

# Comment

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taking care of the foreigner's money, the MIGROS Bank spurned it and turned to the small saver, just as MIGROS stores had sought the small consumer 30 years before. The MIGROS Bank in the Seidenstrasse in Zurich is the only downtown bank doing business from eight to five and on Saturdays. MIGROS Banks refused to join the Swiss Bankers Association and took a very distant stand from the position of its established competitors, accusing them of accepting foreign money too gleefully and indulging in the glut of investments which have overheated the Swiss economy of the 1960s so badly and made prices soar. The MIGROS and the Independents feel that the established and cartelised big banks other than the cantonal banks have acted irresponsibly in accepting so many funds from abroad and investing them locally. MIGROS wants Swiss money to be invested in Switzerland and unconventionally does not want to be taken for a traditional "Swiss Bank", refusing to do business abroad (when not forced by official measures). Duttweiler once said that the Swiss should cease being "*Eine Nation von Watch-und-Cheese-makers, Hotelpartiers, und Bankiers*". This subversive statement, with which he wanted to free the Swiss from their image, reflects the pattern of an independent life spent struggling against the strictures in the establishment.

Although the MIGROS Bank started with a built-in, loyal clientele of "Migros Club" members, it is still a small bank. The Big Banks are said to fear its competition while not holding it in particular esteem. Who knows, the MIGROS Bank may one day grow into a giant, just as the Volksbank, created for the small saver, has now become one of the established giants. Gottlieb Duttweiler set out in 1925 to fight against the cartels. When he died in 1962 he left instead the biggest cartel of them all. (PMB)

# COMMENT

## REDUCE THE VOTING AGE TO 18?

Dr. Fritz Tanner, a marriage counsellor and a great friend of the young who is at the same time a member of the National Council, introduced a *postulate* in the Chamber aiming at lowering the minimum voting age by two years. The postulate is a Swiss political creation and consists, when it is passed by the National Council, in inviting the Federal Council to consider the issues it raised. It is therefore not a motion but an obligation and usually calls for a reply by the Federal Council.

As a result of the postulate, "Die Weltwoche" had the idea of inviting a panel of young people and of recording their views of the problem. Six youths, in and out of school, aged between 18 and 24 were interviewed together and the most striking impression one gathered from reading the interview was that they had a sound common sense.

They raised many sensible points. The first was that to be able to take part in the political life of the community it was necessary to be politically educated and to know what each party and electoral list stood for. It was therefore a task for the schools to educate all future citizens in these matters. This is in fact already practised in Swiss schools and Civic Instruction is given in primary school and Political Science in the third year of secondary school. In spite of this, one of the girls of the panel said that many 18-year-olds couldn't say if they were asked what the National Council was. Another point raised was the immense separation between the respective lives and interests of the parties and the young. A student said that it was pointless to lower the voting age if the parties were entirely governed by old people not open to the young. The feeling was that the parties were controlled by the old and that the young had no place in them. One member of the panel said, however, that he might try for the Social Democratic party — it was the party which perhaps offered the best chance to the young. The Initiative principle was criticised and the initiative launched last year by students to change the law on the Institute of Technology was considered as a failure. The young had launched an initiative but those in a position to implement it, the old in Parliament, had done what they wanted to anyway. Besides, the initiative was a very slow procedure and one youth claimed that the treatment received by apprentices, who get a very small pay in Switzerland, could only be improved if they went on strike and not through

an initiative. It would just have no effect. Asked whether they were interested in getting effective power, one of the panel frankly admitted that youth was not interested in power, all they wanted were good chances and a peaceful life. Neither did the panel appear to be particularly outraged by the materialism of their surrounding. Children, and their parents as well, should be taught that life was not just a matter of consumption. It was all a question of education. The youth are also the country's conscience and the panel agreed that if 18-year-olds had been given a chance to vote on June 7th, then the Schwarzenbach Initiative would not have been rejected by such a small majority.

The discussion did not show a strong common will in favour of the right of vote at 18. It seemed as though the students were as guarded against themselves as they were against society.

(PMB)

# SWISS NEWS

## SEVEN ACCUSED IN THE BUEHRLE AFFAIR

As a conclusion to the inquiry into the illegal arms shipment by Buehrle, the well known armaments factory in Oerlikon, seven persons have been charged with falsifying the documents warranting an arms export licence. The enquiry had been directed against a director of the company, a manager, a signing clerk and two junior employees. It was a surprise to learn that seven employees instead of six, of the company had been involved in the charges, which will now be dealt with by the Federal Court. The Buehrle Company has been found guilty of exporting some 88.7 million francs worth of arms to countries inscribed in the Swiss arms ban list. 52.7 million francs worth was sent to South Africa, 19.5 millions to Israel, and the rest to Egypt, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. The accused had furthermore attempted to obtain an export license for 10 million francs worth of unexportable arms. Dieter Buehrle, the head of the Buehrle concern and son of its founder, was not among the accused but has been the aim of a complaint for his lack of control over the activities of his company.

## THE COUNTRY'S AGRICULTURE

A report has just been published by the Agricultural Division of the Department of Economy in Berne. This report doesn't actually tell the farmers of Switzerland what they have to grow and produce, it barely sets forth a number of recommendations which they