

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

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1970)

Heft: 1598

Rubrik: Comment

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 18.03.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The Swiss Observer

Published Twice Monthly at
63/67 TABERNACLE STREET
LONDON E.C.2
Tel.: 01-253 2321

Telegrams: Paperwise Stock London

HON. PRESIDENT: Robert J. Keller

EDITOR: Pierre-Michel Beguin

Advisory Council:

Gottfried Keller (Chairman)

O. F. Boehringer, J.P., (Hon. Sec.)

F. Burri, J. Eusebio, Dr. C. Jagmetti
(Press Attache Swiss Emb.)

A. Kunz, C. Nater, R. M. Suess

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES
(POST FREE)

UNITED KINGDOM

24 issues £2. 8.0

12 issues £1. 5.0

6 issues £ 13.0

SWITZERLAND & Elsewhere

24 issues Frs. 25 — or £2.10.0

12 issues Frs. 13 — or £1. 6.0

Swiss subscriptions may be paid into

Postcheck-Konto Basle 40—5718

Editor's telephone: 01-602 1378

liberated from Nazi Germany and was now keeping under her own tutelage. China too had emerged as a nominal member of the Communist bloc. The second change has been forced as a consequence of the first: by the emergence of a Communist menace, the nations of the West have grouped together in defensive alliance. But this was only a first and vital stage. To recover from the blow of the war, the countries of Europe had to co-operate economically and were, for the first time, linked in their common dependence (through the Marshal Plan) of America. Economic co-operation was embodied by such agreements as GATT, OEEC and OCDE and the European Coal and Steel Community. Finally, from economic co-operation became political. The Common Market then appears as the outcome of a development whose grain was sown in Moscow in 1948 and began as a security agreement in the face of a threatening Russia. The third and most far reaching transformation that has taken place since the war has been the emancipation of former colonies and the concurrent formation of a third world with nutritional and development problems.

Mr. Petitpierre finds that the principles of Swiss neutrality as reaffirmed at the end of the war are still efficient today. But there should be a distinction between wartime and peacetime neutrality. In wartime, the problem was easily resolved, since it only meant that Switzerland was not going to join or favour any particular camp. In peacetime the formula "to be with no one" could no longer apply and had to be transformed, without negating neutrality, into the motto "to be with every-

The three basic changes in the world's recent history have all achieved a most important result: they have made nations interdependent on each

other and have encouraged a world *solidarity*. This interdependence and the necessity for solidarity cannot be ignored. It was necessary that the right answer should be found within the concept of integral neutrality. This answer was in effect "to be with no one in war, to be with everybody in peace". The first term was a legal "must" written down in international law, the second term was an "obligation" formulated by the spirit and consistency of Swiss neutrality. Not to take sides in war was to be actively passive, just as war-wagers were actively aggressive; to be on everybody's side in peace was to acknowledge the necessity of a renewed solidarity between nations, and realistically, the only useful way of putting neutrality into effect.

As a result Switzerland has been willing to join every international effort of a specifically non-political and military nature and has been ready to mediate between conflicting parties. This she has done in the Korean and Algerian crises.

Regarding the problems of entry to the European Economic Community, it is not only a definite attachment to neutrality which prevents Switzerland from applying for membership. Neutrality in itself would have been a sufficient obstacle because the emerging United Europe are by no means to become neutral, and the traditionally neutral Swiss could potentially be carried away in wars and alliances not of their choosing. There are a host of technical problems which full membership would entail, but the real and quite human reasons which have inspired Switzerland's decision have been that the aims of the Treaty of Rome were unacceptable as they required an abdication of all the political values on which she was founded. This aspect of the problem is not related to the policy of neutrality as such and Mr. Petitpierre did not dwell on it. He only expressed the personal view that Europe should be built along the lines suggested by Louis Armand in his book "Le Pari Européen". There the author demonstrates that a common Europe can only be built first by sharing the institutions the least loaded with the past. It is far easier, for example, to share common industrial institutions as a first step than to attempt to found Europe on a common political system first. Switzerland joined the Council of Europe in 1962, at a time when it had already lost all political significance and was merely a technical assembly shorn of all real power. This decision had not even required a vote by the people. Although, in Max Petitpierre's view, the Council of Europe had lost much of its meaning at the present time as the nucleus of European Integration had shifted towards the EEC, the Council afforded Swiss parliamentarians the opportunity of meeting their colleagues of other countries and was therefore a very useful meeting place.

