

# Swiss news

Objekttyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1970)**

Heft 1599

PDF erstellt am: **01.05.2024**

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

Ein Dienst der *ETH-Bibliothek*  
ETH Zürich, Rämistrasse 101, 8092 Zürich, Schweiz, [www.library.ethz.ch](http://www.library.ethz.ch)

<http://www.e-periodica.ch>

battle between trans-national corporations.

This imbalance fortunately does not have any unhealthy consequences. The *Romands* do not have to envy the Swiss-Germans for all their factories because there is enough wealth to go all round. But this does not alter the fact that a city like Geneva is somewhat artificially enriched by a host of international organisations, foreign banks and holdings, whereas towns like Basle and Winterthur hold the very real and tangible producers of wealth. Also, the movement of organising talent is very much from West to East, so that Zurich, for example, has an impressive French-Swiss colony. German-Swiss companies are then being increasingly managed by *Romands*. This is a happy state of affairs and prevents all resentment. There are no underdogs among the Confederates.

(PMB)

## SWISS NEWS

### SHIPWRECK ON LAKE GENEVA

The weather over the Léman had a threatening look for the whole of Friday afternoon, August 7th. The storm signals on the Swiss shore had been winking from 3 p.m. The radar at Cointrin airport had spotted an oncoming stormy front and had transmitted the necessary warnings to the rescue services of the Lake. But the pilot of the French pleasure boat "Sainte Odile" didn't consider the heavy black clouds looming above Nyons and the gathering storm as sufficient reasons for postponing his return trip from Saint Yvoire to Thonon, and he set off with 25 passengers. Two hundred yards away from port the storm suddenly gathered in strength. Within seconds the wind was gusting to 90 m.p.h. and the black cloud above Nyons had suddenly crossed the lake. He decided to turn back and it was during his manoeuvre that a particularly powerful wave ripped off the boat's windscreen. Water immediately cascaded inside the boat and as it was devoid of security bins it promptly overturned. Twenty-five passengers were thrown in a boiling lake with waves three metres high. There were fortunately many witnesses of the scene and amateur rescuers rushed on the scene in rubber dinghies. They managed to save eighteen passengers. One rescuer, a French count, saved six persons. But four women and three men of French and Belgian nationalities perished on a spot which was hardly a mile away from where the "*Fraïdieu*", a pleasure boat of the same kind, foundered with 24 children a year ago. An enquiry into the disaster has been opened. The pilot of the boat has repeatedly asserted that the omens had not warranted a cancellation of his return trip to Thonon.

The might of the wind, *Joran*, which had abruptly rammed the boat and caused it to overturn had been absolutely unexpected. The mayor of Saint Ivoire believes for his part that the pilot should never have sailed off. He had never seen such a storm on the Léman for thirty years.

(ATS)

### A SHORTAGE OF PRIESTS

A new chapel has just been consecrated at the Seminary of Lucerne. As the Catholic Church is steering through a troubled period, the question can be raised whether the pews of this new chapel will ever be filled. The rector of the Seminary, Otto Moosbrugger, gave his impressions to a "*Tages Anzeiger*" interview.

He said that the number of students at Lucerne's Seminary had remained stationary. There had actually been a slight increase. But of the 130 male students and six girls attending the Seminary, only 40 to 50 had the definite intention of becoming *priests*. Twenty others had not yet arrived at a determined idea on their future career: they had undertaken studies in theology more or less for their own sake and with no practical intentions in mind. The remaining 50 definitely wished to engage in a religious career but were not prepared to be consecrated priests.

The first overriding ground for this shyness towards the plunge into priestly life lay in the *refusal of celibacy*. But behind this primary question there were many related theological problems. Students feel, for example, that the Catholic Church does not value the present conception of marriage sufficiently. The theology student is strongly torn between the secular and the religious world. He is now feeling less at home in faith and prayer (especially private prayer) and is therefore attempting to find the traditional security of faith and prayer elsewhere. Another point to mention is the increasing tendency of the modern man to *live privately*. Families have become closed and private units and the almost exclusive preserve of personal life. The celibate priest has therefore become *lonelier* still.

The new *social mobility* which is transforming life and its conditions so rapidly is a fact which prevents many from taking any definite and irrevocable step. They are ready to "engage themselves", but not in the short term only.

