

**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:** - (1974)

**Heft:** 1688

**Rubrik:** Swiss events

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# The Swiss Observer

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

Telegrams: Paperwyse London  
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UNITED KINGDOM

24 issues £2.40

12 issues £1.25

6 issues £0.65

SWITZERLAND and elsewhere

11 issues Frs. 13— or £1.30

24 issues Frs. 25— or £2.50

Swiss subscriptions may be paid into  
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## Comment

### A TWENTY-THIRD CANTON IN THE OFFING

A twenty-third canton has been virtually created. After twenty-six years of struggle, the *Rassemblement Jurassien* has nearly reached its goal of a French-speaking canton independent from Berne. This result has not been obtained without misgivings and some dissatisfaction, because a majority of less than 3,000 of the 90 per cent of voters who went to the polls on Sunday, 23rd June, to answer the simple question "Do you want to form a new Canton?", provided a "yes" answer.

The count showed 36,802 "yes" and 34,057 "no" ballots, and 1,841 blank votes. It also showed, as expected, that the three southern districts of La Neuveville Courtelary and Moutier voted "no" while the three northern districts of Franches-Montagnes, Délémont and Porrentruy overwhelmingly voted for "independence". The seventh, and German-speaking, district of Laufen voted "no" as expected and will be free to adhere either to Basle or Solothurn.

The vote thus spelled the division of the Jura. The very small number of blank ballots pointed to the minimal impact of the "Third Force" movement which had recommended a null vote in order to preserve the Jura's unity. The division between north and south underlined basic historical and cultural differences. The three northern districts descend from the old Bishopric of Porrentruy. Their population is Catholic and Gallic, while the southern districts had established links with Protestant Berne and Biel well before the "Act of Reunion" of 1815 which annexed the Jura to Berne in application of the Treaty of Vienna.

Although French-speaking, the southern districts have a Protestant majority and a strong Germanic element.

The differences that exist in such a small area — 500 square miles and 150,000 inhabitants — are truly remarkable and are best exemplified by the radical opposition between two men, Roland Béguelin, General Secretary of the *Rassemblement Jurassien* and Roland

Stähli, General Secretary of the anti-Separatist Union des Patriotes Jurassiens. These are two men living less than ten miles away from each other (Délémont and Moutier) and yet fighting for ideas that belong to two different worlds.

This fundamental difference of outlook will now be translated into political terms. Six months following the validation of the results next September, the people of the three anti-Separatist districts will be given the opportunity to confirm their vote, so that they are not integrated in a new canton against their will. It is generally believed that Courtelary and La Neuveville will confirm their desire to remain in Canton Berne. There is some doubt regarding Moutier, a traditionally anti-Separatist district in which the Separatists have nevertheless gained considerable ground since 1959, when an earlier vote on the separation issue was held. The 23rd June plebiscite yielded 42 per cent of "yes" votes against 55 per cent of "no" votes in the district. Observers believe that the Moutier district, which is the most industrial in the Jura, could see a further move towards Separatism. Whatever the outcome of the next popular consultation, the three northern districts are now determined, and they have showed it by a 70 per cent majority, to form a new Canton. This formula may not match the Separatist's original ambitions, but will all the same enable them to live and express their cultural identity in a canton of their own. This canton would be one of the smallest in Switzerland and have a population of about 70,000. It is less industrialised than the three districts of southern Jura, but its economy is more diversified. The future canton would be quite viable.

As a third stage of the creation procedure, the communes neighbouring the new canton would be given an opportunity to opt for the "status quo" or join the Canton of the Jura. In this way, the people of the area will have been consulted at regional, district and communal level. One can hardly be more democratic.

The importance given to the Jura issue in Switzerland must be astounding to anyone unconnected with the country's history, institution and particular way of thinking. One can

imagine an Englishman's surprise at all the fuss at what may appear to him as a pure local issue carried out on a minute scale. After all, the county map of Britain was recarved lately. New local authorities were created and new names appeared without hardly anyone apart from county officials noticing it. The new map will probably have its greatest impact on ratepayers.

The Jura issue is far more than administrative. It can be related to the problems of Scottish and Welsh nationalism. The fact that it is being staged on a much smaller scale doesn't alter its intensity and meaning for those involved. Two other basic considerations add to the subject's importance in the eyes of the Swiss. The first is that the Jura emerges as a "problem" in a country that is remarkably peaceful and that has managed to solve its other problems with more efficiency than most. The other is that the Jura is a difficult constitutional issue. The 23rd June vote required a previous referendum altering the cantonal constitution. It also raised legal problems pertaining to the rights of people which could not be solved within Switzerland's constitutional framework. These legal considerations mean a lot to the Swiss mind.

