

Foundations of Swiss foreign policy [Fortsetzung folgt]

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FOUNDATIONS OF SWISS FOREIGN POLICY

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(Continuation)

11) In connexion with *aid to underdeveloped countries* neutrality plays only a minor part. In this sphere Switzerland has much greater freedom of action. Her initial position is favourable because it is not suspected of colonialism or imperialism.

There exists a great variety of views on questions connected with development aid. It has almost become fashionable to be active in this field. However, the problems are extremely complicated and are often over-simplified.

First let us state that we are not under any political or legal obligation to aid underdeveloped countries, apart from already existing agreements. The backwardness of many former colonial possessions is in many cases by no means a consequence of colonial policy. Colonial policy has rather brought in its wake a certain order and a general uplift. Indeed, it is only the spread of Western ideas that has led to independence. We have to resist the pressure of certain underdeveloped countries — as well as of certain powers which grant development aid — to indiscriminately increase our help and to harness us in their organizations which partly pursue political ends. In this sphere of our foreign policy we also have to take decisions according to our own judgment and in accordance with standards of expediency.

The purpose of assisting underdeveloped countries is to raise their standard of living and to attenuate the enormous differences separating both parts of the world. This aim not only appeals to a general Swiss interest in reducing existing tensions and in creating well-ordered and peaceful conditions, but also serves our direct interests in so far as only progressive development will permit more intensive economic relations with these countries. As universal a foreign trade as possible increases our security and diminishes the risks of our economic dependence on foreign countries. A Swiss development policy is therefore justified. However, success can only be reached if favourable conditions are created in the underdeveloped countries and by these countries themselves. In this context we think of the problem of over-population and the creation of the relevant spiritual-ethical basis. In the first place it is of prime importance to cultivate such qualities as ethics of work, spirit of initiative, thrift, perseverance in effort, patience and rational thinking. Development means above all science in the widest sense of the word, implying the breach of taboos, fight against fanaticism and superstition (which has to be fought repeatedly in the West as well).

It also means — and may a representative of the legal profession not be denied stating this — forming a class of lawyers. Inherent to Europe are her trained lawyers who to a great extent bear the task of running the rational State.¹³⁾ This is in no way a judgment on the value of foreign cultures and ways of life, but he who wants development, assimilation to the West, must also accept the consequences thereof. It requires an effort on one's own and a different concept of life. Financial and capital aid cannot be decisive. As Professor Alfred Sauvy said in his Zürich lecture: "He who pours water on rocky soil reaps at the worst a flood, on receptive soil only can this water bear fruit." The same applies to development aid. He who pours money into a new country whose thin

educated layer is completely absorbed by administration, and, let us add, by politics and prestige, only raises price levels and furthers corruption. Instead of financial aid there ought to be more assistance by human beings.¹⁴⁾ Japan's example should get much wider publicity. Within 50 years Japan succeeded in bridging the gap from the feudal to the industrial era and to rise from a small country to the status of a world power without the term "development aid" having been known at the time.

We ought to draw our conclusions from this fundamental fact. Being a small country, Switzerland has to concentrate her restricted means on promising aims. This means restraint in the sphere of purely financial assistance and in international actions intended for this purpose. The State should make private investment possible and further this aim by giving the necessary legal guarantees. In addition, there ought to be technical help in its widest sense, as for instance advice on the assistance in politically delicate spheres like administration, financial policy, foreign commercial policy, and above all, education. Aid can also extend to the building of schools of all levels, hospitals, small manufacturing plants and model farms. These establishments are to be set up out of funds and with the help of nationals of the aiding State, under simultaneous training of indigenous staff. The procedure of the EEC Commission not to hand over any cash amounts when setting the Development Fund into operation, but to examine and to execute the proposed projects itself, is very commendable. Any assistance for monster projects which have no reasonable economic relationship to the country's resources and which serve above all to satisfy prestige, such as for instance large steel works, should be declined. For Switzerland as a small country with restricted means a concentration of strength is necessary in order to achieve the greatest possible efficiency. Besides, technical aid as seen from this angle will permit us to work off our pedagogic urges which are, generally speaking, none too agreeable a feature. In this context emigration of Swiss nationals should be encouraged and due consideration be given in particular to short-term stays in development countries.

All in all these thoughts correspond to the present concept of Swiss development policy. It is to be adhered to.

Support has also to be given to endeavours at stabilizing prices for raw materials. This stabilization is in the interest of the development countries as well as in our own.

An active treaty policy towards the new States can also be rated as development aid in a wider sense. It is a question of strengthening international law and guiding the African and Asiatic States towards the ideas and institutions which form the basis of the law of nations. Even though certain treaties may be materially without great significance and of no immediate necessity to Switzerland, they ought nevertheless to be concluded. Let us mention treaties of conciliation and arbitration, treaties on the protection of private property, extradition treaties, legal aid and double taxation treaties — subjects which partly seem strange to the new States but which have to be settled on a legal basis in the interest of legally ordered conditions

in international life. This applies also to mutual relationships between the new States. Such a treaty policy of Switzerland can be of a certain educational value.

Neutrality facilitates the accomplishment of all these tasks. An effective and promising development aid calls for the maintenance of our policy of neutrality.

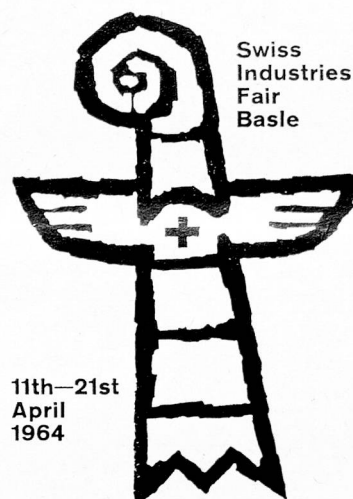
Whether this aid ought to be given on a bilateral or on a multilateral basis cannot be decided upon in general terms. What is decisive are the ways and means of putting it into practice and the purpose pursued. Should the multilateral method be chosen, co-operation with the United Nations — above all with their enlarged technical aid programme and with their Special Fund as well as with their special organizations — would be preferable to co-operation in regional groups. Universal organizations such as UNO offer the great advantage that the development countries themselves co-operate in them from the beginning; their staff has vast experience. Special praise goes to UNESCO, an organization concerned with the setting up of intellectual bases, and which does not always meet with befitting understanding in Switzerland.

(To be concluded.)

13) Max WEBER: Politik als Beruf, 2nd Edition, 1926, p. 25-27.

14) "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", No. 4321 of 6th November 1962.

("Schweizer Monatshefte" April 1963.
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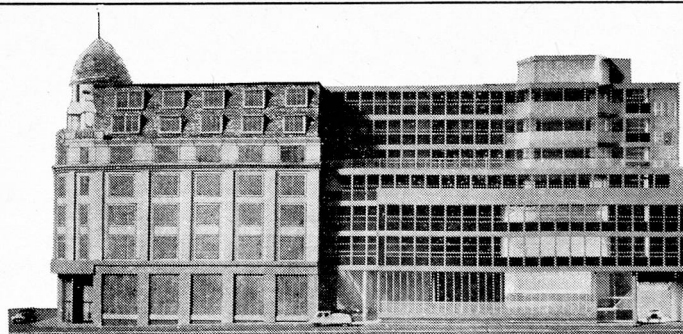
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