A changing understanding of the Church has also had a strong bearing. Many students are disappointed by the present structure of the Church, which they see basically as a power structure. They see its real meaning as lying in a world service. Others find that the work of the priest should become more specialised. The notion of the "all round priest" goes against the univer-

sal tendency of our technical society. As a final and important ground for staying away from priesthood, many students are aware from the Bible and Church history that there are other conceivable forms of priestly service than the traditional Catholic ministry.

This situation is bound to lead to not have any unhealthy consequences. Cese of Basle requires 15 to 20 priests a year. At present, it only receives about eight. With the help of rationalisation and a wise use of manpower the crisis has momentarily been averted. But in 10 years and on present trends, there will be a shortage of 250 priests in the Diocese of Basle. The situation will be similar in the Diocese of Chur. It may be somewhat better, but bad enough, in the Diocese of St. Gallen.

### THE NEW FIGHTER

While Swiss experts were still trying to make up their minds on the aircraft they should adopt in replacement of the Air Force's obsolete "Venoms", Hawker Siddeley chipped in with an offer for renovated "Hunter" jet fighters. The British firm also offered its most publicised showpiece, the vertical-takeoff machine baptised the "Harrier", to the Swiss. Each aircraft would cost 12 million francs and could be delivered from the beginning of 1972 onward. The Swiss authorities are now studying this British tender.

### ASSISTANCE TO THE SWISS ABROAD

The Federal Council has authorised the Department of Justice and Police to put in place a study commission to elaborate a federal law in respect of assistance to Swiss nationals abroad. The Commission will examine a plan drawn out by the Department of Justice and Police in virtue of the new constitutional provisions on the Swiss abroad. When this plan will have been passed by the Commission it will be submitted to the cantons and various interested bodies.

(ATS)

### SWISS COWS FOR BRITAIN

Three hundred opulent, spotted Simmenthal cows took the plane at Cointrin airport with a British destination. They had just spent three weeks of quarantine in the stables of the Comptoir Suisse in Lausanne. On their arrival in Britain, they had to spend three more weeks of quarantine. These were enough reasons for taking the great precautions in protecting them from contagion during their journey. Switzerland exported 2,120 heads of cattle of the Simmenthal breed and 7,150 heads of the brown, or "Schwytz" breed in 1969. The main importers were the Italians, who prefer the brown or "Schwytz" cows. Other clients were the eastern European countries such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Russia and

Hungary. They were mainly interested in Simmenthal cattle. South Africa, Bolivia and Lybia had also imported specimens of Simmenthal cattle in 1969. There are 900,000 Simmenthal cows in the world. The aim of these British imports is to improve current breeds by regenerating them.

### THE "APRICOT EXPRESS"

This is the period of the year when the Valais, having harvested its usually overabundant apricots, attempts to sell them throughout the rest of the country. Last year, a special apricot express train invested Zurich, this year it stopped at Berne. The apricot train and the many emissaries of the golden fruit were greeted by the mayor at the station. A procession was staged. It crossed the town to the casino and dozens of tons of apricots and Valais wine were distributed to eager passers-by.

### CRIME AT RIEHEN

An eleven-year-old child was seriously injured by a bullet fired in his stomach by an angry restaurant owner.

The child had climbed above the restaurant owner's walls with a friend to pilfer blackberries. The man saw them and chased them away with the strongest threats. When he saw them come back in his garden again an hour later he took his hunting gun and fired at the children's feet. They fled but, according to his deposition, they returned within minutes. Furious, he reloaded the gun and fired in their direction without warning. One of the children was hit in the stomach. He had the strength to drag himself back home whence his father drove him straight to hospital. Doctors found serious lesions on his abdomen but his life is not in danger.