Mr. Petitpierre concluded by recalling all the help which Switzerland has been able to afford towards peace. The effectiveness of this help was due to the respect and credibility now enjoyed by her neutrality. Mr. Petitpierre was speaking for himself and his conference was a kind of testament after his 20 years as head of the Political Department. In spite of the many arguments militating in favour of a review of this position, there is no indication that it has been abandoned by those who hold the reins of power nor by the majority of those who understand what Swiss neutrality is all about. A conference in the big auditorium of the University of Berne by the most outstanding Swiss statesman of the post-war era will have clarified this for the students. They who listened to the "elder statesman" realised that he still stood by a policy of neutrality in which he had lead the country through the troubled post-war years; they also knew that nothing short of a national consensus will change this policy.

(PMB)

COMMENT

THE NEW GLOBE-TROTTERS

The practice of hospitality is one of the points on which the outlook between the establishment and the new-wave hippy way of life differs. It is one thing for a Svengali who dwells in a mud hut to offer hospitality to a lone traveller, and another for the bourgeois with a pride in his house. The hospitable savage will share a part of his rug with the stranger, the bourgeois will fret over his carpet or the free sofa in his living room. The standards between the two differ. In the same way, a Svengali will not object to having to sleep in the bath tub or on the garden lawn, should he be harboured in a bourgeois home. In fact, he wouldn't object to innocently sleeping in the same room, and bed, as the master and mistress of the house. Thus the virtue of hospitality appears easier to practice among Svengalis and poor people in general, because the trappings of a higher standard of living necessarily carry with them certain standards of behaviour. Having discovered the bedroom and the bed, civilised man feels that he cannot but accommodate his guests in a bedroom and a bed. Having discovered the mud hut and the dirt floor the Svengali feels, quiet rightly, that this is the best way of accommodating his guests.

The hippy, and the youths who adopt his style of life, have become perfect Svengalis in their understanding and use of hospitality with the important difference that most of them do not even own a mud hut.

This point of view can be illustrated by innumerable examples. A recent personal case was that of the 18-



More branches in Continental Europe than any other British bank

Lloyds Bank Europe provides directly or through its wholly owned subsidiaries, a comprehensive domestic and international banking service in Belgium, Holland, France and Switzerland.

Some of the services of Lloyds Bank Europe

Accepting deposits in Sterling, Eurodollars or other foreign currencies at fully competitive rates.

Issuing Negotiable Certificates of Deposit in Sterling and U.S. Dollars.

Short or medium term loans in London or on the Continent to finance expansion outside the U.K.

Discounting Foreign Currency Bills.

International Portfolio Management in Switzerland.

HEAD OFFICE: 100 Pall Mall, London, S.W. 1.

AMSTERDAM • ROTTERDAM
THE HAGUE • GENEVA • ZURICH
ANTWERP • BRUSSELS • PARIS
BIARRITZ • BORDEAUX
CALAIS • CANNES • LE HAVRE
LILLE • NICE • ROUBAIX • ST.
JEAN DE LUZ • MONTE CARLO

year-old daughter of an austere French theology professor. The professor had asked us to accommodate his "shy daughter" for one night as she was to transit through London and a stranger to England. The "shy daughter" phones one day, asking whether she can stay for *three weeks* with her (newly-found) Canadian boy friend and another female friend. When explained that this presented some domestic difficulties, she had the nerve to ask *whether this was due to our lack of space or our lack of beds . . .*

