



THE CONTEXTS OF SWISS OPPOSITION TO EUROPE

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THE CONTEXTS OF SWISS OPPOSITION TO EUROPE

Such is the lack of interest in its politics that Switzerland rarely figures as an example of opposition to Europe. Indeed many authorities do not really see it as relevant to European debates and, when they do, they tend to misunderstand its position. The fact that so little notice is taken of it is, no doubt, because Switzerland is neither a member of the European Union nor even of the European Economic Area. So it can be assumed either to have no need of Euroscepticism or to have no other kind of thinking about European integration. Thus, Flood argues there is an anti-European consensus while Steinberg (1997;) went so far as to say that the country matters precisely because it is sceptical about the European Union and offers another, better model of political organization. However, most outside political scientists working in the field either ignore it or suggest what really matters in Switzerland is the rise of the extreme xenophobic right (Tiersky, 2001; Husband, 2000). Yet even here Switzerland can often be overlooked or misconceived in ways which are all too common in English language political science.

More surprisingly Euro-scepticism, in whatever form, has yet to become a major subject of study for Swiss political scientists. Where the EU is concerned, Swiss academics are more inclined to consider somewhat technical questions of the effects of membership on Swiss institutions and to analyse the nature of pro-European sentiments (Kriesi,1992) One partial exception to the rule is Dupont & Sciarini (2001: 228) Hence there are no Swiss studies of Euroscepticism as such. And, again, the impression is given that the real problem is the far, anti-foreigner, Right.

This partly reflects the fact that the Swiss rarely use the term Eurosceptic. A search of the collective Swiss media data bank shows that, over the last few years, Euroscepticism as such is rarely used. (SMD, 2002) Eurosceptic as an adjective relating to individuals occurs more often (LNQ 1995) but normally in relation to politicians in other countries or in the Union itself, as in a quotation from Cohn-Bendit about reactions to Nice. Other evidence makes it very clear that few Swiss actually use the term about themselves and their views on integration even when they are firmly opposed to the EU. They do not think of themselves in this way, whether domestically or in wider contexts. To a large extent the term is a journalistic import from outside and one which has not put down roots in Swiss political culture despite the importance of the issues involved.

When journalists do occasionally use the term about Switzerland, they usually take it to mean the simple opposite of pro-European, in the sense of being fiercely opposed both to European integration and to its supporters in the country. However, this is not the way it is conceived on the rare occasions it is used in ordinary political debate. Politicians can use it in a more banal way. Thus, the hostile *Schweizerzeit* can talk of scepticism about the EU developing a foreign policy and Minister Pascal Couchepin could attribute Swiss 'scepticism' about the Union to the latter's failure to decide on a clear division of responsibilities. Amongst academics we can point to Alois Riklin who, in 1990, described Swiss attitudes to the foundation of the Community as 'sceptical' quoting parliamentarians as saying the founding fathers were 'mad'. He goes on to say that such scepticism, motivated by concern for the volume of EC legislation, the CAP, the transit problem, and its bureaucratic nature, returned in the form of the Association for an Independent Switzerland (AUNS/ASIN). Linder (1998) has also used the term to describe AUNS.

This tendency to use sceptical in a dispassionate rather than an ideological way was given its clearest expression in a recent parliamentary intervention by a hostile Radical MP Hans Merz. In March 2001 he claimed that the country was divided between Euro-turbos, Euro-sceptics and anti-EUUnionists (or 'Euro-gegners') thus clearly placing sceptics as middle of the road doubters and not as ideologically committed opponents of Europe. The term 'Eurobremser' (or Euro-brakemen) can also occasionally be used to describe opponents of integration.

Yet, despite this dual neglect, there is both true Euroscepticism in Switzerland, albeit of variable intensity and often very differently understood, and fierce opposition to the European Union. However, the Swiss opposition has many unusual characteristics, thanks to the many contexts which have helped to shape it: historical, intellectual and structural. And the fact that there are these forms of Euro-scepticism in Switzerland has a number of lessons for us, both practically and conceptually.

So, despite these limited and variable uses of the term, Swiss attitudes to Europe do deserve examination because the assumptions which underlie the neglect of the country are open to question. In fact, Swiss relations with the EU are closer and more complex than is often appreciated. And, contrary to what some suspect, these relations often enjoy considerable support. In other words, far from being uniformly hostile to 'Europe', the country is actually very divided on European issues, and also very uncertain about them.

For some authorities Europe has become the key cleavage in Swiss politics. The EU has many firm supporters. However, as Merz argued, there are many who have yet to be convinced, and who have not joined either of the extremes. Indeed, he probably under-estimates the extent of genuine 'doubt and uncertainty' since many of those in favour of closer links with the EU do not, as we will see, really deserve the term 'Euroturbos' (or even 'Europhiles') and are much more hesitant and pragmatic in their support. In some other countries this might be called 'soft Euroscepticism' but this may be too strong, because it is often scepticism in the basic, semantic sense of genuine doubt and does not mean simply limited opposition.

In other words, alongside genuine doubts about the country's involvement in European integration, there is an equally strong, albeit fluid, movement of opposition to European integration as a whole and to Swiss involvement in it. This movement is in fact more significant than is usually appreciated. It thus clearly shares many of the characteristics of the broader range of continental anti-European movements and can fairly be classed as 'hard Euroscepticism'. For instance, the Swiss case demonstrates much of the visceral kind of Europhobia found in Union member states notably in the UK. However, its structure is less similar and slightly less tied to party competition, thanks to direct democracy's dominance of Swiss political life. So, while its outlines are often very Swiss, in essence it is quite similar to broader European trends. Paradoxically, in other words, these kinds of Euro-scepticism in Switzerland are good examples of the country's general Europeanization. (Church, 2000c).

However, the simple fact of its existence is not the only reason for looking at Switzerland. There are at least four other justifications for including the country alongside those member and full candidate countries demonstrating significant sources of opposition to Europe. Firstly, the Swiss case deserves consideration because the opposition is an important force within domestic politics

and is likely to become more so. Not merely has it blocked official policy but it has also frequently constrained it in other ways. So it is often partly responsible for some of the ambiguities in government stances on Europe. Its impact often goes beyond those of other Eurosceptic movements. Indeed, it has the potential to change the whole balance and tone of the political system. Sitter's (2001) argument, that Euroscepticism needs to be seen as part of a general opposition stance, has a special force in Switzerland because anti-Europeanism can be inextricably bound up with a systemic challenge to the existing political establishment. All this is something which is too often ignored outside the country. Yet, given the country's sensitive position, such opposition has implications for the EU. Moreover, because of its geographical, economic and cultural involvement in Europe, Switzerland matters more to the wider Europe than is sometimes realized. Indeed, because it makes so much use of direct democracy, it could affect the continent's wider evolution.

Secondly, Switzerland offers an interesting contrast to other Eurosceptic views on the conflict between the global and the local. On the one hand this is because it is very much part of a broader Swiss resistance to outside entanglements. Switzerland's unusual international position means that Swiss opposition to Europe displays very different attitudes to the wider world than does hard Euro-scepticism elsewhere. Indeed it can take up almost diametrically opposite positions to those common amongst Anglo-Saxon Eurosceptics.

On the other hand, although its case supports Milner's (2000) argument that most explanations of Euroscepticism see domestic politics as a key factor, the nature and orientation of those politics are rather different in the Swiss case. The existence of direct democracy gives a very different shape to the organization of Swiss opposition to the EU. Hence its architecture goes wider than just political parties, let alone the forces associated with Christoph Blocher. Party competition is therefore less prominent than in many other countries.

The third justification is that when outsiders look at Switzerland in an EU context, they can often seriously misinterpret the situation there. The conventional assessment is that 'aggrieved identity' (Times, 2000) explains everything. In fact, there are also clear concrete interests involved in anti-Europeanism. These emerge from specific social, political and geographical factors. In other words, Swiss opposition reflects the particularities of Swiss society.

Finally, Switzerland demonstrates the variety of forms that 'opposition to Europe' can take, thereby raising questions about how we should understand the term Euroscepticism. Indeed, when the term is used in Switzerland, which as we have seen it rarely is, it does not have the ideological feel found in Euroscepticism elsewhere. Nonetheless, it is arguable that the country is marked by feelings towards the EU which are similar to those found in other, more obvious countries. Hence the Swiss case suggests that we need to think of opposition to Europe as a doubly multiple phenomenon, not restricted simply to those countries inside or seeking to join the EU. And, given the variety of views in Switzerland, it has to be seen as very much a plural phenomenon there, and no doubt elsewhere.

Following these things up requires us to look at the historical context and the way the country's long and discreet relationship with European integration has helped to shape the opposition movement. Secondly, we need to look at the Eurosceptic context of opposition to Europe. For, as already argued, alongside much pro-European feeling, the country also has a good deal of

'soft', perhaps even jelly-like, Euroscepticism based on honest uncertainty about how the country should relate to the EU. This can often be mobilised by the smaller but nonetheless emphatic opposition movement. As Steinberg says, the Swiss can be genuinely sceptical about Europe. This shows up if we look at public opinion, direct democracy, and parliamentary activities. Thirdly, we need to see how opposition ideas on Europe fit into a different intellectual context, both nationally and where the country's wider horizons are concerned. Finally, we have to look at the architectural context and the way direct democracy shapes the opposition movement, organizationally, in terms of party structures and the social sources of its support.

This will enable us to make an assessment of its place on the political spectrum, the reasons for its success and its significance for Europe as a whole. What emerges from all this is that Switzerland is far from united on Europe. Indeed, it is deeply divided. However, those who subscribe to anti-European sentiments do not think of themselves as Eurosceptics because they are essentially Swiss patriots resistant not just to the EU but to wider international entanglements beyond the traditional terms. In particular they are responding to what they see as a betrayal by the establishment. The latter is seen as having treacherously changed the successful and accepted policies of yesteryear. In other words anti-Europeanism is partly a reactive movement and all this is shaped by the wider Swiss political system and its use of direct democracy. Hence it is not just mobilised by political parties but also by broader campaigning movements, often focussed on referendum campaigns.

All this is essentially political. It is also very much on the right of the political spectrum. And it is motivated by more than simple xenophobia. The European question is an important mobilising factor in other words. In turn this reflects both Swiss concerns about globalization and facets of Swiss society, including its religiosity. In any case, it is increasingly important because not merely has it helped to revive and reshape the right but the growing influence of the anti-European movement is changing the country's overall political balance. This could lead to significant changes after 2003.