Whatever the following course of events, the 23rd June plebiscite in the Jura showed that Switzerland was able to tackle its internal problems in full respect of its federal ideals.

P.M.B.

## SWISS EVENTS

### SOCIOLOGY STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST RIGHT-WING PROFESSOR

The ban of right-wing speakers instituted by the National Union of Students in Britain was enacted in a smaller scale in Switzerland. Some sixty sociology students at Berne University staged a demonstration and took over the administrative block of their faculty to back their demands for the dismissal of a professor considered as too right-wing. The students placarded posters against Professor Walter von Rugg and his team. When they refused to pull these posters down and evacuate the faculty, the Dean of the University called on the police. The students left the premises after a warning that the police would come into action, and published a statement saying the "Rugg and Management can only teach under police protection".

The demonstrators were faced with a hostile "sub-group" of students, but later in the day received the backing of the psychology students of the

University. They signed a petition calling for the immediate dismissal of Professor Ruegg.

The Dean of the University announced that there would be no question of bowing down to such demands. He said that the demonstration, whose participants had all been identified, had been staged by a handful of students claiming that their curriculum should put in line with their own political book.

Trouble of a different kind struck an Italian technical college in Zurich whose 500 students staged a strike in support of 50 professors dismissed at the end of April. Known by the acronym ENAIP, this school was run by the Italian Trade Union Congress with the help of the Italian Government to train Italian apprentices in various skills and teach them the language of the host country. Its technical diplomas are recognised in Italy but not in Switzerland. The Zurich school, is the only establishment opened abroad by the Italian trade unions, who run about 150 similar schools in Italy. It was considered as a pilot scheme on which experience could be gained for future schools abroad. But at the beginning of last year, the Italian Government began cutting down funds to the school because of the way it was run and the considerable liberty that was given to students in establishing their programme. Canton Zurich eventually laid out 59 per cent of the schools costs. These were sharply reduced thanks to the voluntary work of the Swiss and Italian

teaching staff.

The teachers were dismissed in April and on 6th May the Italian Government sent a new Director and six professors to Zurich to take over the school. But the 500 students decided to

walk out in a gesture of solidarity with the former staff. The school was closed and the seven specialists spent the month of June whiling their time in a Zurich hotel at the expense of the Italian Government.

## “La Pasionara” breaks public speech laws

The ice rink and stadium of Les Vernets in Geneva was the scene, on Sunday, 24th June, of a major breach of the law forbidding foreigners on Swiss soil to make public declarations of a political nature. This controversial law was instituted in 1948 to show to the world that neutrality was a complete notion not only relevant to international platforms. A vast meeting of Spanish sympathisers had been planned long beforehand by the Swiss Labour (Communist) Party at the ice-rink to hear Dolores Ibarruri, a Spanish Civil War heroin known as *La Pasionaria* exiled in Moscow, and Santiago Carrillo, General-Secretary of the banned Spanish Communist Party, which is based in Paris. But when the Federal Council realised the importance of the gathering and learned that several hundred Spaniards and Portuguese would converge on Geneva from abroad for the occasion, it

announced that the two Communist leaders would not be allowed to speak. The Government naturally invoked the 1948 law and said that allowing speeches aimed against a foreign government – the Spanish Government – at such an international rally was incompatible with Swiss neutrality.

The Labour Party violently condemned the decision and said that the meeting would be taking place all the same. Mr. Jean Magnin, Secretary of the Party, announced that the two speakers would make their voices heard in one way or another.

When Sunday morning came, impressive forces of white helmeted policemen were posted around the Vernets “Patinoire” but the equally impressive crowd, estimated at ten to fifteen thousand, marched quietly to the stadium.

Dolores Ibarruri, 78, a dignified

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## *Inn on the Park*

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white-haired militant of another age appeared on a red-draped podium dressed in a plain black dress. She was wildly acclaimed by the crowd, which included many Portuguese workers and Swiss left-wing sympathisers. Getting around the Government ruling, she sang a Communist workers' song in Spanish for four minutes and was tumultuously cheered. Mr. Jean Vincent, Labour National Councillor from Geneva, then spoke to attack the Government ban. "From Calvin to Lenin, the proof has been brought by history and by facts that a country brings honour upon itself by offering a haven to the fighters of freedom", he said. Mr. Vincent then spoke of the "heavy debt of gratitude due to Spain, a country which has been at the vanguard of the struggle against Fascism".