Some days later, the 'phone rings at 9 p.m. and a husky voice asks for a floor for the night. He's the son of a vague German acquaintance. There are four of them, hitch-hiking to Ireland. They are at Piccadilly Circus and have just learnt that they can't sleep in Hyde Park. Half-an-hour later, the four Wandervögel appear on the doorstep with their bundles, blue jeans, T-shirts, beards and side-burns. They inform us that they must be on their way at 8.15 the following morning, which happened to be a Sunday. My kindly father thus arose at 7.30 a.m. to prepare them a generous breakfast, but at 8 o'clock, three of the guys were still sound asleep. They eventually lounged down to breakfast, devoured all the bread and butter in the house, rolled their cigarettes ceremoniously, expatiated for an hour until at about 10.30, they felt ready to be driven to the start of the M4. They were kindly told, as they were left to wait for the ride to Bristol, that "we would be having guests" at the time of their return journey through London.

This kind of adventure happens to ministers and priests more often than to anybody else. They are there to be used and bamboozled and they know it! What does a youth do when he either breaks down or finds himself without money in a foreign town deprived of a consulate? Why—he goes straight to the local priest! All our Swiss ministers in London regularly accommodate hard-up youths for a night or two. Fortunately, in the case of London, there is an excellent Consular service which takes care of the weirdest cases. The Swiss Benevolent Society which co-operates with the Consulate, has four rooms in its Conway Street premises in which temporary waistrrels can find a haven. The Swiss Hostel for Girls has a camp bed open to young people stranded late at night. But in spite of these efficient and other official services, our ministers still feel bound to put up with the most unseemly people.

Pasteur Nicod probably has the best first-hand experience in this field. His latest case is still actual at the time of writing. Four long-haired ragamuffins who had just concluded their secondary schooling arrived with their ramshackle car, decorated with a skull on the bonnet, the word "love" daubed in every colour on the sides and fitting-

ly illustrated with female buttocks, at the Swiss Church in Endell Street. One of them had solid credentials: he was the son of the hairdresser of the mother of the assistant-pastor's wife. Having phoned Pasteur Nicod, they were told by him that there was a very suitable camping site at Crystal Palace. Their answer was that, despite the 400 francs of which they had availed themselves in driving to England and crossing the channel, they could not afford a camping site. Pasteur Nicod sent them to Pasteur Hostettler, who, with a full house had to catapult them back to Pasteur Nicod, where they eventually remained for five days. They camped in the garden and used the public conveniences of the nearby park. The money which had been unavailable for their accommodation came in handy, sure enough, on discotheques, girls and cigarettes. Theirs was in fact a mild case compared to a previous visit and enforced sojourn by a teenage couple a few months beforehand. They stayed for eleven days—and not in the garden this time—and the animal smell that emanated from their consciously-cultivated grimyness haunted the house for days after they had left! Staunch with hydrophobia and soapophobia, they stubbornly refused all use of a shower and were too destitute to afford the entry to a swimming pool.

Consulates, like ministers, are there to be exploited. A globe-trotter may well plan to drive out as far as Katmandu, and then rely on the help of a thin-blooded Consulate to repatriate him with tax-payers' money. He will fortunately have to repay his return fare later, but as this is usually at half price or less and he normally strikes a bargain on the official benevolence of our consular services.

The ease of modern communications, the lust of experience and adventure of the youth have tempted them into criss-crossing the world. As this is coupled with a Svengali mentality, it is no surprise that hospitable ministers, consuls and bourgeois owning a car, a roof and some money get a knock on the door from them every now and then. The new Svengalis are anti-establishment, but they still need the establishment to enjoy their freedom.

As an expression of their disapproval of the way the young are tending to get things free, many of the bourgeois we have been speaking of refuse to pick up hitch-hikers. The hitch-hiker has even been described as a new kind of tramp. Apart from such reasons as the refusal of endorsing unnecessary liabilities and of facing possible misadventures, there is a strongly-felt reluctance to give free rides to people in a position of paying for their journey themselves. As a result hitch-hikers usually get lifts from younger motorists, people who were themselves hitching their way not so long ago.

(PMB)