

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: - (1953)
Heft: 1207

Artikel: A Diplomatic Position of Switzerland [Fortsetzung folgt]
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691750>

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THE DIPLOMATIC POSITION OF SWITZERLAND.

(Conclusion).

Switzerland And The Reconstruction Of Europe.

A particularly delicate problem for Switzerland was the question of her participation in the Marshall Plan. When she was invited to attend the Conference in Paris in June 1947, she had to make a decision on the issue of her collaboration in the work of European reconstruction, without knowing what definite form such a collaboration would take, nor what extent the American aid to Europe would reach. On accepting this invitation, Switzerland therefore formulated several preliminary reservations, especially concerning the Convention on economic Co-operation.

Nobody demanded that Switzerland should sign this convention, which contains no clause, that could compromise her independence, and which declares in Article 14, that no decision of the organization can be imposed upon her. This collaboration therefore involves no political or military commitment.

In certain circles — in Switzerland — the adhesion of the Confederation to the Marshall Plan was criticized as being an exclusively political act. Yet neither the American government, nor that of any European country has attempted to divert the plan from its original purpose, nor to transform the Organization for economic co-operation in Europe into a form of alliance, to which Switzerland could not have subscribed.

On the other hand, the Confederation is herself interested in seeing her neighbours — all of whom participate in the Marshall Plan — regain as soon as possible a prosperity, which is a condition of peace on this Continent. As a member of the European community, she owes it to herself to participate in the effort made to this end. In so doing she has not felt that she compromised her neutrality, since her adhesion to the Organization of Paris does not prevent her from maintaining and developing her relations with the States, which are not members of it.

However, the position of Switzerland has, from the beginning, been somewhat exceptional, as her economic and financial situation is sound and because she does not ask to be aided by the United States. This is, moreover, the best guaranty of her economic independence.

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Switzerland and the International Technical Organizations.

Acting in the same spirit, Switzerland has joined a certain number of these specialized organizations, which depend on the United Nations, and whose work is without doubt the most positive element of international co-operation begun since the war.

Since 1874 the Confederation has been a member of the Universal Postal Union, and since 1865 of the "Union Internationale des Communications," both of which are today connected with the UNO. Since 1920 she has participated in the work of the International Labour Organization, which has been depending on the UNO since 1945. In 1947 the Swiss Parliament ratified the entry into the International Organization for Civil Aviation, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization. In 1948 it ratified the admission to the International Court of Justice and, soon after, her adhesion to the UNESCO.

Thus the Confederation follows a wide-spread tendency of the Swiss in showing an obvious preference for international institutions of a technical character. The Swiss are not theorists by nature. The conditions of their existence, the fight which they have to keep up constantly against an almost unproductive soil, make them prefer concrete action, the result of which can be expressed in facts and figures, or goods. All co-operation of the Confederation in great international organizations is characterized by this feature, and it is therefore not surprising, that this country occasionally shows some reticence regarding the more political organizations.

Moreover, the division of different services of the UNO between Lake Success and Geneva looks like a tacit confirmation of this tendency, since the European Center of the UNO groups important, but very specialized and very technical services.

Parallel to the official organizations, a large number of semi-official, private international organizations also have their seat in Switzerland, which go to make this country an important international center of administration. This offers Switzerland another way of participating in the international activities of the nations, and of opening her gates widely to the world.

Switzerland and the Idea of a European Federation.

Is it not surprising that, with such a marked tendency towards international co-operation and a federal tradition of several centuries, Switzerland does not participate with more enthusiasm in the various

movements, whose common aim is the creation of a European Federation? Once more, she is torn between her desire to collaborate and a certain reserve. Yet most of the Swiss have a decided sympathy for the idea of a European Federation, but a sympathy that is tempered with a drop of scepticism in a people, which has during six centuries experienced the difficulties, that have to be overcome in order to realize this type of union.

As far as official Switzerland is concerned, she is watching the development of the question. The idea of a European federalism conforms too much to the Swiss mentality, for her to consider it with indifference. But she does not want to commit herself in this direction, as long as she has no certainty, that there is no question of an alliance, the aims of which would be incompatible with her neutrality. Does that which is proposed to the Confederation today, under the name of European Federation, not look somewhat like a regroupment of forces in view of a possible conflict? The very fact, that one can ask this question, shows how prudent Switzerland must be in respect of a continental system, that is still embryonic, and concerning whose aims she does not yet know, if they will conform to her own policy. Switzerland is too European not to desire the realization of a form of continental union, based on federalism. The present degree of realizations, important as they may be do not, however, enable her to adopt a definite attitude for the moment. Hence this reticence, which at the first glance seems to be in contradiction with the federal spirit of this country.



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