.

Without numbers are the foreign visitors who, for centuries, have fallen victim to the beauty and the charm of the Vaudois Riviera, that unique landscape on the Northern shores of the blue Léman, the Lake of Geneva. Let us mention but a few, the beautiful Madame Récamier living in an aura of scandals, the English poets Lord Byron and Shelley, Chateaubriand, the South African Boer Leader Ohm Krueger and the Finnish Field Marshal von Mannerheim. And even a few years ago, the Spanish Ambassador in Berne, the Duke of Baëna, many times over a Spanish grandee, aesthetic poet and well-versed traveller, wrote in a diplomatic periodical that there was no more charming view anywhere in the world than the one of the vineyards of Lavaux and the majestic lake on coming out of the tunnel at Chexbres. Incidentally, the vineyard immediately outside the tunnel has been called in the vernacular of many generations the «ticket vineyard» on account of the many return-tickets thrown out of the train windows by German-speaking compatriots on arrival in the beautiful Vaudois country. Yet this impressive panorama has also another aspect. Only too easily does it imprint on the visitor from outside an image of the Canton, and he forgets that the *Pays de Vaud*, fourth-largest Canton of Switzerland, consists not only of the sunny wine-growing villages of Epesses, of Riex and of St-Saphorin, just to mention a few amongst all the idyllic villages between Lausanne and Vevey with their imposing and incomparable view of the Léman. The proud Savoy mountains rising on what is already French territory and the

picturesque Dents du Midi which, however, form part of the Canton of Valais.

The gentle hills of the Jorat and the harmonious Prealps of the delightful Pays d'Enhaut, also known as the Valley of Château-d'Oex, belong likewise to the Canton of Vaud, just as does the rich delta of the Rhone, the salt-mines and the spas of Aigle and Bex, the terraces of Villars and Leysin culminating in the Alpine valleys of Les Diablerets and the Grand Muvran, wild and at the same time romantic.

The Canton of Vaud also comprises the extensive territory of La Côte, the Valley of the Joux, the wide vales of the Broye, the Venoge and the Orbe, not forgetting the peaceful hills which lead us to the Lake of Neuchâtel whose vineyards are a modest repetition of those of Lavaux. The Yverdon region, too, forms part of the Canton, that centre known since time immemorial for its market, its industries and its baths, which for a long time gave the Lake of Neuchâtel the name of «Lacus ebrodonensis» (Lake of Yverdon). The adjoining heights of the Jura and the valleys well above the mists of the plain belong to Vaud as much as the forests to which the Vaudois owe their name right back to the Celts: «Pagus Waldensis» (the people of the forests).

All these different regions have their characteristic traits and their own particular charm.

In our capacity as enthusiastic Vaudois we have asked ourselves during the studies of early history of our Canton of origin whether all these beauties were possibly the cause why, as opposed to all neighbouring regions, there is no trace of cave-dwellers. Why indeed should one hide oneself under the earth when everything is so lovely outside! On the other hand, traces

# Features

of lake-dwellings were found on the shores of our large lakes.

Nevertheless we realize that our theory, much as we like it, is not necessarily true, for already in the era of the Tigurinians, the population of that epoch preferred to leave that truly beautiful country in order to follow their leader Versingetorix towards richer territories. Punishment followed rapidly, for the Tigurinians were beaten by Julius Caesar near Bibracte in the year 58 B.C. And so they had to carry the Roman yoke and endure their tutelage.

Nor could we explain logically the reason why the number of Vaudois living abroad has always been on the high side, from Abraham de Treytorrens, Marshal in Sicily, Colonel Henri Bouquet who conquered the Red Indians in Ohio, and the Chevalier Jean-Samuel Guisan who gave his name to Guisanville in French Guiana, to the numerous representatives of the *Mission suisse romande* in South Africa, above all Dr. Paul Rosset from Cossonay.