A recorded speech of Mr. Santiago Carrillo was then played on loud-speakers. The Communist party chief called for an end to the Fascist regime in Spain and the setting-up of a provisional government. The speech began with the words: "You are now witnessing an unusual scene. You can hear me speak, and see me at the same time muzzled on this platform. And who is preventing me from speaking? — the Fascist government in Madrid". But Mr. Carrillo didn't agree to be "muzzled" completely for at the end of his address he said a few words live to the delight of the crowd.

La Pasionaria's voice was then heard on the loud-speakers. Tight-lipped, the elderly activist stood erect while her planned speech was being played out. Among the main points of her address

was a call for the Spanish people and Army to unite to create a new regime which would follow the Portuguese example. When six pages of the ten-page speech had been read, the recorded voice was suddenly silenced: Dolores Ibarruri had asked Mr. Magnin, standing beside her, to stop the tape. The Pasionaria continued her speech live in defiance of the laws of the Confederation. There appeared to be no police in the stadium and she was allowed to complete her speech unhindered. Again, she was given a rousing ovation.

At a press briefing after the rally, Mr. Vincent explained that it would have been a summit of impoliteness to allow hundreds of militants from ten countries of Europe to come expressly to Geneva to hear Dolores Ibarruri and Santiago Carrillo, and be prevented from doing so. He claimed that the spirit, if not the letter of the law had been respected and once again deplored the regulations on political declarations by foreigners.

The Federal Council was not satisfied with what Mr. Vincent had termed as his obedience to the "spirit" of the law and two days later ordered the expulsion from Switzerland of the two Spanish speakers.

mother firm, Hoffmann La Roche (Basle), which covers business for Europe and Morocco, and did not correspond with the financial year of the Sapac Corporation (New Brunswick, Canada) responsible for business in the rest of the world. But the figures published were the most extensive published to date by one of the world's most secretive companies. Shareholders were told of the group's 553 million francs profit and learnt that the Basle arm of the group had made a net profit of 68.1 million francs, inferior to the 70.5 millions made the previous year, and that they were offered a 525 franc-dividend per share. Business on pharmaceuticals was reported in healthy growth in France and West Germany. Vitamins were holding out well in most countries of continental Europe and the group's new test and diagnosis equipment was gaining a rapid foothold in the market. Business in Britain was still hampered by the price-cutting decree on Valium and Librium of the last Conservative Government. The trial to obtain redress goes on before the High Court, and Roche has closed its London offices to save money. The group has 35,000 employees.

Brown Boveri announced a record turnover of 7,200 million francs for 1973, marking a 10 per cent progress over the previous year. Cash-flow totalled 353 million francs and the order book had grown nominally by 30 per cent to 9,600 million francs by the end of last year. The group employs 95,500 persons. Its main factories are at Baden, Mannheim and Paris (Compagnie Electro-Mécanique). The latter company had received very important orders from the French government for the construction of nuclear power plants. The Sécheron electrical works in Geneva, which were taken over three years ago by Brown Boveri, showed a profit for the first time in 1973 and would in future specialise in the manufacture of transformers.

Another group to show good figures was Oerlikon Buehrle, which has lately been reorganised into a holding. Its 1973 turnover reached 1,259 million francs, 43 per cent of which came from the arms sector.

## COMPANY NEWS

The Roche group recorded worldwide sales of 4,677 million francs during 1973. The figure didn't quite correspond to the group's consolidated turnover since the financial year of the



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### Dan-Air celebrates 2nd Anniversary of Gatwick-Belpmoos route

Passengers at the tiny airport at Berne recently were surprised to find themselves being offered champagne — free.

The occasion was a birthday party marking the second anniversary of the regular London (Gatwick)-to-Berne air link operated by British airline DAN-AIR. The airline also flew in from London an iced birthday cake for the event.