A: THE SWISS BACKGROUND

The initial context of contemporary feelings about Europe in Switzerland help to explain both the reasons for honest doubt and the rise of hard Swiss opposition to European integration. The origins of the political arrangements which help to give Swiss attitudes to Europe their special characteristics go back a very long way in history when neutrality first emerged. After the Second World War this helped to produce a very reticent attitude to European integration. However, once involved with the EC through EFTA and a Free Trade Area, the Swiss felt that they had achieved a very satisfactory arrangement. So when, under the influence of 1989, the government sought to change this, opposition developed. And this was to lead to a very difficult period for the government.

The cantons emerged in the high middle ages and were able to secure their independence by the early sixteenth century. However, their social, political and increasingly their overlapping religious divisions forced them to adopt a very loose co-ordinating structure and an officially

neutral posture in European relations. Nonetheless they were very much part of mainstream continental cultural and economic life. After the upheavals of the French revolution their neutrality was recognized by the Congress of Vienna. However, it was not until after a brief civil war that the modern nation state was created.

This maintained its neutrality in an increasingly systematic way. And, although this was briefly changed after the first World War, the country returned to absolute neutrality in the late 1930s in the face of the breakdown of the League of Nations. This helped it to sustain its independence during the Second World War, albeit not without difficulty. During this period the country also developed its internal political system into an increasingly consensual one so as to bring both the reviving catholic conservatives and wary French speakers into the mainstream. The result was to limit centralization, entrench proportional representation and encourage both direct democracy and a consultative social and political culture. Because neither the US nor the USSR had greatly appreciated Swiss neutrality in the Second World War the country felt there was little point in seeking membership of the UN in 1945. No application was therefore tabled and the country stayed out of the Bretton Woods organizations.

Equally neutrality was fiercely maintained, albeit in association with 'solidarity'. So, for a few years the country found itself rather isolated diplomatically. Even the OEEC and the Council of Europe were treated with reserve, the former only being accepted on strict conditions. And without major coal and iron industries the Schumann Plan had little relevance to the Swiss. For the most part this was accepted by public opinion, including by Swiss business leaders. (du Bois, 1989)

Things began to change from the late 1950s. Although the Swiss stayed out of the EEC they did play an active part in subsequent free trade negotiations, notably in the setting up of EFTA. Moreover, in a sudden reversal of policy the government seriously considered Association with the EEC between 1961 and 1963 (Dupont & Sciarini, 2001: 219). While this came to nothing the Swiss did finally join the Council of Europe and also made increasing use of EFTA as a multilateral means of handling relations with the Community. Hence once the Gaullist blockage was removed the Swiss joined the other smaller EFTA states in negotiating a free trade agreement in 1972. This was approved by 72.5% to 27.5% despite the beginnings of a xenophobic right wing movement led by James Schwarzenbach.

In fact for the next dozen years things worked well for the Swiss as EFTA grew and consolidated its position while the EC ran into increasing difficulties. This did not encourage Swiss officialdom to consider closer relations beyond their increasing number of bilateral arrangements. They tended to think that they had the best of all worlds, a kind of quasi-membership. And Swiss public opinion was very happy with this situation.

However, by the mid 1980s the situation altered. Firstly, the changing international situation encouraged some Swiss to push for UN membership, only to undergo a humiliating defeat in 1986. Secondly, the Swiss government then came to need a new European policy. The simple bilateral/EFTA policy was ceasing to be sufficient to deal with the renewed dynamism of the EC despite attempts to create a special EFTA relationship known as the 'Luxembourg process'. The official view was that the process was failing to deliver because the Community tended to give precedence to its own internal interests over its EFTA obligations. Yet, Iberian enlargement, the

Single Market programme and a better growth rate made the EC ever more important to the Swiss. The government saw Switzerland as facing both marginalization from a key market and enforced conformity with standards and norms in the making of which it had no part.

However, concern about where all this might lead encouraged the conservative forces which had resisted UN membership to set up the AUNS to defend traditional Swiss sovereignty. The movement was obviously worried about the European implications of moving away from a successful European stance. In other words, the trigger for opposition to Europe was a radical shift in government policy. Public opinion in general was prepared to wait and see.

While initially official policy had been, under pressure from the Parliament, to develop a 'third way' between membership and 'going it alone', the evolving policy was further overtaken by the events of 1989-91. In fact, the end of the Cold War called into question the country's traditional international stance. This pushed the government into going beyond the limits it had set itself in its report of 1990. It felt it had to widen its horizons and take more risks.

Hence the country embarked on a triple revision of neutrality, military provision and European policy. (Church, 1994) Where the last was concerned, Switzerland along with the other EFTA countries was moved to take part in the negotiations started by Delors' January 1989 speech and which eventually led to the European Economic Area accord of October 1991. However, this did not give the Federal Council the equal share in decision making it felt it needed. So, following Austria and Sweden, the government submitted an application for membership in May 1992. While changes in the way neutrality was deployed and the army organized were generally accepted, the idea of formal membership in the Brussels organizations prompted real doubt as this seemed to go against previous government reservations about the EC, thus reinforcing doubts about the establishment. It also seemed to jeopardize underlying Swiss interests. These were brilliantly exploited by AUNS and other opposition forces and led to a defeat over the EEA which, as we will see, may have been narrow, but was both decisive and divisive.

After this humiliation the government had no alternative other than to freeze its application and to embark on a long and painful course of bilateral negotiations to fill the gaps left by exclusion from the EEA. (Church, 2000a) While these eventually succeeded, reinforcing the country's increasing legislative Europeanization, they were extremely difficult externally and domestically. It took until 1999 to negotiate them and almost four years more before they were both accepted at home and actually came into effect on 1 June 2002. And well before then the government had begun to feel its way towards negotiating a further round of bilateral deals though this was not at all easy.

Moreover, the government was consistently challenged at home on other aspects of its foreign policies. And, on a number of occasions, such as the votes on the Alpine Convention in 1994 and the creation of a military corps for the UN in 1996, it was again defeated. At the same time it had to face a growth in right wing violence, often directed against asylum seekers. However, it did see off challenges both to its right to negotiate deals with the EU and to its more open military reforms. It also won a pyrrhic victory in March 2001 when a pro-European initiative calling for immediate entry negotiations was defeated.

During all this the situation was complicated by the irruption of a major crisis arising from

controversy about the country's record in the Second World War. Starting with accusations that the country, and its banks, had appropriated the deposits made by Jewish victims of the Holocaust, this escalated into a major assault on the country's overall stance in the war. The government, much to the annoyance of some right wing forces, was forced to set up a Commission of Historical Enquiry and, following a global deal between the banks and the World Jewish Congress, create a Solidarity Fund to distribute its national reserves. This, along with growing concern over asylum seekers, helped to produce increasing electoral success for some centre right forces who saw such adaptation as a further, unjustified threat to national interests and independence.

Hence there was considerable opposition to the 1996 popular initiative calling for UN entry although this was rapidly endorsed by the government. Despite some uncertainty, sufficient signatures were collected in March 2000 for a vote to be called. This took place on 4 March 2002. However, while there was a relatively clear popular majority, of 53% to 47%, the required number of cantons was achieved only by the narrowest of margins, representing a margin of some 1,700 votes in the Valais. The country thus remains very divided on such issues and the likelihood of early entry seems to be declining. The fact that eastward enlargement may possibly dilute the influence of small member states may partly account for this along with unease about new difficulties with the EU over bank secrecy.

In other words, the historical context of contemporary scepticism is one of belief in traditional detachment. Until the 1980s this was shared by government and people. However, when the government felt forced by circumstances to seek new ways of defending Swiss interests, they were only followed by a part of the population. A majority were doubtful while a minority became increasingly angry and alarmed about the new policies and their apparent dangers. This becomes very clear if we consider more recent evidence of political feelings about Europe.

B: THE CURRENT SITUATION

Emerging out of this has been a very strong and well organized movement of opposition to Europe, something which goes well beyond the Blocher phenomenon. But it does not operate in a vacuum. In fact it has a symbiotic relationship with broader popular uncertainties about Europe. Equally it draws on a wider unease about threats to Switzerland's place in the world to produce a harder and more hostile set of ideas about Swiss involvement with Europe.

However, this goes much further than in some other countries because it rejects both less binding forms of relationship with the EU and wider involvement with the outside world. It also rests on a particularly Swiss structural and organizational base. These contexts play a large part in shaping its character.

Real Scepticism and Real Opposition

Not only have European issues been a major theme in recent Swiss politics but they have helped to produce concerns about European integration at all three levels suggested for examination by Clive Archer (1999): popular, parliamentary (or intermediary) and governmental. Thus they have shown themselves in public opinion polls and referenda, in parliamentary debate and in the

political balance inside the Federal Council. These deserve more detailed investigation, notably the very formative vote on the EEA, since they can bring together real sceptics and 'Euro-gegners'.

Public Opinion

To begin with the popular level, uncertainties about relations with Europe clearly show themselves in Swiss polling evidence. Opinion polls have very often showed a low level of support for EU entry, rarely recording percentages much above the mid 50s. Even this can prove misleading as in the autumn of 1991 when, for the first time, support for entry rose over 50%. This was hailed as a dramatic breakthrough. Yet it proved to be a transitory and unreliable base for more purposive European policies. In fact, support for entry then fell away very rapidly with opposition rising to 55% in early 1993. (GfS,2001) This was in line with other polls which showed a considerable gap between the support for integration amongst business and opinion leaders and that of ordinary Swiss which could be only two thirds as high.

However, as the trauma of 6 December faded, outright opposition in turn declined until mid-1995 before the percentage more or less stabilised in the mid 30s until late 2000. Thereafter it again rose to virtually 50%. And, on those occasions when it fell, the don't knows tended to rise accordingly. In any case, by October 2001 only 39% were in favour of entry (a figure later falling to 24%), compared to 16% who did not know and 45% who were against. Furthermore, no more than 29% were in favour of reactivating the application for membership reflecting a lack of support for entry as a long term objective. In fact, only 19% agreed that entry should actually be a prime Swiss foreign policy objective although 42% accepted it as a long term possibility, compared to the 25% who were totally opposed. More strikingly only 6% believed that this was a real likelihood in the short to medium term. Yet against this, some 54% declare themselves satisfied with the EU save perhaps in its level of democracy.