After the defeat at Bibracte, the *Pays de Vaud* remained under the domination of the Romans for five centuries. There they left some of the most beautiful evidence of their art on Helvetian territory. Amongst the treasures is the remarkable bust

of the Emperor Augustus, pure gold and so unique that it rests in the vaults of a bank, and we may merely see a modest copy at the Lausanne Museum.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the cantonal territory of the present became part of the Burgundian realm, before falling into the hands of the Dukes of Savoy at the beginning of the 13th century. The latter knew well how to govern wisely and managed to maintain an equilibrium between the nobility and the towns to whom they accorded numerous rights and privileges. It was during that period that the expression «*Patria Vuaudi*» (Homeland of the Vaudois) originated, which allows us to presume that a deep feeling of solidarity prevailed amongst our ancestors, and that there were no longer any tribal groups without affinity.

Soon after the defeat at Laupen in 1339, the power of the House of Savoy began to crumble, which enabled above all the Bernese to settle in their place. The Burgundian Wars favoured their expansionist desires. In 1536, under Jean-François Naegeli, they conquered the whole of the Canton of Vaud in what was at that time a lightning campaign. The Bishop of Lausanne, the last to capitulate, paid dearly for his defeat. The

property which he guarded, was confiscated and the precious ecclesiastic treasures transported to Berne. The latter, amongst others, consisted of the splendid tapestries of Burgundy, which today grace the Historical Museum in Berne. One had hoped the Bernese Government might return them on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of Lausanne Cathedral in 1976 – an honourable gesture it would have been. . .

Not all the Vaudois were hostile to the Bernese, particularly the Protestants who increased in numbers, and their faith was soon declared the official denomination. In the course of 262 years of ascendancy, the Bernese established an excellent administrative system which even today, after seven generations of independence, has left traces in the Canton, so for instance the work of the district offices. In spite of their dominant position, the Bernese showed great understanding for the peculiarities of their subjects and contributed towards the economic development of the region. They also showed great generosity towards the Huguenot refugees from France. All in all, this was no unhappy period! The Vaudois, on the other hand, remained loyal subjects of the Bernese, even

General view of Montreux. (Photo L. Nobs O.T.M.)



Lausanne – the Palud square with the market. (Photo Y. Debraine)



# Features

when, in 1653, serious troubles broke out amongst the farmers in the German part of the Canton of Berne. The position changed only when, at the time of Absolutism, some of the bailiff families tried to enrich themselves at the expense of the Vaudois, and unfortunate nepotism began to spread. Many were the efforts trying to get rid of the «Bear of Berne»; the best known amongst them was that of Major Daniel Davel. But it was also the most tragic, for Davel acted entirely alone, convinced that he had a divine mission. He did not even confide in his soldiers and his officers. After his execution on the scaffold in 1723, he rapidly became a hero and a martyr, even though the foreign domination was not all that hard.

It needed an alien intervention to set an end to the Bernese regime. It happened soon after the French Revolution, whereby the general rebellion arose from a quite harmless event, we might say typically Vaudois. In the spring of 1791, a pastor named Martin of the village of Mézières announced that potatoes were a vegetable and not a seed tuber and therefore were not taxable under the tithe system. Martin was arrested and taken to Berne where he was soon released again, but his arrest caused great agitation in the whole territory, and his return to Mézières became a real triumph. Everywhere, banquets were organised in his honour on the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. In spite of energetic military intervention and arrests, the Bernese had to face ever more blazing speeches and *tricolore* cockades, and on 27th November 1797, when General Bonaparte entered Lausanne on his way to the Congress of Rastatt, he was welcomed enthusiastically. On 28th December, his famous decree was published under which every Vaudois who revolted against the Bernese, would immediately be placed under the protection of



Lausanne – the Market stairs dating from Middle-Ages

France. One month later, the declaration of independence was made by the Canton, and on 5th March 1798, the old Bernese despot went down at the battle of Grauholz against the French. The Léman Republic was born.

