

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: 1197

Artikel: Switzerland is tracking Shock Troops

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686838>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 17.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

SWITZERLAND IS TRAINING SHOCK TROOPS.

The following article under the above heading has appeared in the issue of December 20th, 1952, of the "EASTERN EVENING NEWS" Norwich.

Switzerland, resolutely opposed to war, and unscathed through two world conflicts, is nevertheless busy tightening her defences in case of future invasion, Reuter's correspondent in Locarno reports.

Soldiers are encountered in many parts of the country, and there are frequent signs of the preparations going on beneath the surface in case this tourists' paradise one day becomes a battlefield.

The Swiss do not expect to be so lucky again if there was another world war. They expect, in fact, to be invaded — an indirect attack aimed at others, coming in possibly the second phase of the war, in a sudden movement to outflank the Rhine defences.

The small Swiss Army — only 500,000 combatants, plus 300,000 auxiliaries and Home Guards — would then play the role for which it is now being reorganised.

Coming from the north, the invaders could pour into Switzerland at many points between Lake Constance and the Basle bridges which lead from France and Germany.

They might then pass along the Aar Valley to Lake Neuchâtel and Lake Geneva, occupying the Berne-Lausanne plateau. But they would have to fight every foot of the way. The strategy held in reserve in the last war — to fight the main battle from the elaborate

fortifications in the Alps — has been considerably improved to-day.

Shocks for the invaders would begin at the frontier and continue all along the line. As they fell back across well-planned defences in depth, the Swiss Army could inflict great damage.

The narrowness of the midlands would favour the defence, making it difficult for an invader to use his full strength, especially tanks, in the fluid wide-ranging manner of modern war. The defence could be stubborn, with shock troops fiercely fighting on their own soil, though they might still be without the 550 tanks they want from abroad.

It would, however, be difficult for the enemy to get out of Switzerland. The Western nations against whom the attack might really be directed would man the mountains of the Jura and all the hills and ridges to the west of Lake Geneva. Whatever happened, the progress of the invading army would be slowed down.

"This is the main reason," a staff officer said, "why we are trying to show how strong we are. Our attitude towards a potential enemy is: 'Invading would cost you so much in men and materials — and above all, in time — that it would just not be worth your while.' "

The two great dangers to the Swiss in the event of an invasion would be tanks and paratroops. That is why the Swiss Army is now specialising in commandos with a tank-destroying and liquidating mission. The cream of the country's youth are being turned into shock-troops at the school for grenadiers.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION

(A Company limited by Shares, incorporated in Switzerland).

99, GRESHAM STREET, E.C.2
and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W.1.



Capital and Reserves s.f. 214,000,000



NEW YORK AGENCY
15 NASSAU STREET.

Branch Office: 49th STREET OFFICE
10, WEST 49th STREET, NEW YORK 20, N.Y.

Affiliated Company in Canada :
SWISS CORPORATION FOR CANADIAN INVESTMENTS LTD., MONTREAL.

BASLE · ZURICH · ST. GALL · GENEVA · LAUSANNE
LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS · NEUCHATEL · SCHAFFHOUSE · BIENNE