

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand

Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand

Band: 30 (1967)

Heft: [11]

Artikel: Oskar Reck, newly elected president of the Nouvelle Societe Helvetique speaks out at the assembly of the Swiss abroad

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942344>

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summer and winter camps, and it is felt that the young Swiss have a valuable contribution to make.

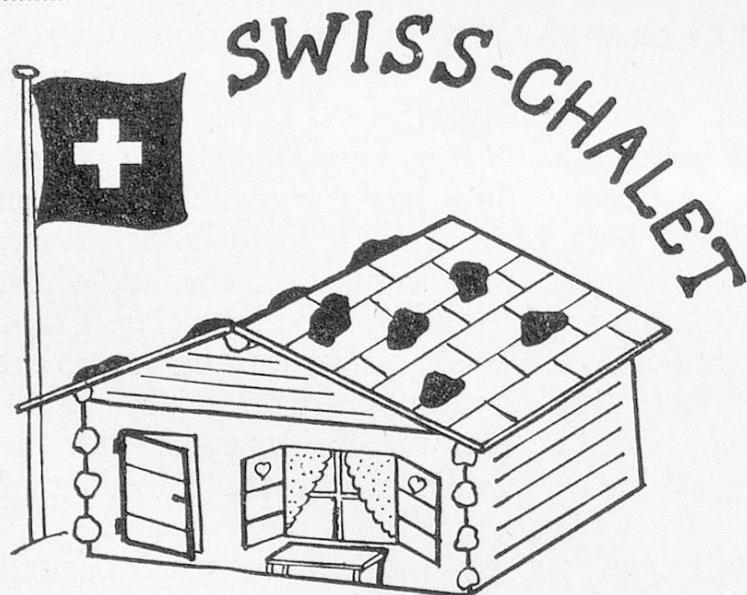
Two pleas voiced at the end of the meeting were for more consideration to be given to the Italian language (by a French-speaking member) and for records of Swiss church bells and of the National Anthem, both to be available for First of August Celebrations.

—The Swiss Observer

—§—

OSKAR RECK, NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE SPEAKS OUT AT THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS ABROAD

The foreign observer of Switzerland who follows her policy and her publicity, cannot help getting ambiguous impressions. Whether, in the end, he forms a pessimistic or confident opinion depends largely on the choice which he makes from amongst a host of contradictory statements. He is mistaken, however, if he thinks that the difficulty of evaluation is only the consequence of distance. The multitude of open criticism is the expression of doubts and spreading uncertainty also inside Switzerland. It is true that we live with an unshakable order of things and on an



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enviable level of civilisation, but the faith that Switzerland has a perpetual subscription to fortune, has begun to totter. Worries of development appear more and more clearly also in our democratic small State and can no longer be waved aside with a deprecatory gesture.

It would be wrong, however, to pretend that present appearances which cast a shadow over the image of Switzerland, are without example in recent Swiss history. The generation is still with us who remembers clearly the social upheavals at the end of the second world war. And the two decades between the world conflicts are still so close that our contemporaries cannot but yet be aware of the violent conflagrations regarding new forms of State and economy. At that time, traditions and principles were in jeopardy, and the fight between views were often more violent than today; but it also created more distinct boundaries, from the question of social structure to defence policy.

The present state of our country is marked by apprehensions of quite a different nature. We realise that democracy with its federative structure and its foreign policy of neutrality is practically as good as unassailed; but at the same time, grave faults are visible in the present order; faults discernable in an ever more rapid process of development. We have had to agree that a federalism which neglects intercantonal co-operation on one side and allows the Cantons through their own fault to deteriorate into administrative provinces of the Confederation on the other, is no longer the best system to progress. Many were the requests, but finally the demand for a governmental policy became inevitable, a policy which clearly states an order of precedence of public needs, so that the limited means at the disposal of a small State should no longer be scattered. The "Mirage" business not only uncovered unstatesmanlike methods and conceit of those responsible, but also revealed the problematic ability of a Militia Parliament to supervise administration. In this picture of Swiss problems of today also falls the spreading tendency to make more and more demands on the State, without being ready at the same time to affirm the well-known and inevitable consequences of such demands.

Even this short and most incomplete description of the present position justifies the critical deliberations in Press, Radio and Television completely. Its lack would be the surest sign of denying democracy. Complaints regarding the rigorous execution of this watchman's task may at times be senseless; but concern with regard to the quality of this supervision is justified. The fact that the Swiss development problems which need looking into, are generally little attractive, but need a great deal of expert knowledge, easily and mistakenly lead the critic to let

loose on less important events and developments. When the will to sensible political proportioning lacks, and when the only question is what may be exploited most effectively, distortions appear at the cost of civic information. What can be bought outweighs the important fundamentals, and criticism which could be a public service, becomes mere business.

In the present state nothing seems more important than the effort to confront the modern social and civilisatory progress of development with the traditional institutions and habits. We need a most extensive inventory, exactly as has been forced in Parliament to prepare a total revision of the Federal Constitution. With this, a task of the magnus proportions of a **Bewahrungsfall**, opens up not only for Press, Radio and TV, but also for Political Parties and civic societies. Only through thorough and uninhibited preoccupation with the fundamental problems of development of our small State, can Swiss political life get new impulses. People with a frightening self-sufficiency alone will deny that such new impulses are a necessity.

—The Swiss Observer

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