Moreover, the GfS poll shows further evidence of doubt about Swiss involvement in EU-based integration. Some 46% of those polled professed themselves sceptical about the bilaterals, with a declining number seeing them as to the country's advantage. In October 2001 only 24% believed the deals were wholly advantageous compared to 46% who saw them as a mixed blessing and 16% as disadvantageous. Similarly, more (44%) were sceptical than hopeful (40%) about the impact of the Euro on Switzerland, although the figures have gone up since 1998. Other polls in 2001 showed that neutrality remained infinitely more popular than European involvement. (de Graffenried, 2001) Equally, in 2002 more people were pessimistic about the outcome of the second round of bilaterals than were optimistic.

In other words, general doubts about European integration exist. This is true both of principle and timing. And, while these doubts do not always translate into out and out opposition whether at *votations* or elsewhere, they clearly offer encouragement to anti-European forces. They can also act as a constraint on the government.

Votations

All this popular doubt is more significant than it might be in other states because it links to a second form of political expression, that of direct democracy. This gives the population not just

the chance to express an opinion but at least three chances of making actual decisions on European policy through what are called 'votations' or 'volksabstimmung'. The term is used because it embraces a range of policy voting including what the Swiss themselves actually call referenda, that is either obligatory votes on constitutional changes and binding treaties etc - which require a popular and a cantonal majority - or challenges to legislation. The last have to be called if opponents can collect 50,000 signatures within the given time. (Kobach, 1993) At the same time, the Swiss can launch initiatives calling for constitutional changes on European issues if they can collect the necessary 100,000 signatures.

Over the last few years all these facilities have been used in an anti-European way and have exercised a major influence on government policy whether by deliberately blocking change or simply by forcing caution on the Federal Council by the threat of a referendum defeat. In fact, over recent years there have been seven 'votations' which have touched directly on the country's European policy and involved all three types of referendum permitted by the Constitution.

Sciarini & Marquis (2001) and others have shown that foreign policy *votations* have a different profile from strictly domestic ones. They are more intense and more conflictual than the latter. This is partly because they can raise questions of identity. Equally, they bring in a wider range of political actors than domestic *votations*. In other words, they are more likely to match up to the model of referenda as essentially polarizing votes.

The first, and most significant, of these was the 6 December 1992 *votation* on entry to the EEA. This was treated as an obligatory referendum although, strictly speaking, it did not have to be so. Despite the fact that the idea of entering the EEA was endorsed by most of the establishment, it was defeated by 50.3% to 49.7% (and by 14 1/2 cantons to 6 1/2) on a turnout of 78.3%, the fifth highest in Swiss history and reaching over 87% in some cantons. Many habitual abstainers turned out to vote against the idea encouraged by a skilful 'anti' campaign which turned the establishment's earlier doubts about the EC against the EEA. Thus, the EEA vote mobilized many true doubters and not just committed opponents.

Although, at the popular level, there were only 23,000 votes in it, the effect was dramatic. It humiliated and weakened the government. Indeed, post-election analysis showed that lack of confidence in the government was the key deciding factor, followed by fears of the social dislocation which the EEA might bring. At the same time the defeat shifted the political balance towards the leaders of the opposition and hardened their appeal and approach. The Federal Council was forced to put its application for entry on ice and eventually opted for bilateral negotiations to fill the gap left by being outside the Single Market.

The government's position in these was then complicated by a successful popular initiative in 1994. This committed the government to a timetable for shifting cross-Alpine transit from road to rail, complicating its transit understandings with the Union. It had to proceed very carefully in case such ecological Euro-scepticism undermined the financing of the new rail tunnels whether directly or through levies on lorries. These were challenged by opponents and though they were approved very easily in September and November 1998 the fear of defeat had worried the government.

Before then a new anti-European initiative, started by the Lega dei Ticinesi and encouraged by 6 December, had been tabled. This demanded a popular vote before any negotiations were started as well as at their conclusion. If passed this would have blocked the bilateral talks since it would have had quasi retrospective effects. However, this was emphatically turned down, albeit on a low turn out, in June 1997 showing that the opposition movement cannot always win over pragmatic doubters.

Nonetheless, the same fringe groups collected signatures to challenge the bilateral agreements even though the mainstream opposition groups chose not to do so. Collection proved difficult but they succeeded somewhat to government annoyance. However, when put to the people on 21 May 2000 the bilaterals were approved by a two to one majority although only with only 48% voting. Here again pragmatism seems to have motivated many soft sceptics and the generally uncommitted to accept what seemed a sensible deal bringing the country needed opportunities but without tying it too closely to the EU's apron strings. Even so, a further challenge was mooted in January 2002 when the Lega dei Ticinesi sought to start collecting signatures for a new initiative to demand a unilateral abrogation of the bilaterals because of their traffic and labour mobility implications.

Initially, approval of the bilaterals was seen as removing a blockage in the country's relations with Europe. However, this proved not to be the case thanks to the enthusiasts for membership who refused to withdraw their initiative for entry, launched after 6 December and gaining the requisite signatures in 1996. In March 2001 the idea went down to a catastrophic defeat by 76.8% to 23.2% on a 55% turnout. Although this is what the government wanted, the result was, as already suggested, a pyrrhic victory. For though it freed the government from having to start talks at a time when there was little chance of their being successful whether in Brussels or at home, the fact that this was a technical issue and not one of principle was rarely appreciated outside the country, and sometimes not within it either.

Indeed the vote was negatively assessed and forced the Federal Council further on to the back foot, consigning thoughts of re-applying for entry to the distant future. Even the narrow victory in the UN *votation* did not ease this. Some of the opposition saw this as a vote on Europe even though the Federal Council went to great lengths to keep the 'E' word out of the campaign. As it was the opposition almost managed to deny the vote the cantonal majority which it needed.

The 'Yes' vote may also have made the start of new bilateral negotiations with the EU even more difficult. It may have encouraged the EU to doubt whether it was worth making concessions to a country which was probably not going to apply anyway. Hence the increasing pressure against banking secrecy, something seized on by the opposition. So direct democracy clearly shows the continuing force of popular doubts about Europe. Very often they can support more emphatic opposition forces, whether directly or indirectly. They can also constrain government policy by making government concerned about losing public support. Hence on occasions government has gone for the line of least resistance even when this was neither really in the national interest nor likely to succeed.

Political Debate: Parliament and Beyond

Furthermore, all this was not just a matter of occasional votes but a process which generated an on going debate on Europe at the intermediate level. Europe was a commonly discussed subject and a whole raft of parliamentary questions and queries were tabled. The Parliament also had major debates on government policy reports on Europe during which there were regular demands for the complete withdrawal of the government's application for membership, something that the Federal Council managed to ride out. However, its 1999 Report on Integration did not convince everyone despite its attempts to echo popular doubts about the EU and to play down the likelihood of early entry.

Hence, in the context of a Council of States committee enquiry in 2000-01, two centre right MPs, Hans Merz, FDP and Bruno Frick, CVP, sought to relaunch the EEA idea. This typified the limited enthusiasm amongst many MPs for going too far, too fast, notably in the Upper House. In fact, the Foreign Affairs Committee concluded unenthusiastically in April 2002, in a response to the government's policy report, that there was no real alternative to going further down the bilateral road. Such doubts reflected the changing electoral balance in which views on Europe played a part.

Parliament, moreover, has a role in the direct democratic process. By law it has to come to a view on all initiatives and it often adopted positions which were not those on which the government was keen. This was very much the case after the bilateral deal was approved when internal party aspirations helped to block compromise proposals which might have eased the government's difficulties with the 'Yes to Europe' initiative in the second half of 2000. At the same time the government came under pressure from anti-Europeans who felt that it enjoyed too much freedom of action during *votation* campaigns and should be restricted.

The government itself, to move to Archer's third level, has also been seen by some as having its own doubtful elements. Its policies up to the early 1990s have been so described and since then it is seen as divided between pro and anti elements. However, the veil of collegial secrecy which surrounds decision making makes it hard to be sure. Nonetheless, there seems to have been some reluctance amongst the majority to endorse the off the cuff decision made in October 1991 by the two negotiating ministers to make membership the main aim when it became clear that the final EEA agreement did not give the country what it wanted. The initial decision to apply was in fact apparently due to a change of mind by Adolf Ogi, then a 'swing voter'. Similarly, today while Joseph Deiss the Foreign Minister is seen as an enthusiast to the extent that some saw him as a liability to the UN campaign, the Economics Minister, Pascal Couchepin, has been regarded as being less keen.

However, all Ministers endorse the official long term strategy, claiming that it is in line with popular wishes. Equally they are also united in resisting EU pressures for concessions on the exchange of information relating to tax evasion. And they are careful not to push things too far ahead of the public majority. This rather suggests that, despite attacks on them as 'Euro-turbos', the government can be sceptical about some aspects of the EU and as already suggested, it pandered to doubts in its 1999 report.

Where Europhobia and, indeed, scepticism show up less in Switzerland is in the media. This is partly, as Stampfli suggests, a structural matter because, like the EU, Switzerland has no common media. This is due to a combination of linguistic diversity and, at least in the press, of local fragmentation. The mainstream press tends to be sympathetic to Swiss engagement in international affairs, often exuberantly so in the case of *Le Temps* and some other French language papers. The country certainly does not have campaigning anti-European tabloids as in the UK. Hence anti-European opinion can often treat the media as the enemy, purveying deception, lies and aggressive leftist partiality although this is, to some extent, an aspect of their media skills. For some, press objectivity is just a bad joke.

Some Eurosceptic leaders have had brushes with the press, notably over their advertising. Blocher claims that the press has set out to defame him as a German Swiss demon, isolationist and populist. Equally, he and his supporters have promised to fight back against its lies and the untoward influence it can yield, as in the recall of the Swiss Ambassador to Berlin in April 2002. He had been accused by *Sonntags-Blick* of sexual misconduct in the Embassy itself. This turned out to be have been largely invented, though the matter is still somewhat mysterious.

Not surprisingly the opposition believes that such press influence is at the expense of grass roots democracy. So they tend to rely on their own publications such as *SchweizerZeit*, *Europa-Magazin* and *Mattino della Domenica*. The first two are very much focussed on international issues while the third likes to publish anti-EC pieces from time to time. Since these do not have a very wide circulation anti-European forces often issue their own direct statements to the population at large, as with Blocher's open letters, and publish as much as they can. The SVP is presently thinking of going beyond this to produce something more accessible.

In other words, Swiss anti-Europeans can have very active communication strategies. They all actively use the web and encourage much advertising, pamphleting and letter writing. AUNS reckons that at crucial moments 40% of all references to Europe in the press come from its members. And their publicity relishes every 'crisis' in the Union because these substantiate its case.