Yet Bonaparte as liberator did not treat the young republic exactly gently and soon afterwards he incorporated it, under the name of Canton of Léman, in his Helvetia Republic, arbitrarily splitting up certain districts; the town of Avenches for example was simply attached to Fribourg. Internally, development became quite dramatic. On one side, a tendency was felt in favour of a Bernese return, whilst on the other hand, it was above all the farmers who tried to prevent this by every possible means. Under the leadership of Louis Reymond, the Bourla-Papey (Vaudois dialect expression for *brûle-papier*) set fire to castles and public archives in order to get rid of the odious documents reminding them of their oppressors. Their rather likeable slogan was: «Peace be to men, war against papers!» After Bonaparte had realized that Switzerland could not be governed as a homogeneous state, he im-

posed the Acts of Mediation which accorded the Canton of Vaud the right to have its own constitution. It became an independent Canton within the Helvetic Federative State. On 14th April 1803, the future «Vaudois National Day», the Grand Council assembled for the first time. Although the new Canton stood the test amongst the Helvetic group of Cantons, its existence was once again put in jeopardy in the course of a general turning back of the wheel of history after the Allied victories over Napoleon Bonaparte. Thanks to the personal influence of the Vaudois Frédéric César de Laharpe on Alexandre I, Tsar of Russia, whose tutor he had been, the Canton of Vaud was able to keep its independence. The *Pays de Vaud* is thus the only Canton which became Swiss thanks to a Tsar of all Russia!

In the following decades right to the introduction of the first Federal Constitution, the 19th Canton of the Confederation made a constant effort to prove itself worthy of its partners. The internal structure was improved, and great attention was given in the first place to training and education. Unfortunately, the Canton of Vaud, like its neighbours, was not spared the serious divergencies of the era between the conservatives and the so-called radical parties, controversies which also touched the Church when, in 1845, the new government demanded the clergy to recommend from the pulpit adoption of the Constitution. Forty amongst them refused and were subsequently defrocked. That in its turn led to the creation of the Free Vaudois Church, the *Eglise Libre* which exists still today, though integrated now for some years in the Vaudois Reformed Church.

Fortunately, this separation was the last event which shook Vaudois life. Since then, its development has taken a normal harmonious course in all spheres.

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Outstanding personalities directed the Canton's political history and made a deep impression at federal level, such as Henry Druey, Victor Ruffy, Paul Cérésolle, Camille Décoppet and Marcel Pilet-Golaz. In the field of science, the great teachers and scholars, amongst them the medical men August and François Forel, the meteorologist Alexandre Yersin and the explorer of the stratosphere, Auguste Piccard, reached international fame.

The painters Charles Gleyre, François-Louis Bocion, Eugène Burnand and Felix Vallotton are not only to be seen in Swiss art galleries, and they have contributed towards the immortalization of their homeland's beauties. Writers, philosophers like Alexandre Vinet and Juste Olivier drew the attention of the intellectual *élite* of all Europe and became, like Eugène Rambert and Charles Ramuz, great propagators of the beauties of our country and our way of life.

Scholars like Jean-Louis Gaillard, Louis Carrard and Georges Meylan made education a matter of renown. It is not for nothing that Lausanne University acquired a

great reputation in a very short time, and that a whole row of private schools were founded on Vaudois territory, which are much sought after by an international social *élite*.

At all times, women, too, played an important part in spiritual and public life. In the early Middle-Ages already, the legendary Queen Berthe, *La royale filandière*, rode on horseback across country, spinning even while riding, and was always anxious to do good. In the 15th century, Catherine de Saulx wrote an interesting work on the pious life of Louise of Savoy, and in the 18th century, Isabelle de Montolieu was not only a talented writer, but also inspired various German, French and English poets. In these days, too, a number of Vaudoises enrich the literature of our country, such as Clarisse Francillon, Catherine Colomb, Anne Périer, to name just a few.

The Vaudois often calls his wife affectionately «la bourgeoise» and by doing so proves that he takes her seriously also as a citizen. The Canton of Vaud was one of the first to give women the vote and, under the leadership of the Vaudois lawyer Antoinette Quinche, female suffrage made great strides forward in obtaining various rights at federal level.

In the economic field, the Canton has been successful in keeping a balance between agriculture, trade and industry, and this has enabled it to achieve outstanding performances in all three sectors. Its agricultural colleges and research institutes are well-known all over Switzerland, the quality of its vintages is first-class. A whole series of undertakings in the precision industry are world-renowned; the insurance companies, the Vaudois banks – amongst them several private banks – enjoy an excellent reputation.

