

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: - (1966)
Heft: 1503

Artikel: Switzerland and the war of Vietnam
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695048>

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: 18.09.2025

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

and technical men regarding the future. The fear is mounting that in many vital new branches of industrial production — nuclear and space engineering, transistors and possibly biochemical production as well — the Swiss are no longer able to cope with the massive competition from foreign large-scale concerns, in either the capital or the labour sector. It is also feared that a negative influence will be exerted by the outward migration of qualified Swiss personnel. For this reason, an appeal is being made for government aid, which has hitherto been lacking, and for intensified collaboration within industry. The latter has been greatly promoted spontaneously by national or international co-operation among research and development bodies attached to private firms in similar lines of industry, management being kept strictly separated. Also, the sale of licences, etc., was greatly stepped up, in some cases through the agency of licence-and-patent-exploitation companies. Also, within the strictly private sector, there has been some development of commission research and a promotion of joint laboratories, e.g., in the watch industry. Mention should also be made of government and private testing of materials. Finally, the greatest attention has recently been devoted by Swiss industry to automation and rationalisation. It should be borne in mind that 30–38% of industrial workers and office employees, engineers and technicians come from abroad. Internal rationalisation within firms has scored notable successes even in small-scale enterprises. The employment of computers and other control systems has been so much increased that an international study has shown that Switzerland has now moved into second place, i.e., it is outranked only by the U.S.A. Nevertheless, all are agreed that priority in the competitive struggle continues to be a challenge to enterprise and engineers, implemented by concerted research, development and construction projects.

Along with increased efforts for “Research and Development”, the Swiss Federal Council beginning of 1965 decided to institute a scientific council of thirteen men, representatives of universities, industry and Government, Cantons respectively. One of the main tasks of this new body consists in working out an overall survey — in so far as it does not yet exist — covering the work done by academic, industrial and governmental research laboratories and by the international joint research centres. This body intends to submit proposals for further development and possible intensified co-ordination to the top authorities of the country. As consulting body to the Federal Council the scientific council in its proposals should consider all aspects of a scientific, economic, financial and political nature. It is also entitled to consult experts on the matter.

These summary remarks are far from exhausting the subject. We ought as well to enlarge on the importance of good management and personal leadership. We could also go into the questions of general commercial policy, sound government, and social harmony. Industrial research must not be developed for narrow-minded or selfish interests. It must keep in close touch with basic science. The study of the foundations of science as well as scientific research must be able to rely on the assistance of flourishing universities, a uniformly high level of civilisation, all-round prosperity, and on a sufficient amount of wealth to make possible investments for research in all directions.

(“Pro Helvetia” Foundation.)

SWITZERLAND AND THE WAR IN VIETNAM

In answer to a question in Parliament, the Federal Council stated that there was no question of appointing a Swiss Ambassador in Saigon or to take up diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In 1926, the Federal Council opened a Consulate in Saigon in, at that time French Indo-China, for the protection of the Swiss resident there. In 1958, due to the resignation of the Consul, the Federal Council had to ask for an exequatur for a professional Consul-General. Vietnam considered this as recognition, and Switzerland's position has not been altered since.

At a meeting on 4th June of the Swiss Council for Peace, Minister Thalmann, Chief of the Section for International Organisations in the Federal Political Department, declared that Switzerland had already made several efforts to mediate in the Vietnam Conflict, efforts which were not known to the public. One of the main reasons why no mediation seemed to be possible at the moment, was that neither Red China nor the Vietcongs were members of UNO. The Federal Council would use every chance to mediate.

There have been various actions of protest against the war in Vietnam. Early in the year, a group of 140 teachers from Neuchâtel and nearly 400 from the whole of Switzerland published resolutions to which teachers in Basle replied with a statement that Spitteler's famous speech in the New Helvetic Society in 1914, in which he defined the “Swiss Point of View”, should be remembered today. They appealed to the teachers to prove their adherence to Spitteler's “Schweizer Standpunkt” by taking a Red Cross *Patenschaft*.

In April, a group of 92 politicians, university professors, Army officers and other personalities mainly from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, deplored in a statement to the Swiss people that events in Vietnam were used as propaganda. This had been done in particular by a recently formed “Committee for Information on the Vietnam War”; its supporters were to a large degree committed to Communist ideologies. The statement defended the Swiss Press and Radio which had at all times tried to be fair and conscientious.

The above-mentioned committee in Zurich did not receive permission by the Municipal Council to hold exhibitions on the war on Zurich public ground. The Committee considers this as a one-sided political decision. In the Commune Council, a proposal has been made by a member that some ground should be permanently put at the disposal of political information shows, and that a “Speakers' Corner” like in London might be considered.

Early in May, a number of university professors, teachers and writers in Geneva protested strongly against the American war in Vietnam. Mr. H. J. Kellermann, American *Chargé d'Affaires ad interim* replied as the representative of the American Government. He doubted that the Geneva protest was a true mirror of what the Swiss people and members of the Swiss universities really felt. He thought it sad that the true aim of the American stand in Vietnam and the tremendous sacrifices were not even understood by a people whose freedom and safety was being defended by the U.S.A. and her Allies. Mr. Kellermann also gave an address in Berne on 24th May (Swiss-American Society), in which he described the complicated historical background of the war.