They also try to deny their opponents similar access by use of the rules on referendum spending, attacking government information provision as 'propaganda' and the launching of law suits. They also exploit the largely neutral broadcast media. The key example of this is the Friday 'Arena' show on German speaking TV which is often used to debate European issues. This can be used very aggressively and with Manichean tones. Eurosceptics tend to demonize their opponents and targets, while claiming to be the victims of a conspiracy. They also have the advantage of being able to mount simple and direct emotive cases against European integration which the more nuanced and pragmatic arguments of the pro-camp cannot easily counter. However, there is little use of direct action.

Nonetheless, it is clear that doubts about Swiss involvement in European integration are widespread. Such 'soft-scepticism' can be, and is, mobilized, usually through direct democracy, by a powerful 'hard oppositional' movement. This gives it an influence beyond that of its own core support. Yet their case against involvement in the EU has to be seen not just as a 'one off' but as part of a wider concern about the country's place in the world. This too enables the anti camp to attract wider support .

The Intellectual Context

In other words, there is a wider intellectual context to Swiss Euroscepticism. On the one hand, there has been a nuanced approach to European integration as such. This rests largely on specifically Swiss themes. On the other hand, Europe is not the sole focus of Swiss thinking in this field. Rather it is an element of a wider reserve about changes to the country's place in the world.

Ideas

So, while the government may seek to avoid antagonising public opinion, and many of those who take part both in parliamentary debates or in the various votations may do so for pragmatic or 'soft' Eurosceptic motives, direct democracy has encouraged a much wider range of thinking about Europe, much of it increasingly hostile to aspects of European integration. Thus, in 1992 much public opinion supported the EEA because it was not the Community. The latter was seen as too risky from the point of view of Swiss practices and policy whereas the EEA showed Swiss willingness to co-operate but without sacrificing either independence or principle. At other times people have been loath to push the European issue for fear of popular resistance. In other words, there was a certain mild doubt about the EC.

Equally, this brings up the fact that some opposed the EEA not just for itself but because it was seen as simply an antechamber to the EC. And this stance pointed to the development of 'hard' oppositional attitudes, characterised by factors such as an absolute insular certainty about the virtues of the Swiss situation and a belief that joining the EU represents a threat to the Swiss social fabric. However, the EU, by its very nature, is also seen as a political threat. Resisting these challenges to the Sonderfall is made more difficult by the lack of resolve of the established authorities.

Opposition thinking rests firstly on the belief that the Swiss have become a special case, the 'Sonderfall Schweiz'. This refers to the fact that the country has been particularly blessed, enjoying both 350 years of independence and, more importantly since 1945, unparalleled prosperity and stability. They thus point, on the one hand, to the high levels of wealth, the competitiveness of Swiss business and the absence of inflation, strikes and unemployment. And, on the other, the discourse emphasizes the ultra-democracy of the Swiss system with its federalism, direct democracy and consultation, all held in place by neutrality. This has avoided the kind of political upheavals found elsewhere. There is immense pride in this vision of Switzerland and the structures which underpin it. Equally, many argue not merely that Switzerland is not isolated but that it has no need of international organizations. Entering them is seen as a symbol of impotence and failure. This is especially true of the organizations based on the Rome Treaties which are seen as a multiple threat.

So, secondly, joining would, for many critics, be economically disastrous because it would force harmonization of economic policies and in so doing undermine the bases of the Swiss system. Entry would condemn the Swiss to increases in mortgage rates, to more strikes, to higher taxes and to rising unemployment. Much is made of the fact that some of the extreme prophecies of economic disaster if the country rejected the EEA have not come true. Indeed the country can claim a better record than many Community states. Equally, the initial decline of the Euro was cited as evidence of the economic insanity of joining although this plays a relatively minor role

compared to that which it enjoys in the UK. The Swiss are more likely to carp about the 6 or 7 billion francs of budgetary contribution and the costs of the base tunnels under the Alps. The latter would increase the country's debts.

Thirdly, at the same time the EU is a political threat as it is, and not simply because it might become a super state. There is less concern in Switzerland about deepening being put ahead of widening. The threat is partly because entry would impose constraints both on the exercise of popular sovereignty through direct democracy and on the treasured freedom from law made by foreign judges, which goes back to the thirteenth century. It would also transfer decision making from communes and cantons to Berne and Brussels, thus upsetting the federal balance. This is particularly the case with the impact of the Schengen system on the cantons were the Swiss to join. And such things are seen not as the outcome of negotiations but as 'diktats'. They threaten Switzerland with the loss of its neutral status and the likelihood of becoming a colony or satellite, and thus going back to the age of the Hapsburg bailiffs.

Fourthly, alongside this there is a strong belief that the social fabric of the homeland would also be under threat. Switzerland's agricultural base is seen as particularly at risk from the CAP, threatening the extinction of the peasants who play such a large role in the Swiss psyche. Closer links with Europe also mean more transit traffic involving heavy lorries, from which the country's roads and forests are already suffering badly, and also more environmental damage. Swiss opponents of Europe are worried about its mountain regions and farms, together with the small firms dependent on them. This environmental concern has been a continuing theme amongst anti-Europeans of both left and right. The latter also highlight the perceived threat of increased migration if there are closer relations with the internal market. Given that Switzerland already has one of the highest levels of foreigners of any western country this is seen as a threat to both wages and socio-cultural integrity. There is in fact talk of the Swiss becoming 'foreigners in their own country'.

This can sometimes focus, on the one hand, on threats to property ownership, previously restricted to Swiss citizens but freed up as part of the rapprochement with the Single Market and, on the other, on the menace of increasing insecurity inside Switzerland. One criticism of the Schengen arrangements is that this would end the ability to properly police the country's frontiers. The opposition also highlights threats to the Swiss welfare state whether its pension funds, its medical costs or, especially, its unemployment benefit costs arising from free movement. Equally it is vehemently opposed to any diminution of banking secrecy to meet EU demands since this has now assumed the status of a national characteristic. Hence Blocher has demanded that it be entered in the constitution as an untouchable responsibility of the Confederation. All these policy problems are taken very seriously by many. Indeed, some SVP commentators saw such pressures as also explaining Le Pen's success in France.

Finally, the opposition can also claim that the EU is seen as politically wrong in itself. For some Swiss the EU involves an authoritarian conception of state which has sold out either to world free markets or to lobbies who would restrict development. There is some doubt about how committed to open borders the Union actually is. For others, the Union is dominated either by 'Brusseler Burokratie' or the big states or both. Occasionally, the Union is seen as dominated by France and Germany and there are fears that the Swiss would get sucked into their quarrels. Moreover, as

in the UK, the Union can be seen as essentially corrupt, not to say criminal or even quasi-Nazi. The real question for some is whether the EU is 'Swiss compatible' and not the other way round.

Much was therefore made of the undemocratic way that the EU treated the Austrians when the FPÖ joined the government in Vienna in 2000. This could be attacked not only as showing that the EU did not believe in human rights, but also as typical of the national tensions which dominate the EU. The fact that this was a case of the big powers ganging up on small state, in a way they were not to do when Berlusconi brought Fini into the Italian government, was also highlighted.

For Blocher the EU is an intellectually false construction. Fundamentally divided and lacking the 700 years of history which hold Switzerland together it is likely to break up. The first round of the French Presidentials is likely to have strengthened this view. Moreover, at present these tensions are seen as working against small states. However, the fact that German is not a full working language has also been held against the Union.

More significantly, there is a growing tendency to see the EU as having great power tendencies. Because Switzerland is small and neutral this too can be seen as a threat. The same line of reasoning has been directed against the UN as a body dominated by a super-power with scant respect for small and different states. In the European context therefore, the CFSP can be rejected in itself, sometimes, contradictorily because it does not 'deliver'. Hence there is doubt about the EU's role in preserving peace. In any case, because the EU thinks in the 'wrong' way to Switzerland, this is a special threat to neutrality. All this was neatly summed up in a McGill-style SVP cartoon from February 2001 which shows Switzerland as a unhappy looking little man about to be married off to a vast Wagnerian EU wife.

What really counts, however, is the impact of entry on Switzerland, and not simply the EU itself. Thus, in December 1992 only 17% of 'No' voters made dislike of the EC their main reason for voting, a view found especially in the Suisse Romande. Sovereignty, jobs and the prospects for direct democracy were much more influential. So the obsession with the EU is less marked than in the UK. Equally there is less stress on alternative forms of European integration.

Certainly, 'EU-gegners' can, on occasion, contrast the EU with a wider Europe, stressing the value both of organizations like the Council of Europe and the OSCE and of bilateral partnership in a 'Europa der Vaterlander'. They would argue that the EU is not the only 'Europe' and that there should be room for many types of cooperation. However, others can have doubts about integration as a whole. Indeed there have been a number of difficulties with Council of Europe charters on social and local government affairs. So there is no rush to build up other bodies.

Moreover, there is often opposition to solutions less than membership such as the EEA. The Lega would argue for instance that the bilaterals were unnecessary given the existence of free trade agreements with both the EU and Eastern Europe. In fact many opponents would see these as virtual coup d'état to prepare the way for entry. They would not share the view of Blocher and others that, by giving Switzerland some of what it needs, they actually make entry unnecessary.

Similarly, in the early 1990s bilateral arrangements for programmes could be seen as a way forward for sceptics, but this is decreasingly the case given the mounting hostility to large scale integration in general. Hence, not merely were the voting figures queried and a new challenge

canvassed but, by the spring of 2002 the SVP called for the immediate abandonment of the second series of bilateral talks. Equally, they also wanted the transport elements of the first round renegotiated because of problems in the St Gotthard.

All this is very Swiss-centred and there are relatively few trans-national links with other opposition movements. So, while AUNS likes to play up critical reports from other small countries, notably Austria after entry, the Swiss are only marginally involved in bodies like the Trans European Anti-Maastricht alliance and then only through a left wing body, the Forum for Direct Democracy. Indeed, both at the time of Haider and of Le Pen the party has been prompt to deny any link with, or sympathy for, extreme right views in other countries even if they may share some of the latter's analysis of the impact of the new EU on the nations of Europe. Thus, when in 1998 Vladimir Zhirinowski approached the party for links, he was firmly rebuffed. However, since then there seem to have been some contacts between the SVP and conservative forces elsewhere.

