

Geneva at Portuguese time

With almost 32,000 nationals, that is to say 7% of the population, the Portuguese make up the largest foreign community in Geneva. The first generation of immigrants, comprised mainly of manual workers, arrived en masse during the 1980s and played an important role in the city's socioeconomic development. Today their children attend the *grandes écoles*, hold positions in the trade and banking sectors, start companies and go into politics. Although the Portuguese are well integrated into Geneva life, they remain very attached to their culture, which they celebrate through an intense community life. This cultivates *saudade*, this mixture of nostalgia and desire that envelops the Portuguese soul. So obviously the presence of the Portugal football team in Geneva is seen as a big event, especially as many have friends and relations from Portugal coming to stay for the occasion. There is no doubt that in June, Geneva will be Portuguese!

"I have tickets for all the Switzerland and Portugal matches!" Antonio Pinheiro, manager of the Camões Portuguese bookshop, is in seventh heaven. For this immigrant who arrived in Geneva at the beginning of the 1980s, the arrival of the Portuguese team to his adopted country is a reason to celebrate. "My dream is to see Switzerland and Portugal in the final!"

This dream, which is a mixture of *saudade* and affection for their country of residence, is shared by all the Portuguese. "We have a divided identity – in Portugal they call us "Swiss" and here we are "Swiss of Portuguese origin", explains Fernando Martins, owner of the restaurant Le Portugais. Fernando Martins was born in Switzerland and has Swiss nationality. He only has one ticket for the Euro – he will be in Basel on 15 June for the Switzerland-Portugal match. And to show his attachment to his two cultures, he will wear a T-shirt in the colours of the two teams.

The first restaurant

Fernando Martins is the head of the oldest Portuguese restaurant in Switzerland and perhaps in Europe, since his father opened it back in 1973. The latter arrived in Switzerland in political exile in 1961, well before the first wave of immigration. At this time there were hardly any Portuguese living in Geneva. To attract Swiss customers, the first menu was mainly composed of Swiss dishes. However, between a dish of rösti and a veal sausage, the restaurant owner sometimes gave his customers a small octopus salad. Initially surprised by the appearance of crabs and other aquatic creatures, the people of Geneva finally got a taste for them and started to order them again. Gradually, cod replaced local specialities on the menu. Thirty years later, Le Portugais is a restaurant of great repute. Fernando's parents have returned to see out their days in Portugal.

The largest bookshop

Antonio Pinheiro, however, decided to stay. "I have built my life here and I have no regrets". His life is the Camões bookshop, named after the famous Portuguese writer. It was opened in 1992 and has 2,500 Portuguese titles making it the largest in Europe outside of Portugal. Authors as famous as José Saramago, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998, have come to sign their books here. In 2000,

Antonio Pinheiro, a former civil engineering draughtsman, who once worked as a labourer in a workshop, opened the Pessoa literary café. The success of this café, which is dedicated to Lusitanian literature, is witness to a growing demand.

The Portuguese in figures

In the meantime the Portuguese have arrived en masse. In 1980 there were already 19,000 in Switzerland compared to only 61 in 1941. Ten years later, the number had increased to 110,000 and is now 193,655, 19% of whom live in Geneva. Therefore, they form the largest foreign community of the canton, and also the youngest – 28% of them are under 19 and only 1% over 65. Today citizens of Portuguese origin can be found in all sectors of life in Geneva. Around 200 of them work at CERN and since last year two have a seat on the Municipal Council of the City of Geneva.

Community life

During the 1980s and 1990s, the Portuguese community of Geneva got organised. Immigrant or worker support associations were set up, sometimes with political leanings. Several football clubs, in the colours of the various regions of Portugal, brought together nationals from the same region around the game and folk songs and dances. The first Portuguese radio programmes were also launched. The weekly information programme "Nozes e Vozes", on Radio Zones, has been debating the great topics of society for 23 years. "Like most associations, our goal was to inform and advise new arrivals to facilitate their integration", recalls Alvaro Oliveira, one of its founders.