### An eight-year-old drug addict

According to an enquiry by la "Tribune de Genève", Geneva's evening paper, there are four to five hundred drug addicts in the City. The average age tends

to become lower all the time and the case of an eight-year-old drug addict has been reported. With teenage drug addicts also procreating, maternity hospitals now have to cope with the problem of addicted babies. The "Tribune" has established a conservative estimate of the drug market in Geneva. Assuming there are 400 regular addicts who fix themselves three times a day at a cost of 40 francs an injection, the market value of drug consumption adds up to over 18 million francs a year, or about two-and-half million pounds sterling. The paper reports the extraordinary case of a bar-owner in the Old Town who was compelled to substitute his metal cutlery by plastic because his customers used his spoons to heat their drug mixture. Plastic spoons prevented this since they would melt over a flame. The bar-owner introduced the measure in the hope that his toilets wouldn't be used as a doping den any longer. In view of the magnitude and urgency of the problem the "Tribune" called for a co-ordination of all the organisations dealing with drug addicts.

#### RUSSIA CONDEMNED AT THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

The Soviet Union was condemned at a month-long international conference on labour for maintaining the practice of forced labour in defiance of the conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at whose headquarters the conference opened on 5th June. The resolution condemning the Soviet Union, which was supported by 123 trade unions

and other professional delegations from 125 countries with 156 abstentions and no opposition, was eventually not adopted for failing to reach the necessary quorum of 206 votes. The resolution had been tabled by the Convention's Applications Committee which had accused the Soviet Union of assigning people to particular jobs against their will and preventing members of state farms from resigning. These practices are forbidden by the ILO conventions signed by the Soviet Union. The Soviet delegation reacted strongly against the motion and said that its authors didn't properly understand the meaning of Soviet legislation. The chief Soviet delegate claimed that there was no such thing as forced labour in the USSR because the need for it was inexistant. There were only certain provisions necessary to fight social "parasites" representing a burden on society, he said.

#### A CALL FOR MORE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE "GAST ARBEITER" AND THE SWISS PEOPLE

A call for more mutual information was made by a federal commission on the foreign labour problems in Switzerland. Chaired by the Federal Judge Anton Heil and set up by the Government in 1970 following the 7th June vote on the Schwarzenbach Initiative, this Commission report that the clue to improving relations between alien and local communities in Switzerland lay in promoting information on both sides. Holding its first ever press conference, the

Commission said that a campaign should be launched to make the Swiss more aware of the reasons inducing men and women from Mediterranean countries to find work in Switzerland. This campaign should also encourage the home population to be more hospitable to foreign workers and promote the goodwill necessary to uproot many deep-seated prejudices and antipathy feelings. The Commission also called for a study of the real impact of foreign workers on the Swiss economy. A more complete knowledge of this aspect of the problem would help the Swiss public at large to appreciate it more objectively and realistically.

On the other hand, the information of foreign workers coming into Switzerland should be stepped up considerably. The Commission said that these workers should be informed of the realities of life in Switzerland beforehand. The importance of this was underscored by the fact that most of the foreign labour coming into Switzerland was of rural origin thus adding to the already existing cultural and linguistic barriers between them and the local population. Foreign workers should be told that they are expected to comply to the Swiss pattern of life and to the laws of their new country of residence. Such an effort at assimilation required the helping hand and goodwill of the Swiss people. This help could be given through new institutions, such as the mixed working communities already existing in some cantons.

But the solution to the problem will depend to a great extent on the

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verdict of the Swiss people who will be taking part next October in another important referendum on the future of foreign labour in Switzerland.

## ENVIRONMENT

Residents in the neighbourhood of Kloten and Cointrin airports are losing patience over the night-flight issue and have formed two separate associations. Residents in noisy areas around Kloten international airport have recently held their Annual General Meeting at Bulach. An overwhelming majority voted in support of new national initiative which would have their rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

The residents around Cointrin airport, have addressed an "urgent question" to the Federal Council asking to know when it planned to carry out its promises to ban night flights completely. The Association, which claims to represent 55,000 people, said that the frequency of flights between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. at Cointrin had risen from 3,576 in 1968 to 4,901 last year. They said that the health and nervous balance of these 55,000 residents were seriously threatened by these flights, an assessment which they said was backed by authorised specialists.

One possible way to alleviate the noise problem at Kloten and Cointrin is to reduce their traffic by agreements with Basle and Lyon airports. This solution

was put forward to the National Council by Mr. Jean Ziegler, Socialist MP for Geneva. He said future traffic handling capacity should not be found solely by extending Switzerland's two inter-continental airports, but by operating them jointly as single destinations with the airports of Basle and Lyon. Such a solution is actually examined by the Federal Air Office. It would naturally require the co-operation of the French.