Lastly in this context, what makes things worse for most Swiss opponents of Europe is that the Swiss establishment has collaborated in creating this threat. This is not merely because it has failed to defend national interest, effectively preferring to be walked all over by Brussels, but because it has been motivated by greed. The establishment has decided to worship at the 'Golden Calf' of Brussels because it offers huge salaries and other financial benefits, not to mention the chance of power. There are charges that the elite are 'heimatmuede', having tired of both patriotism and the Swiss heritage. They have been compared to those politicians of the 1940s like Pilet-Golaz who were willing to 'adapt' to unpleasant political realities in Europe. There are especially virulent attacks on politicians and officials seen as 'Euro-turbos'. Equally there is bitter resistance to elite claims that citizens are lazy and ill-informed. In other words, not merely is all not for the best, but the real enemy is at home, in the political class.

This is a heady and often bitter mixture, especially when reinforced with neo-liberalism. And it can be pursued obsessively with arguments that the country today faces its greatest threat since 1945. However, Swiss defenders of the status quo seem to have more confidence that this can be resisted than is sometimes found in British Eurosceptism. Swiss opponents place great emphasis on maintaining the things which have made the country great: popular sovereignty/direct democracy; competitive federalism; neutrality as barrier to political ambitions of elite; a light state within a liberal constitution and a valorization of personal responsibility and liberty. Since much of this chimes in with more general popular feelings about the country, it gives the 'EU-gegners' considerable leverage. Moreover, such ideas are helped by being part of a broader critique of Switzerland's position in the world.

The Wider International Dimension

In fact, dislike of European integration is one element in a broader and widely held set of feelings about the country's place in the world. These differ very much from what is found amongst Eurosceptics elsewhere and stem essentially from a concern for national independence and security. This is what the constitution is committed to and neutrality was traditionally a means of providing it, as well as preventing domestic divisions over foreign affairs leading to strife, as happened earlier in the country's history. However, over time neutrality has become a defining and untouchable virtue for many Swiss.

This is partly because Swiss neutrality is armed. National defence has been based on a large militia army which has been seen as a major force of national cohesion. This has been supported by a significant arms industry and has been strongly defended by conservative forces when attacked by the left and environmentalists, as was the case in the late 1980s. It is also because it has helped the country to avoid entanglements, ensuring that the Swiss government cannot develop expansionist ideas and has to concentrate on the immediate national interest. Since 1937 it has become associated with the country's successful avoidance of invasion and its subsequent rise to prosperity. Hence it is closely associated with both the 'Sonderfall' and national identity.

Because of these things many conservatives were confident that, economically and politically, Switzerland did not need outside help, whether in the form of membership of constraining international organizations or of alliances with other states.

However, since the mid 1980s this stance has come under threat. The first challenge was the attempt to enter the UN. This was premature and was very successfully resisted much to the government's embarrassment. However, conservative forces saw this as a warning sign, both of the general pressures on Swiss institutions and of the fact that the country's political leadership were becoming more flexible. Hence Blocher and other conservative leaders of the anti-UN campaign established AUNS as a means of monitoring Federal Council policy and thus preserving Swiss sovereignty in the face of what was seen as a massive attack on it by the 'political class'. Blocher and those like him also doubt the elite's assessment that Europe is now at peace. Many threats are possible and the country must ensure that it remains able to resist them on its own.

AUNS therefore set itself three basic tasks: to work to safeguard national independence, neutrality and security; to campaign for a federal foreign policy respectful of traditional neutrality; and to stop external activism and unnecessary international engagements. This meant monitoring and criticising government policy in case it created new complications rather than ensuring national security. Such arguments were also increasingly taken up by the SVP which made sovereignty and nationality jointly one of its three key themes, along with taxation and asylum policy.

In the first instance the UN dropped from sight and the EEA was seen as the main threat to the status quo. There was also some doubt about Swiss accession to other bodies like the IMF and the World Bank which the Swiss finally joined in 1992. Equally there was much resistance to government arguments that neutrality was now less relevant because of 1989. They argued that both the policy and its military basis remained valid because the peaceful nature of the new Europe could not be relied on. Hence they queried the government's new report on neutrality and the attempts to change military policy by blocking arms purchases, creating a standing company of soldiers to the UN and revising military policy to allow soldiers on peacekeeping missions to be armed. Such changes were seen as a way of moving the country into NATO, something which was seen as undermining Switzerland's standing both in itself and in the fact it could make the country less rather than more secure. NATO was seen as a major menace and even the Partnership for Peace struck many conservatives as unacceptable, since it compromised neutrality and was little better than a traditional alliance. Moreover, for Blocher the problem with NATO was that it was simply a tool not merely of the US but of the 'great-powerism' of which he so strongly disapproves. And even the OECD could be seen as a problem because of the influence of the big powers and its calls for Switzerland to change its ways on banking and taxation.

By the mid 1990s, the issues of Nazi Gold and UN entry also moved to centre stage. The attack on the country's record in the Second World War arising from reports on the less than transparent and competent way the banks had handled numbered accounts caused great offence, especially when neutrality was denigrated. Most outside charges were firmly rejected and the country's record strongly defended. The Blocher view was that the country had shown an unparalleled will to resist and, in so doing, had upheld its neutrality. So it had nothing to apologise for. Equally there was stiff resistance to the creation of the 'Solidarity Fund' announced as part of the country's 150th anniversary, since this was seen as an admission of guilt. Such was the anger at foreign criticism that Blocher at one stage called for 'war' on the US and joined others in denouncing the deals done in New York as 'blackmail'. This may explain why opinion polls suggest that, of all West Europeans, the Swiss are the most hostile to any attack on Iraq. 83% are opposed to unilateral action and 57% even if there is UN 'cover'.

Thus, during 2002, the political climate shifted against the Fund. While there was little enthusiasm for the SVP's call for all the proceeds of gold sales to be given to the Old Age Pension funds, there was very little more for the parliamentary counter-project. This proposal, which had government support, suggested dividing the proceeds between pensions the cantons and the Solidarity Fund. However, this was not well understood and often rejected because it was seen as giving ground to unfair criticism. So both proposals went down to 52-48% defeats on 22 September. Coming as it did only a fortnight after the country finally entered the UN, the result shows the limits of Swiss willingness to engage with the outside world in general.

In fact, the UN also came back into consideration in the later 1990s with the collection of signatures for a new vote. This galvanised the antis into action and explains why, to some extent, they held their fire over the bilaterals. But they used all their efforts to defeat the idea when it came up for decision in March 2002 and, as noted, nearly succeeded in getting the cantons to block it. The arguments used against the UN focussed on the organization itself, although AUNS did argue that it was merely a stepping stone to EU membership and, as we have seen, the Federal Council went to great lengths to avoid the European issue complicating the argument. To an extent they succeeded, since evidence from *Schweizer Zeit* in the months before the vote shows the opposition to have been much more concerned with the UN, the Bergier Report and government policies on tax and asylum than they were on the EU.

For opponents there was no need for the UN and especially not at the price which it demanded. This was partly a matter of finance, there being much criticism of the extra costs the country would incur by joining such a debt laden body. Entry would also cost the country its sovereignty and independence because it would enter a body dominated by the US and the veto powers. They could turn Switzerland into a mere pawn of the Security Council, forcing it to embrace costly and harmful sanctions. It would also undermine direct democracy. Such a cost would not be offset by any gain in security since, on the one hand, the UN actually fomented rather than prevented war and, on the other, it would deny Switzerland the defence of neutrality.

It would also deprive the world the services of the one country which was different and could provide an alternative form of peacemaking. And, to the argument that good offices were no longer being sought, critics responded that this was because the government had not defended neutrality effectively, so that it was not seen as a credible solution. In other words, anti-European feeling was thus part of a wider campaign both to defend Switzerland's traditional international stance and to defend the popular will against a treacherous and un-Swiss elite. As with other

countries, opposition to Europe is on the margins of more general domestic concerns about foreign policy. Euroscepticism is not worn as a 'badge of pride', as it has been called, in the way it is in England.

The Architectural Context

Although opinion and ideas are somewhat fluid affairs, it needs to be remembered that Swiss anti-Europeanism, if not ordinary doubting scepticism, also has a solid, if unusual, organizational foundation. This is not purely party based as might be the case in some more typical representative democracies. In Switzerland, consultation and direct democracy encourages the creation both of pressure groups with a European focus and of loose coalitions and committees and campaigning bodies.

Nonetheless, the main stream parties can provide a basis for both doubt and opposition to Europe. This is true of the smaller and the larger formations alike, and its part in developing the latter has helped the SVP to change the balance of party competition. This reflects the way that the European and international issue has put down roots in particular elements of Swiss society.

Parties Minor and Major

Whereas soft Euroscepticism in Switzerland is fluid and poorly organized, such hard-scepticism has an impressive if unusual, organizational foundation. This rests not just on parties but on pressure groups with a European focus and loose coalitions and committees and campaigning bodies. Its part in all this has helped the SVP to change the balance of party competition. This reflects the roots that the European and international issue have in specific elements of Swiss society.

Despite, or because, of direct democracy a range of parties are involved in Eurosceptic politics. To begin with, there are a number of small, mainly right wing parties which are very hostile to Swiss involvement with Europe. Prominent amongst these are the Schweizer Demokraten, the remaining descendants of the xenophobic movements of the 1970s. Although they are now down to one seat in the Lower House, representing 1.8% of the electorate, they are still very active in out and out resistance to entry into the existing style of EU. Led by Rudolf Keller the party spearheaded the move to collect signatures to challenge the bilateral agreements, producing some 33,000 of the 50,000 needed.

The SD did this in alliance with the populist Lega dei Ticinesi which is a powerful force in Italian speaking Switzerland, based round the charismatic leadership of Biagnasca and Maspoli, backed up by the former's newspaper *Mattino della Domenica* and a willingness to resort to street demonstrations. Hence it returns two MPs to Berne and now has a foothold in cantonal government thanks to the use of PR. (Mazzoleni, 1999). Its basic strength and its opposition to German Swiss 'colonisation', the ruling political elite and contamination from Italy helps to explain why the Ticino voted with UrSchweiz and not the Suisse Romande in 1992, 2000 and 2002. It is also very aware of the costs of the Ticino's peripheral geographical position in the country.

Alongside this tandem is the Freiheits Partei Schweiz, formerly the AutoPartei. Although this has lost its national parliamentary representation through defections and the way its electoral support has shifted to the SVP, it still matters. The FPS maintains branches in many German speaking cantons, even if it was ejected from the Bernese parliament in 2002. Hence its support to anti-European campaigns should not be overlooked.