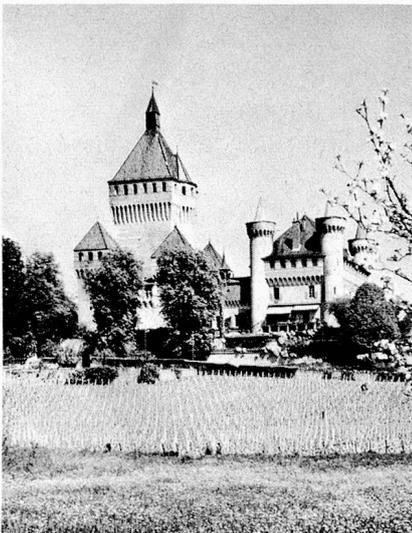


View of the massive of the Diablerets.  
(Photo OTV)

The way of life and method of work which we have illuminated, have contributed towards the high reputation enjoyed by this helvetic centre and, together with its natural beauties and architectural treasures, has made the Canton one of the most privileged regions of our country. Is there anything more impressive than proud medieval castles of Chillon, Grandson and Vufflens in their splendid surroundings? Are there any more striking churches than those almost entirely Romanesque of Romainmôtier, Payerne and Montcherand-on-Orbe? Are there any more desirable dwelling places, both graceful and comfortable, than the many country mansions along the foot of the Jura?

Is it therefore surprising that to live in the Canton of Vaud is almost like a dream come true? Not only for the great ones of this world who have known for a long time already that our Canton is renowned to be a fiscal paradise, but also for a great many Swiss repatriated from abroad who want to settle in their homeland, amongst them quite a few retired ambassadors and consuls. This has given the name of «Ambassadors' Cemetery» to a certain Vaudois district – hardly a deferential term! Many compatriots from other, less favoured parts of the country, hope to one

Castle of Vufflens



# Features

day be able to «pitch their tents» in the lovely triangle formed by the Léman, the Jura and the Lake of

Neuchâtel, although the number of return-tickets thrown out of the train windows may have decreased

on account of the ever increasing fares!

Marcel Ney  
Lucien Paillard

## Solidarity Fund of the Swiss abroad

Gutenbergstrasse 6, CH-3011 Berne



## That was 1976

A village in Switzerland, in the German-speaking part – the time early winter 1976: A young family with two children has returned from Africa; for the husband had lost his job.

What peace and quiet after the colourful life in the tropics!

How will the baby stand the change in climate?

Where are the jolly playmates of the little girl?

There are no blacks here, and nobody speaks French in the street.

But above all: How will they live? Will there be any work for father?

So much experience lies in just *one case of the Solidarity Fund*. The more one condenses it, the clearer its significance.

Date	What happened	Payment	Benefit
1972	Mr M. married a girl from his village The couple went to live in Africa.		
1973	Birth of a child.		
1974	<b>Mrs M.</b> joined the Solidarity Fund.	Single payment of SFr. 5400.– in risk category I	
<b>1976</b>	Birth of second child.		
August	Mr M. was given notice for November. (Reason: Refusal of work permits to foreigners due to legal measures in favour of the native population.)		
September	The application for compensation arrived in Berne.		
November	The family returned to Switzerland. One week later payment was made for		SFr. 30000.– (Lump sum compensation)

### Remarks

1. The qualifying period of two years of membership, which the Constitution normally demands before compensation can be paid, had hardly elapsed by the time Mr M. was given notice.
2. Risk category I was the right choice for Mrs M.; for in this case, the lump sum compensation was more important (in category II, her payment would have entitled her to only SFr. 15000.–, in category III SFr. 7500.– for these two categories favour the savings factor).
3. Quick action by the Solidarity Fund.
4. Although the wife was not working, she insured against loss of livelihood. She has remained a member of the Fund in view of later immigration.  
But her husband could have joined the Solidarity Fund as well!

Information: **Solidarity Fund for Swiss Abroad**, Gutenbergstrasse 6, 3011 Berne, Switzerland