Needs have now changed, and with them the aim of the associations, which is now to keep alive the links between the national culture and the second generation, born in Switzerland. It is with this goal in mind that Alvaro Oliveira created, two years ago, the Cultural Association for Portuguese Expression. Its annual poem recital competition already attracts 200 young second generation Portuguese. Teaching of the Portuguese language and culture is also a fundamental policy of the Portuguese authorities – in Geneva, 3,215 students attend classes held by 35 teachers employed by the Lisbon government. The Portuguese catholic community of Geneva, which brings together 2,000 young people every year, is the largest in Europe. Portuguese Geneva currently has nineteen associations and three radio programmes.

Geneva and Portugal

A number of key Portuguese figures have also settled on the banks of Lake Geneva. Several opponents of the former authoritarian regime lived here. The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durao Barroso, studied for his master's degree at the European Institute in Geneva. And the former Prime Minister Antonio Guterres, the current United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is also based here. However, the links between Geneva and Portugal go back much further than this since Princess Maria Emilia of Nassau (1559-1629) and her daughter, Maria Belgia of Portugal, are buried in Geneva Cathedral. The azulejos panel of Parc du Musée Ariane, which was presented to the city last year by the Secretary of State for Portuguese Communities, pays homage to the Portuguese people of Geneva.

Some of the Portuguese dream of a Switzerland-Portugal final. But if it happened which team would they support? They are unanimous in their answer – Portugal. *Saudade...*

Information:

National festival

To celebrate the Portuguese national festival on 10 June, the embassy is organising a fair on Sunday 8 June in Neuchâtel, where the Portugal team is staying during Euro 2008. The festivities will begin in the afternoon by the lake near Stade de la Maladière. Dance, music and specialities are all on the agenda. Press conference at Stade de la Maladière at 4 pm. Portugal team training at 5 pm.

General Consulate of Portugal

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Restaurant

Restaurant Le Portugais, bd. Du Pont d'Arve 59, Tel. +41 22 329 40 98, <mailto:leportugais@bluewin.ch>, closed Sunday and Monday. www.leportugais.ch

Bookshop

Librairie Camões, bd. James Fazy 18, Tel. +41 22 738 85 88, <mailto:camoes@bluewin.ch>

Open from 9 am to 12 noon and from 1:30 pm to 6:30 pm (Saturday 5 pm), closed Monday morning. www.livraria-camoes.ch

Folklore

Folk Group "Rancho Folclorico Estrelas de Portugal"

Rue des Vieux-Grenadiers 10, M. Aderito Marques, Tel. +41 79 478 31 65, <mailto:aderito.marques@bluewin.ch>, www.ranchoestrelasdeportugal.ch

Bar and chance to attend dance and music rehearsals Friday evening at 9 pm.

Football club

Clube Académico de Vizeu em Genebra – CAVG, rue de Neuchâtel 10, M. José Matos, Tel. +41 76 572 60 76, <mailto:cavg@bluewin.ch>

The club is organising a Portuguese fair on 7 June from 7:30 pm and on 8 June from 2:30 pm. Maison de Quartier Aïre, ch. Nicolas Bogueret 12b, Le Lignon.

Radio programme

Associação Cultural de Expressão Portuguesa – ACEP

"Nozes e Vozes", Radio Zones, FM 93.8, Sunday from 10 am to 12 noon.

Alvaro Oliveira, Tel. +41 79 305 56 70, <mailto:acepgeneve@hotmail.com>

Where to watch the matches

Havana Café, rte. des Jeunes 5 bis, Accacias, Tel. +41 22 301 29 54.

Large screen and terrace.

Café littéraire Pessoa, rue Jean Dassier 5, M. Luis, Tel. +41 22 340 22 85.

Portuguese café where writers sign the guest book directly on the walls.

Associação Democrática dos Trabalhadores Portugueses – ADTP, ch. du Furet 61,
Tel. +41 22 340 43 60. Three televisions and a Portuguese ambience.