One unusual feature is the role played by religion in hard-Euroscepticism. This is symbolized by the fundamentalist Protestant Eidgenössischen Demokratischen Union which is strongly anti-European because of its general defence of Swiss independence and neutrality. It emerges out of free churches and informal congregations and not the established cantonal churches. The Evangelische Volkspartei, the traditional Protestant party which does draw on them, can also lean this way at times as in its resistance to a counter-project to the 'Yes for Europe' initiative which would make entry a prime policy objective. It also seems to have inherited FPS votes in Berne in 2002. However, it was in favour of UN entry and is more concerned with domestic politics. Traditionalist Catholic movements, the Katholischen Volkspartei in Luzern and Thurgau and the Mouvement Chrétien Conservateur in the Valais also actively oppose EU links and helped in the collection of signatures for the challenge to the bilaterals.

On the other hand, most of the mainstream parties are, at least in principle, in favour of closer links with the EU, and perhaps even of entry. However, there are many 'soft' doubts about the timetable and the conditions, while some elements take a more strongly critical line. The Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei for instance wishes to see how the bilaterals work first while the Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei is somewhat schizophrenic on the issue, having expressed great enthusiasm for entry in 2000 but then cooling off as its core German speaking support showed it was much more doubtful. However, its Jura branch recently chose to expel JJ Koffel, a party official, for his links with AUNS and the SVP. Some elements within the two parties are, as already noted, more interested in a revived EEA option.

One estimate, made during debates on the “Yes” initiative in the summer of 2000 by *Le Temps*, was that the Radicals were split almost equally between opponents of rapid movement and those who were either neutral or pro. The CVP leant somewhat the other way as did the Liberal Party, although there are doubts in both. And even the Communist Party is in favour of entering the EU only if the latter goes back on Maastricht and becomes more ‘social’. However, stances tend to be somewhat changeable and it would be wrong to think of clear and continuing factions. Equally, what we find is more a matter of doubts than of root and branch opposition. Thus only one FDP MP voted against the bilaterals. In other words, the mainstream parties of the centre right exhibit (very) soft Euroscepticism rather than hard European opposition’s rejection of any links with the EU. As the main pro-European party, the Social Democrats show few hard oppositional tendencies although there are some soft concerns for instance on EU policy on liberalizing postal services.

The Swiss Peoples’ Party and the Party System

Things are very different when it comes to the Schweizerische Volkspartei (Ladner, 2000). This has emerged as the main and most dynamic force in Switzerland under the leadership of Christoph Blocher and the Zurich wing of the party. Whereas in the late 1980s there was some thought that the party was on the decline and might lose its claim to a seat in the Federal Council, the 1990s saw it embark on a long march first through Zurich and then through the cantons, creating eleven new cantonal parties and 350 local sections. As a result it is now present in every canton, including those in the Suisse Romande. Furthermore, the new parties tend to adopt the hard line and not the more moderate stances, dating back to earlier agrarian and liberal incarnations, in Berne and the Graubunden.

Internal party objections to this have largely been seen off, as was the case with two *Frondes* amongst present and past secretaries general in 2000-01. The Bernese wing of the party, which counts for perhaps 26,000 of the party’s 80,000 members, has felt increasingly aggrieved at the eclipse of its views and influence. However, it was able to hold on to the party’s seat in the Federal Council when Adolf Ogi, who had often had to face outspoken hostility from his own party over his military and other policies, stepped down. Some more moderate elements were actually driven out of the party because of this stance.

Nonetheless, the SVP’s expansion went hand in hand with electoral victory so that it has become a major force in cantonal parliaments, entering that of Obwald in March 2002 for instance. Its cantonal gains were followed by a significant electoral victory in late October 1999 when from under 15% of the vote and 29 seats, the party rose to 22.5% of the popular vote and 44 seats. This was a far more significant rise than might be appreciated and it has been followed by further cantonal election victories. It represented in part the way in which the SVP was drawing in the old far right, more or less destroying the FPS in the process. So the Zurich nucleus has made the SVP very much a movement and not just a parliamentary party. And although outside observers tend to focus on Blocher, he has attracted a new cadre of lieutenants like Ueli Maurer and Hans Fehr, along with a number of young Turks like Toni Brunner and Christoph Moergeli.

The party’s success has a number of explanations. It began by exploiting the resentment of the Zurich lower middle classes whose encounters with globalization were not taken seriously by the old Bernese leadership. Thereafter, the party has grown mainly on the back of its own strengths. These are partly organizational because Blocher is a very capable organizer and has often helped

financially. But they also derive from the party's unique status as both a party of government and of opposition. This allows it to send warning shots without rocking the boat. So far it has been able to enjoy this best of both worlds.

Even more important has been the party's new populist campaigning style, which is both very effective and very hard to counter. The party does not behave like a typical consensus party but campaigns hard on a series of simple, emotive issues: asylum abuse, taxation, and the defence of Swiss institutions, neutrality and sovereignty. Indeed, Gibson (2001) describes it as one of the most successful co-optive anti-immigrant parties. The frequent use of referenda has been very helpful to its missionary zeal. (Pelet, 1995). In this it is able to draw on doubts about the direction in which the political class is leading the country.

The party encourages a deep traditionalism which is not willing to come to terms with the compromises which government feels it has to make in the new world. It is clear that opposition to Europe plays a major part in this, serving as the surrogate for wider fears about globalization. It is, moreover, the only party consistently to reject membership and to call for the formal and definitive withdrawal of the 1992 application. Some elements of it have gone further than most in rejecting the bilaterals.

However, it has also moved away from its old agricultural stance because it has concerns about the level of subsidy involved, which conflicts with its free market and small state policy stances. (Ladner, 2000) Paradoxically this has brought it into conflict with the Swiss business elite at times. This is because of its neo-liberal stance that led it to criticize firms which either do not modernize or prefer to go along with state subsidies for failing industries. (Kriesi, 2001) Hence it was very critical of the rush to pour public money into the new 'Swiss' airline after the collapse of Swissair.

This ability to clash with business is also true of its stance on migration and the size of the foreign population that it sought, unsuccessfully, to cap. Generally, business is more welcoming because it tends to need foreign labour. For such stances the party was therefore denounced in 1999 by the Council of Europe (Gjellbroek, 1999) as extremist, and by implication, racist. Not surprisingly the SVP denied this and, to be fair, Blocher in particular has normally been careful not to say anything which could easily be construed as racist. Nonetheless, the charge has been levelled more recently by others such as Gaffney (2002). Gibson is probably right to see a latent xenophobia underlying much of its thinking and propagandizing. Indeed, some critics detected a trace of anti-Semitism in Swiss reactions to the now defunct Solidarity Fund.

However, not all anti-Europeans are convinced by the party's credentials on such issues. The Lega and others have pointed out that the party did not actually object to the bilaterals and this was, in their view, partly because the agreements suited Blocher's own economic interests. They even see him as part of the 'system' (Indelkofer, 2000). And the Lega leaders have also attacked Blocher for seeking ownership of things like the initiative for faster processing of *votations*, which they claim as their own idea. They see this as an attempt to make them seem simply puppets of the SVP, something they vehemently deny.

Equally, there is a contradiction between the SVP's nationalism and its espousal of a fierce neo-liberal economic stance. When this led it to suggest the abolition of parts of the welfare state it found itself faced with a revolt and backed down. Moreover, the party had often argued for

bilateral rather than multilateral deals with Brussels even if it did not always find those agreed in 1999 satisfactory. But pragmatic elements in the party saw this as a way of disarming soft support for closer relations with Europe and avoiding harm to Swiss economic interests. Such tactical adjustments cut no ice with many of the more rejectionist forces, even if, as a party, the SVP was more hostile to the bilaterals than Blocher himself.

Despite such criticisms, the old political class has found the SVP to be a real thorn in its flesh. Because the former is consensual and managerial in approach rather than demotic, it can be less effective in the political arena. As a result it can also be less versed in the use of the new media than the Blocherite SVP. Hence, it has found it hard to resist the new SVP onslaughts, although it did succeed in resisting the idea that the entry request should be formally cancelled. Such weaknesses have been exacerbated by scandals such as the collapse of Swissair and the way that outside developments such as the EU's treatment of Austria in 2000, the crisis in the second bilaterals over banking secrecy and the French Presidential elections have played into the SVP's hands. Their strength showed up in the "triumphal" defeat of their very hard-line asylum proposals in November 2002. These captured a clear constitutional majority and only lost a popular endorsement by some 3,000 votes. Equally, their 'outsider' candidate for the Federal Council in December 2002 did quite well.

The rise of the SVP has dramatically changed the hitherto stable party balance in Switzerland. This is true both at cantonal level and nationally. Since 1959 there has been remarkable stability with the three main parties maintaining the support of about 20% each of the electorate, the SVP about half that, and the many smaller parties coming nowhere. This has won the big three two seats each on the Federal Council and the SVP one. However, things have begun to change, initially with the continuing secular decline of the CVP. Because of secularization this has consistently lost votes and seats. It now enjoys the support of no more than 13% of the electorate, down on the 17% it won in 1999. Yet it still controls two seats in the government.

This is a problem because, following on the decline of the CVP, has come the dual rise of the SVP. On the one hand, its electoral support raised the question of whether it now deserved a second seat on the Federal Council. It made a claim for this in 1999 but was blocked because of opposition to Blocherite extremism and because of the unwritten rule that serving ministers themselves choose when to leave office. However, the continued disparity between the CVP and the SVP suggests that this will have to change in 2003, something which the former's leadership has virtually conceded. By attacking Joseph Deiss, the then Foreign Minister, the SVP was seeking to remind people of its claim. Of course, the fact that the whole Parliament chooses members of the Federal Council means that SVP candidates might well not come from the Blocherite tendency as happened in 2000. So, despite party president Ueli Maurer's insistence that any new SVP Bundesrat must be an anti-European, there is no guarantee that this will happen.

On the other hand, because of its clear stances, notably on Europe and the dangers of socialism, the SVP has established itself as the dominant voice of right wing politics, leaving the Social Democrats as the voice of pro-Europeans and progressive opinion in the country. This is now true of the Suisse Romande and not just of the east of the country. Hence politics has become a good deal more polarized. This may explain why a very recent poll showed the Social Democrats leapfrogging the SVP into the position of the most popular party ahead of the 2003 elections.