(ATS)

### THE NEW FACE OF SWISS AGRICULTURE

The kind of mergers and transformations which have changed the face of industry so rapidly in the past have affected the Swiss peasantry. A recent survey by the *Schweizerischen Bauernsekretariats* shows that the number of farm holdings had diminished by 13 per cent in the four years from 1965 to 1969. There are now no more than 149,300 farm estates in Switzerland. They employ 161,152 people on a regular basis, a reduction of 21,950 or 12 per cent compared with the 1965 figures. The effectives of the seasonally employed farm labourers has on the other hand increased by 5.1 per cent. As the surface of cultivated land hasn't markedly changed, the reduction in the number of estates is due to takeovers by larger neighbouring farms. The result is that the number of fairly large units (10 to 15 hectares) has increased

by 3 per cent and that of farms larger than 15 hectares, by 15 per cent. Mechanisation has also increased by 16 per cent during the same period. There are now 71,253 tractors (including the two-wheel all-purpose mountain tractor). Sales have increased too. Turnover for meat and wheat has bounded by 5.2 per cent in the first semester of this year.

### DRAFT SWISS-U.S. PACT ON BANK SECRETS

Geneva, August 17

A proposal has been made to open a chink in Swiss banking secrecy where Mafia-type financial operations are concerned. This was disclosed today in a statement on the progress of the discussions between Swiss and American officials about a convention on legal co-operation in penal matters.

It says that the proposed convention will allow "practically no interference" with Swiss legislation but it will enable the fight against organised crime to be more effective.

The discussion — five meetings have been held so far — started 18 months ago, after repeated American allegations that Swiss banking secrecy was providing a cover for tax evasion and criminal offences.

The exchanges have led to a provisional draft of a convention under which American investigators would be able to secure a wider degree of co-operation from the Swiss authorities than hitherto in uncovering major offences.

One difficulty has been to hammer out mutually acceptable conceptions of what constitutes such offences under the two countries' different legal systems. Some procedures that contravene American law are legal in Switzerland and tax evasion is not a criminal offence in Swiss law.

The Swiss side resisted considerable American pressure in the earlier stages of the talks. The Americans gradually came to appreciate that, in return for any concessions, they would have to accept the fact that Swiss law would determine to what extent banks would provide information.

Progress towards an agreement was speeded up when the Swiss Cabinet ruled that "exceptional methods" were called for by the particular circumstances resulting from the operations of international combines using "sophisticated" techniques.

The provisional draft will now be considered by the two Governments. The Swiss banks are likely to press for amendments for the country's reputation as a banking fortress is based on the traditional concept of absolute secrecy.

In fact, the provisions of the banking law are such that, when the authorities have proof of criminal offences,

"the obligation to bear witness generally prevails over the obligation to maintain secrecy".

The same law, however, makes disclosure of confidential information by bank staff a criminal offence, punishable by a fine of up to £2,000 or six months in prison, or both.

This provision was not conceived to attract questionable money. It was introduced in 1934 after the Nazis had introduced severe penalties — any thing up to the death sentence — for anyone concealing the fact that he had funds outside Germany.

It has since helped many people who have genuinely been victimised as a result of political disputes. Undoubtedly, too, the situation has been exploited by many others for dubious reasons.

(Times)

### INITIATIVE AGAINST SONIC BANGS

The signature collection in favour of a national referendum against supersonic overflights was launched last Autumn. The aim of the organising Committee was, in its own words, to give the Federal Council a necessary push into introducing legislation forbidding all commercial supersonic flights over Switzerland. The Federal Council had, indeed, already hinted that it was going to submit restrictive legislation on such flights. The future referendum, which will most certainly gather the support of the majority of Swiss voters, will inscribe this prohibition into the Federal Constitution by an amendment of the third paragraph of the 37th Article, which says that legislation pertaining to civilian aerial navigation is a Federal preserve. The referendum will seek to complete this sentence by the following ruling: "*Supersonic flights in Switzerland's air space will be prohibited*", modified by the provision that "*The Federal Council decides on the cases where exemptions will be granted.*" This latter clause is aimed, naturally, at allowing the Air Force to continue training with its new-fangled supersonic machines. It has, however, caused some complaints by various circles wishing to see a generalised prohibition. The Air Force regularly flies above the speed of sound during its exercises. There were 466 cases of supersonic flights over Switzerland last year—a relatively small figure. Pilots are instructed to fly at supersonic speeds at very high altitude only as this limits the effects on the ground. Most important of all, they have to avoid triggering avalanches. Indeed, avalanches make certain parts of the country exceptionally vulnerable to sonic booms and were a major cause of concern to the drafters of the proposed constitutional clause. The forthcoming decision by the Swiss people will be another obstacle placed on the path of the supersonic airliner.