## A man fires 40 shots at passers-by in Zurich

A twenty-year-old cook kept the Zurich police and the residents of the Badenerstrasse on tenter-hooks for half an hour as he fired some forty shots on passers-by from his garret window. Three persons were wounded, not seriously, and a police car was peppered with five shots.

# LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

## To prevent "alienation"

The problem of the number of foreign workers in Switzerland is once again dominating the political debate. On 20th October the population will have to vote on the third initiative concerning the "over-alienation" (what an ugly and gruesome word!) of the country, which, if adopted would reduce the number of resident aliens with working permits by half by 1977. For the economy and for many industries this would be a downright catastrophe — quite apart from the fact that it would be contrary to international agreements, which in turn could provoke retaliatory measures. It would also be almost inhuman and it is to

be hoped — and generally expected — that this third attempt at "ridding the country" of half of its foreign population will be decisively defeated.

But, even though it is difficult to believe, initiatives No. 4 and 5 are already looming on the horizon. Initiative No. 4, launched by James Schwarzenbach's Republican Movement, has collected 53,800 signatures — 50,000 are sufficient — and has been handed in to the Federal Chancellery in Berne. Initiative No. 5 is conceived as a kind of political and moral counter-weight against its forerunners and has been launched by the Movement of Catholic Workers and Employees. It postulates, amongst many other things, social security and the right for every foreign worker, including the "saisonniers" (who are only in the country for 10 months) to have their families by their side. With the exception of the active and passive voting right this fifth initiative wants to put foreign workers legally on exactly the same footing as the Swiss citizens. The collection of signatures for this is just about to begin.

All this shows that the problem of the presence of an admittedly large number of foreign workers amidst a not always very welcoming indigenous Swiss population will be on the agenda for debate and discussion not only during the current year but for some time to come.

The Swiss — and here I am quoting the well-known author Max Frisch — have wanted foreign labour to come in and help produce wealth, and are now forced to admit that these foreign workers are human beings whose rights and dignity they have to respect.

There has recently been a big celebration in Berne to commemorate the 100 years during which the Federal Constitution of 1874 has been in force. Amongst the prominent speakers were Federal President Brugger, the President of the National Council Muheim, a well-known Law Professor and that eminent sociologist Madame Jeanne Hersch from Geneva. In her speech, which she started with the remark that her forefathers had not been present at Morgarten, she praised the Swiss will to independence and self-determination. But there were, she added, still some problems for the solution of which

## Acting or the struggle to survive

The 1973-74 Theatre Season in French-speaking Switzerland is over and the theatre-going public of Geneva and Lausanne will have to wait until Autumn for the preparation of a new repertoire. Switzerland has a flourishing theatrical life. Everything may be done on a small scale, but there are a sufficient number of theatres in the main cities to satisfy any demanding public. When the possibilities of the season are exhausted, it is easy for a Genevese to drive to Lausanne for an evening, or for a Zurcher to go to Basle.

In French-speaking Switzerland alone, there are 156 professional and unionised actors. According to an article in the Journal de Genève's Literary Supplement, only thirty-six of these professionals earn more than 30,000 francs a year. Some make as little as 300 francs a year out of acting. Earnings depend to a great extent on individual theatres and the public they cater for. Thus the Theatre de Carouge et l'Atelier in Geneva offer their casts from 1,500 to 2,000 francs a month during the season. At the Comédie, salaries attain 2,000 to 2,500 francs, but at the experimental Théâtre Mobile, all actors require a second job even during the season. The

professional actors and directors of the Theatre Populaire Romand (TRP) net 1,150 francs a month, a sum which attests to their devotion to the theatre. The TRP was founded in Canton Neuchatel and in the Jura some fifteen years ago. It has become one of the driving forces towards opening the theatre for the rural and working classes. It stages highly regular and successful performances in schools and industrial cities like la Chaux de Fonds.

Despite their very small area, with a public half the size of London's, Swiss theatres often display productions of West End standards. Although the French-speaking part of the country falls under the shadow of France, while German-speaking Switzerland has its own identity, neither part of the country is in a cultural vacuum. There is perhaps less competition and fewer stars of the stage, but the importance given to theatre by the authorities of Basle and Zurich, in particular, tend to uphold very high standards even though there is a perpetual conflict between conservatism and avant-garde experimentation and revolutionary.