This has also been encouraged by the way in which, at the same time, many of the smaller parties of the centre and right have been whittled down, if not eliminated, as the Landessring has now been. This defragmentation does not really relate to European issues. (Church, 2000b) In fact, it is probably going too far to say that Europe has become the new cleavage line. There is no doubt that it is important but, as already suggested, it is tied up with both a wider division on whether the country should be open or closed and with more complicated domestic political disputes. This could change, depending on the outcome of the 2003 elections. If these, as has often seemed likely, lead to a further SVP breakthrough, there is little doubt that European questions would become more salient.

Campaigning Anti-European Organisations

Another aspect of this context is the way the Swiss political system offers many opportunities for political involvement. This has helped the anti-European cause in general and the Blocherite wing in particular. Thus the latter overlaps with AUNS, the largest of a number of campaigning pressure groups with an anti-European bias. This started out life in 1986 with some 2,000 members and grew slowly until 1991. Profiting from public anxieties about the EEA solution it then shot up from 8,000 to 18,000 and, following its success in the EEA campaign, it has continued to grow consistently at a rate of about 5,000 p.a. in the 1990s although this has now slackened off, so that it had over 42,000 members in 2002. Given that it also had some 4 million francs in capital including a large fighting fund, it has been a very successful organization, able to raise 120,000 signatures against army reform in a very short time, which was more than the Lega and the SD were able to do. Equally, in 1992 it started campaigning well ahead of the government, and put the latter, and the business community, to shame by its vigour. (Schneider & Weitson, 1996) It now has an active secretariat under a fellow MP, Hans Fehr, and maintains an active publications policy. In other words, as Sciarini and Marquis say, it has its own inherent dynamic.

Although clearly dominated by Blocher, AUNS is formally run by a committee which includes other Eurosceptic MPs. Its membership crosses party lines and is composed of true believers. Hence, it does not always do what it is told and, in 2000, voted 325-190 to ignore Blocher's advice not to campaign against the bilaterals because they did not involve a challenge to independence, neutrality or security. Like other hard anti-Europeans they refused to see them as simply an economic arrangement and viciously attacked them on grounds of political principle, ignoring the fact that they could have been a barrier to EU membership.

When it came to the UN vote, aware that their extremism and very anti-European stance could deter some voters as had happened in June 2001, they worked behind the scenes, allowing ad hoc committees to lead the campaign. Conversely, Blocher himself, aided by his wife, campaigned vigorously as did the SVP in general with the exception of Berne and the Graubunden sections. And if, as with the bilaterals and the army reforms, AUNS failed, narrowly, to carry the day, it remains a major factor in anti-European politics, notably at *votations*.

However, it is not the only anti-European body of this kind. There are other smaller ones, often active in referenda campaign. Again most of these are on the right of the political spectrum, although there is the already mentioned Forum for Direct Democracy. This is influenced by a leftish environmentalist Luzius Theiler. It publishes the *Europa Magazin: EU Kritisch*,

Ökologisch, Sozial, which continues the Green criticism of the EU that the parliamentary party has now dropped. This peasant and environmentalist movement apparently collected 2,500 signatures against the bilaterals. In the 1999 federal elections there were also a number of 'Solidarity Groups' in French speaking Switzerland which linked the bilaterals with attempts to dismantle the welfare state. The "Stopp dem Beton" movement also seems to have similar tendencies.

More to the right, but also concerned about the environment, the peasantry and Swiss society, are bodies like the Basle based PresseClub Schweiz of Ernest Indlekofer (2000), which collected 3500 signatures against the bilaterals, mainly because it saw them as a transmission belt to EU entry. It also claimed to have distributed a million tracts attacking them. Luc de Meuron and the Neuchâtel based *Lettre Politique* takes a similar view although he has not been sentenced by the courts as a racist, which is the case with Indelkopfer. The anti-European line is also regularly upheld by the EU-Nein organization, a youth movement set up after the bilaterals and also using the name of 'Y for FUN', from the German 'Freiheit, Unabhängigkeit, Neutralität'. It maintains a vivid website and campaigned strongly against UN entry.

One very unusual movement is the Vereins zur Forderung der psychologischen Menschenkenntnis (VPM or the St Michael Vereinigung), a strange partly secular, partly religious fundamentalist movement based in Thurgau and now led by Hanspeter Tschannen. This has long roots in German speaking Swiss anti-alcohol Protestant education although it also has contacts with traditionalist Catholics. Both see value in the movement's psychological views. With its considerable financial resources, its 500 volunteers and its active secretariat, the VPM is said to have collected the outstanding signatures necessary for the challenge to the bilaterals when the Swiss Democrats and the Lega ran out of steam. Its political wing, SchweizerBurgervotum, then campaigned against the deal in the guise of the Eidgenössische Komitee gegen den sektorielle EU beitritt and Eine Schweiz für Unserer Kinder. It sees itself very much in the tradition of General Guisan resisting Nazi pressure in World War 2. It is also linked to bodies such as Bürgergesprach and Souveran.

This is not the end of the small groups which can join anti-European fronts. For instance the relics of the old Vigilance movement in Geneva still exist in *L'Equipe* giving the movement a xenophobic tinge. There are also a few alternative left opponents of integration. As noted elsewhere, some of these cropped up in the 1999 elections.

The Bewegung neutrale Schweiz, Aktion Freie Schweiz, the Vereinigung für Freiheit, Demokratie und Menschenwürde, Pro Libertate, Medeag SA and the Unternehmergegen den EWR/EU Beitritt are other examples from German speaking Switzerland. Many of these work within umbrella committees at the time of referenda. Thus the EEA was resisted by the 'Swiss Action Committee against EEA and EC diktats and for a 'Switzerland Open to the World'. Like the bilaterals this was fought by a whole raft of Committees, covering all parts of the country and many professional groupings from farmers to employers. Many of these were involved in the challenge to the bilaterals. Some twenty such fringe groups then came together in the Komitee gegen die Sektoralen.

Social Support

Taken by themselves many of these organisations are, no doubt, insignificant. Yet, collectively they show that there is considerable support for strongly anti-European stances in Swiss society. Where does this come from? Unfortunately there has not, as Gibson points out, been much research on the subject.

To some extent it is clear that it is territorially determined. It is stronger in German speaking Switzerland than French, though it exists in both. It is here that identification with Swiss institutions is strongest (Buchi 2001: 265-7) and more use is made of direct democracy. Hence Europe seems to threaten the existing dominance of the majority. Entry might also strengthen standard German against *Schweizertutsch*. Equally there is more support for environmentalism there.

Thus, for the challenge to the bilaterals only 2000 signatures of 67,000 came from French areas. This represents 3% of the total whereas French speakers make up 18% of the national population. However, early claims that there was no support for such views in the *Suisse Romande* have been belied by events. (Buchi, 1995) The SVP has now got branches everywhere, often with Blocherite views, and about 12% of AUNS members live there. Indeed, one neutral estimate is that perhaps a third of French-speaking voters are mildly anti-European. The Ticino is also a stronghold as already noted.

Age plays a part as observers have often remarked on the elderly nature of ASIN supporters and polling evidence backs this up. However, there are many young anti-Europeans both in the SVP and outside and they have played an active part in recent campaigns. Gibson sees the SVP as now recruiting from younger working class men.

Opposition to Europe also tends to correlate with lower levels of education. However, gender does not seem to be that important a factor although the majority of opponents are probably men. Conversely Gessbuhler (1999) shows that religious fervour amongst Catholics encourages scepticism on European issues and the VPM example suggests this would also be true for extreme Protestantism.

Socially, such anti-Europeanism tends to draw on farmers and small businessmen who are not plugged into wider circuits and fear competition. Craft and trade bodies can also be cautious. Because the anti-European movement is increasingly urban, the agricultural interest is decreasing. However, small towns and villages tend to be more doubtful than big towns. Despite this a growing number of workers are involved. Because some fear being undercut by migrants they have moved from the SPS to the SVP. In other words, opposition to Europe tends to be concentrated in the older parts of Swiss society although it is found everywhere. Soft, true scepticism is equally widespread but probably more representative socially.

C: ASSESSMENTS

Clearly then, even if the term 'Euroscepticism' is rarely used, it is clear that alongside a considerable amount of doubt about EU entry, Switzerland has a significant anti-European movement. This is based in traditional parties and campaigning organizations. It shows itself not just in attitudes but also in voting patterns, especially in referenda and in related political activities. Equally, it draws on a very critical view of European integration, albeit set within the

context of a wider ideology for of resistance to a more active national role in international relations. So it is obvious that relations with the EU are taken seriously by many people and decisions are taken thoughtfully and pragmatically and not just because of a firm anti-EU ideology. Hence there is little of the 'good for a laugh' Euroscepticism found in the UK. Hence, whereas once the Federal Council tried to use the existence of internal doubts as a bargaining ploy, it now has to accept not merely that people have to be convinced, but that it has to face down the opposition.

In other words, fierce anti-European feelings and organizations do exist. And they can be influential both in themselves and through their effects on uncertain and more sceptical (in the true sense) opinion. Hence this clearly deserves to be considered a real example of hard Euroscepticism even if those involved in it do not think of themselves in this way. As we have seen, their attitudes to Europe are often shaped by more typically Swiss political ideas and processes.

Characterizations and Causes

Given this we need to look further and ask how is the latter best characterized, why did it emerge and what are its implications ? To begin with, while it has an economic element, it is, above all, political and constitutional in nature. For some, maintaining national integrity against threats is a vital matter. However, in comparison to the UK there is less obsession with the EU as such, let alone with the Euro.

To begin with, although opponents of Europe can occasionally be described as Eurosceptics they tend to see their opponents as being defined purely by European concerns, describing them as 'Euro-enthusiasts', 'turbos' or 'ultras'. They see themselves as Swiss patriots more than 'Eurogegners', acting alone rather than as part of a wider movement. In any case, for many people concern about European integration is not a creed as such, nor an overriding obsession, but is part of a wider defence of Swiss political traditions.

Secondly, to a very large extent, Swiss opposition to Europe is located on the right of the political spectrum. In the eyes of Blocher this is an essential point as he has got on the offensive against socialism and the way in which, in Switzerland, it was linked with both Communism and indeed Fascism. This caused a major crisis in Swiss politics and clearly failed to convince the population at large. However, hard anti-Europeanism also draws on a range of conservative opinions and not just those of the SVP and AUNS. It feeds on a firm belief in national exceptionalism based on direct democracy, federalism and neutrality. In other words, this is again as much a matter of openness vs. closure as of an EU focus. Yet paradoxically this has radical connotations because it is often directed against the government of the day and, if the rise of the SVP continues, this could lead to a revolutionary change in Swiss politics. In other words, it is used not as an ideology but as a tool in domestic politics as well as a form of national identity. However, it is not anti-political or anti-global as such.

