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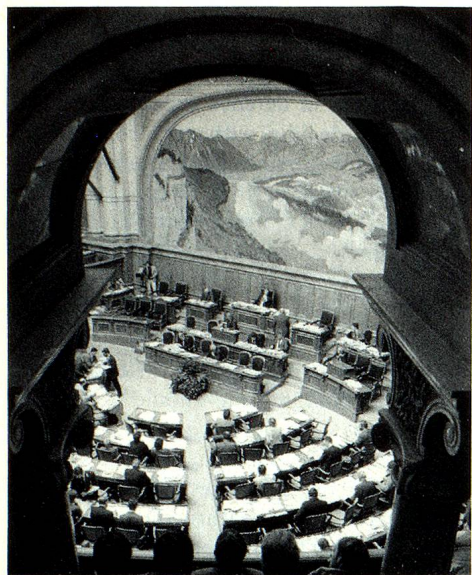
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Swiss domestic politics: to a Hungarian they sometimes seem rather boring – but they do not often result in too hasty or extreme solutions. (Our picture: National Council. Photo: Keystone)

cial and industrial collaboration. This is admittedly possible only when the economic potential of the supporting parties is similar to that in Switzerland. From the foundation to the peak: even on a relatively small scale and with adjustments to take Hungary's special circumstances into account, a transplantation of Swiss qualities could prove of great help to Hungary in that country's strivings to become a genuinely European country in the spirit of centuries of democratic and Christian traditions.

József Martin, Budapest

Details of sources

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- Jürgen Engert. «No special favours for the Swiss». From: «Politik und Wirtschaft», No. 9/1989.
- Peter M. Lings. «Not really wise, but perhaps a bit shabby». From: «Politik und Wirtschaft», No. 9/1989.

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“Not really wise – but perhaps a bit shabby”

By renouncing the possibility of joining the European Community, Switzerland has missed the opportunity of having a say in the creation of the “new” Europe. Some damage to the Confederation's interests can perhaps result from this attitude, since even a merely associate membership will not enable Switzerland to shut itself off from the consequences of EEC policies. But the Swiss abstention could above all harm Europe, as its republican mentality and outlook, its liberal basic attitudes, and its successful handling of the problems of a multi-national and multi-lingual population could serve as a pattern for the EEC's future development. Like the Swedes and the Austrians, the Swiss see their neutrality as an irreplaceable asset, for which they are prepared to sacrifice the ideal of European unity. Personally, I cannot appreciate the value of this asset. To stay out of every conflict, as a matter of principle, is something that I do not regard as really wise – but perhaps as a bit shabby! And the only justification for such shabby behaviour – namely that one is spared the sufferings inevitable in all-out war – is in practice not valid: neutral Bel-

gium was overrun by Hitler's troops, and that he did not invade Switzerland was solely due to the Swiss combat strength, and had nothing whatsoever to do with respect for Switzerland's neutrality.

The united Europe of the future comprises far more than merely the sum total of benefits in terms of the economy and of security policies. The vision that we hope will come true is that of the final and definitive conquest of nationalism, of a future in which we shall be proud to be Europeans of Swiss, German or French origin, a vision of cultural unity born of diversity, of intellectual and physical freedom, a vision of the re-birth of the Occident as an economic, cultural, socially progressive and militarily potent great power.

For the realisation of this dream of a united Europe, comparable in its influence to the art of the baroque period and to the Age of Enlightenment, it will, I believe, be essential to overcome parochial narrow-mindedness among the various nations – and not least of all, the “Kantönligeist” in Switzerland.

Peter M. Lings, Vienna

“No special favours for the Swiss”

A dynamic force has been released by an age-old but constantly renewed desire, and a broadly conceived draft proposal: a momentous change by which Switzerland, as a small country, is too directly affected for it to be able to lay claim to recognition of its entitlement to a special role.

In its dilemma, between full membership of the EEC on the one hand and a policy of isolation on the other, Switzerland is trying to “make a virtue of necessity”: it wants to remain capable and acceptable as a true European state. It reminds one of the phrase used in official certificates in connection with possible pregnancy: in German, “Zeugungsfähigkeit”, in English “procreative capacity”. Or more crudely expressed: “I could if I wanted to, but I don't want to. Not yet!” And one must remember: the objectives and the scales of value in matters of the economy are virtually identical for Switzerland and the EEC.

Will the Swiss one day be seen as “second-class Europeans”? Will they no longer have to worry about “infiltration by foreign ele-

ments” because nobody will want a Swiss passport anymore? As I am not Swiss, but German, I would nevertheless like to see the “interior decoration” of the European house being influenced by Swiss “design” with its democratic pattern. A true conservative will not cling to yesterday's values – he will always contribute to the fashioning of the future, with due sense of proportion and mindful of tradition, of course. Thereby he will be very different from the reactionary, who only reacts to what others propose. Dear Swiss readers: make full use of your potential. Create, conceive and bring forth. Do not hope for any extra favours – be content with the best you can achieve. But I fear that I may be wasting my breath. In my own country a lot of people would like to see the frontiers of 1937 restored. Keep Europe sustained at the level of the Gotthard pass? Wouldn't Liechtenstein be quite nice too? The only snag is that it would not satisfy Switzerland's aspirations.

Jürgen Engert, West-Berlin