This is perhaps why there is so little Euroscepticism on the left, despite Kitschelt's assumptions. The more one moves to the left the less likely Swiss voters are to oppose closer links with Europe. In the past, for instance, the Swiss Greens were doubtful about the EC, but the fact that this has become less associated with free market policies has helped to change opinions.

Nonetheless, there is some suggestion that the rank and file of the Social Democrats, the main political force supporting entry, are less enthusiastic than their leaders. However, pro-European sentiments cut across party lines.

So, thirdly, why should there be these forms of Euroscepticism? One implicit explanation often advanced for its emergence is the general rise of the far right in Switzerland and elsewhere. (Altermatt & Kriesi, 1995) Husband thus argues that the 6 December 1992 was an example of anti-global migration feelings and the routinization of xenophobia while Beitz (1993) sees the FPS as part of this. Since then there has been a rising tide of extreme right wing violence. However, while opinion polls show that xenophobia and even anti-Semitism exist in Switzerland, the evidence clearly shows that this is not really the key factor. Firm opposition to Europe is not a form of fascism in other words. In any case, these explanations are not very relevant to soft Swiss doubts about Europe. These have doubts about entry but are less concerned with the EU itself.

Certainly there is a general pattern of unease about globalization but European integration throws up other issues and impacts on social groups other than those involved in right wing violence. It also rests on a positive view of Switzerland and is not merely reactive. In Lee's (2002) terms it is more national interest than policy Euroscepticism. Hence the stress on the 'Sonderfall' and the impact that the EU might have on this. Nonetheless there are a good number of hard policy issues involved, not to mention social interests.

There is also a strong religious motivation in all this. There could also be a linguistic element since some German-speaking Swiss are fearful of the cultural pressures from the north if they are swept up into the Union. Equally, there are those who think that anti-Europeanism in German-speaking Switzerland is a means of preserving the power of Schwyzertuetsch speakers in the Confederation.

At the same time, one of the dynamics for the success for anti-Europeanism has also been the problems on the other side. On the one hand, like Euroscepticism, it has been motivated by the failures of government, whether in terms of information, of negotiating strategies or their estimation of popular support. The Vox analysis of 1992 makes it clear that lack of confidence in the government was a prime factor behind voting patterns. On the other hand, as in the UK, the pro-European side has been quite weak. Its forces are more divided, less numerous and less sophisticated in their political communication strategy. In any case, the main pro-European movement, NOMES, is numerically weak and inclined to take its hopes for realities. The 'Yes for Europe' vote and its aftermath showed up their naivety all too brutally.

And the fact that the lead is taken by the left leaning Social Democrats, who are often seen as the weak link in Swiss mainstream politics, may not be altogether helpful. The decline of the CVP and the trend away from support for the traditional parties has been helpful to anti-European forces. As Yeats once said "the best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity". All this shows that Milner's view that relations between state and organized interest groups is the key factor is not sustainable in the Swiss case.

Equally, the fact that the SVP is both a government party and merely one part of a larger, overlapping alliance of anti-European forces, rather rules out the applicability of Sitter's view that the real dynamic is a matter of making and breaking governments. Certainly this does not

help in understanding Swiss doubts on involvement with Europe. Given the nature of the Federal Council and the importance of direct democracy this cannot be a full answer. If Swiss anti-Europeanism can be the politics of opposition, it is opposition of a different kind, more complex but also potentially more far reaching.

Effects and Significance

So what impact has all this had? Internally there is no doubt that feelings about Europe have contributed to the emergence of a new cleavage in Swiss politics. However, it is a division which goes beyond the European question, embracing a wider range of questions about the country's position in world society. Swiss political scientists refer to talk of an open/closed cleavage. To quote HP Kriesi (1995) "the conservative, nationalist mobilisation articulates a new political cleavage, a cleavage between the traditional rustic and inward-looking (parochial, internal-market oriented) Switzerland, on the one hand, and the modern, urban and outward-looking (cosmopolitan, export-oriented) Switzerland, on the other hand. This is a cleavage between those who believe in the myth of the 'special case' or *Sonderfall* and who wish to continue the 'solitary route' or *Alleingang* in foreign policy, and those who believe that Switzerland is a country resembling its neighbours ever more closely and that the increasing need to cooperate requires its integration into the European Union". To some extent this correlates with a metropolitan/rural divide, although it is complicated by the country's traditional cross-cutting cleavages. Hence Kitschelt's doubts about the impact of European questions on national elections seem to be justified.

Moreover, opinions on the sceptic side are very divided. Not all those with doubts about European integration subscribe to hard-line anti-Europeanism. Many, as already suggested, take a utilitarian or sectional point of view. They may line up with AUNS at particular referenda but are not faithful followers. In any case, anti-European feelings have not yet succeeded in capturing the commanding heights. They failed to defeat the bilaterals and UN entry. This shows that Europeanization in Switzerland is somewhat ambiguous.

Nonetheless, the European issue has helped to revitalize the right, much more so than xenophobia. (Flood, 2000). Though the movement may partially be anti-establishment, it is also part of the establishment, even though the SVP likes to get the best of both worlds. Thus it has increasingly dominated the SVP and has been used by the latter to help it to a major victory in the 1999 elections. In so doing it has, as seen, challenged traditional Swiss party systems and balances. At the same time it has helped to change the tone of Swiss politics, making them more strident and confrontational, calling into question the dominance of *konkordanz* and compromise.

The reservoir of opposition to entry and the way that Blocher and others can mobilize it, has also had an impact on government policy. It has forced the government to moderate any enthusiasm for entry, at least in the short term. It has also made it harder for the government to campaign. On the other hand it has had a limited impact on the media.

Constraints and enforced changes in government policy are, of course, one way in which the rise of Euroscepticism of both kinds has had an impact on the wider Europe. However, so far the impact has been limited. The rejection of the EEA made many EU decision makers doubtful about the ability of the Swiss authorities to embrace membership. And if the EU initially saw the

value in proceeding with a further round of bilateral negotiations, increasingly it seems to have begun to question their value, and wants the Swiss simply to accept the *acquis* in the areas in which they are interested. This would require even more concessions from the Swiss, and these may be very hard to accept since they would come up against soft doubts not to mention the opposition committed 'EU-gegners'. Already, in fact, the SVP Parliamentary group has called on the government to pull out of the talks. So the government may be forced into some kind of *alleingang*, surviving on the first bilaterals and doing nothing to revive the application. However this will leave them open to all kinds of pressure from the EU.

Should the decision be to take the plunge and successfully reapply, Swiss anti-Europeanism could potentially make even more impact. The fact that it has so many referenda could, as Roberts-Thomson ((2001)) suggests, give it a leverage on EU policy. The fact that the Swiss will have to vote on EU related matters could change both opinions and projects. And, in a passive way, it could be destabilizing, forming a hole at the centre of a growing web of integration. It could also call into question the Europe of values seen by Sobell (1997) because of the way Switzerland defines and defends its national interest.

Nonetheless, the Swiss case does have implications for our understandings of Euroscepticism. European integration clearly helps to mobilize politics beyond the narrow confines of the EU and the candidate states. In a broad sense the concept clearly applies outside this circle even if the Swiss do not greatly use the term. Indeed, in the view of one left of centre MP (Cornu, 2002) the concept is even being used by the SVP to strengthen their control over domestic policy.

Hence the precise targets and the centrality of popular concern about the EU clearly vary. As the Swiss case shows, there are a variety of forms of Euroscepticism. Alongside the hard Europhobia of the Blocherite camp there is a good deal of Euro-realism as many supporters of closer integration sometimes describe themselves. In other words, the term is wider and harder to pin down than many British usages assume, as Foster (2002) helpfully points out. In Switzerland, it often takes the form of honest doubt about the Union and relations with it and not root and branch opposition. This suggests that Euroscepticism may not be, as Tiersky suggests, a serviceable term. Indeed, 'EU-gegners' might be a more honest description of the Swiss variant of what is clearly a more complex phenomenon than simply a matter of hard and soft forms.

Prospects

Whatever the semantic rights and wrongs of the term, there is little doubt that the Swiss case of concern about Europe is a potent, significant and unusual one. It has shown itself in public opinion, in influential *votations* and has developed a sophisticated analysis, setting reservations about Europe in the context of wider Swiss reluctance to become politically involved in the outside world. And this is supported by a complex architecture which, in its turn, is also very marked by the special nature of the Swiss political system. So it does matter and does deserve consideration as part of the wider debate on European integration.

Will this continue? It might be thought that, after the decision to join the UN, the strength of anti-European feelings, and less fervent Swiss style Euroscepticism, may fade. However, this cannot be relied on. The hard opposition will not disarm even if pragmatism defeated it on this occasion. This is especially true given the fact that the opposition attracted 46% support and coming so

close to denying the UN a cantonal majority. Indeed, it came so close that one SVP Cantonal parliamentarian in Lucerne sought to challenge the results.

While the opposition may accept the UN vote, having helped to see off the Solidarity Fund it is likely, as already suggested, to focus more on the EU dimension in the future. This is partly because it is the one organization in which the country is not yet involved and partly because there are a growing number of pressure points ahead, even if the main question of entry may not be posed. And the European question could, as already implied, become very much a matter of principle should the SVP make a further breakthrough in the 2003 general elections. In other words, if the UN question is now dried and dusted and the SVP gains a new influence on government, it could well focus attention on Swiss relations with the EU as the main foreign policy question.

The fact that the bilateral route is also now very unreliable will encourage them, for all that the government was insistent that the UN vote has no implications for EU entry. With the difficulties over Schengen, acceptance of the *acquis* and especially banking secrecy, general doubts about Europe are likely to grow and this will further encourage the hardliners. What is seen as bullying demands by a divided EU for full and automatic disclosure of foreign deposits in Swiss banks has been very badly received. The SVP and others are even talking of having it written into the constitution. As in the past they will not only be able to make their own strength felt but could well encourage more pragmatic doubters to join them. So, politically as well as intellectually, Swiss Euro-scepticism, if this is the right word for it, already matters and may matter more in the future. However, what is clear is that it has to be understood in its own particular terms and contexts.

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