A Swiss Red Cross team of eleven left for South Vietnam in April, and the Federal Council has taken over a large part of the cost. The leader is Dr. P. Stueckel-

berger from Wallisellen. The team will work in close co-operation with the International Red Cross. One of the difficulties is that the Geneva Convention is not accepted by the North Vietnamese, and they consider American prisoners as criminals.

The "Centrale Sanitaire Suisse" organised a campaign in Switzerland to pay for medicaments and surgical equipment. The International Red Cross Committee is doubling all the antibiotics paid for by the "Centrale", and large amounts have been flown to Hanoi.

A further Swiss organisation "Terre des Hommes" have also given help. Doctors have been sent to Vietnam and other helpers, and the Federal Council has decided to send them further help. This organisation was also responsible for flying injured Vietnamese children to Switzerland. Due to misunderstandings and the fact that an agreement made with the Swiss Aliens Police was not kept rigorously, some of the children were said to be refused admission into Switzerland. This matter has now been clarified, and the sick children will remain in the country. Further transports are being organised.

(Based on news and reports received by A.T.S.)

RECENT DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Robert Grueninger (84), Basle, well-known architect and active in the *Heimatschutz*.

Hans Stamm (80), Basle and Washington, prominent "Auslandbasler" architect in U.S.A.

Ernst Tobler (77), Berne, citizen of Heiden (Appenzell), well-known agronomist and dairy expert; one-time Assistant Secretary of the "Bauernsekretariat" at Brugg; Secretary of the "Verband N.O. Schweizerischer Kaeserei- und Milchgenossenschaften" in Winterthur; from 1919 *Regierungsrat* and National Councillor for Zurich; from 1926 in charge of the Emmental A.G., Zollikofen, export firm for Swiss cheese; from 1939 to 1948 Deputy Chief of the Federal Office for Wartime Nutrition; Colonel of Artillery.

Karl Treiber (55), Zurich, for twelve years Secretary of the "Schweizerische Winterhilfe; from 1955 Central Secretary of the "Schweizerische Bundesfeierspende".

Walter Sprenger (59), Basle, Deputy Manager Swiss Bank Corporation.

Yves Maître (48), Geneva, lawyer; member of the Geneva Grand Council since 1951; National Councillor since 1963; interested in aviation and Major in Swiss Air Force.

Prof. Johann Ulrich Hubschmied (85), Kuesnacht, well-known for his research regarding the old Swiss place names.

Oskar Hager (60), Berne, Chief of the BLS navigation service of the Lakes of Thun and Brienz; expert on tourism in the Bernese Oberland.

Miss Ida Theurillat (92), Epauvillers/Sainelégier, the oldest inhabitant of the Clos-du-Doubs; for over 60 years in the PTT administration.

Karl Schmid (75), Teufen, originally machinery technician; since 1921 in the Army Instruction Service; in 1951 Commandant of the Sargans Fortress; Divisional Commander from 1954 to his retirement in 1956 (Chief of Army personnel); Justice of the Peace at Teufen.

Dr. Heinrich Irmiger (75), Wohlen, from 1931 to 1949 member of the Commune Council and *Gemeindeamman*.

Dr. phil. Hans Ehinger (63), Basle, *Feuilletonredaktor* of the "Basler Nachrichten"; musician, music critic and author.

Dr. h.c. David Beck (73), Chur, *Fuerstlicher Studienrat* from Liechtenstein; prominent historian; honorary doctorate of the University of Basle.

Gottlieb Blattner (79), Geneva, for 22 years President and later Honorary President of the Geneva "Wirtverein"; since 1936 member of the Executive Council of the same organisation on national level.

Otto Hugentobler (74), Jegenstorf, Manager of the Eelektra Fraubrunnen" for nearly 40 years; board member of several electricity works; member of the Foundation Council of Jegenstorf Castle.

Oscar Doswald (79), Lucerne, painter and graphic artist; for 20 years in U.S.A.: returned to Lucerne in 1935.

Gustav Eisenmann (78), Lohn (Solothurn), for many years Manager of the paper factory Biberist; well-known in the Swiss paper industry.

Miss Constance Mojonnet (100), Montricher (Vaud), for 50 years Sunday school teacher.

Jean-Joseph Furrer (95), Berne, former Consul in Besançon.

Dr. Hans Dietiker (45), Muttentz, Principal of the "Genossenschaftliches Seminar des Bildungszentrums des VSK"; member of the "Pro Helvetia" and Swiss delegate on the Commission for Adult Education of the Council of Europe.

Henry Favre (64), Zurich, ETH Professor (in French) for technical mechanics.

Miss Eugénie Desboeufs (98), Courgenay, the oldest *Jurassienne*.

Fritz Bracher (60), Rohrbach/Huttwil (Berne), *Drogist*, member of the Bernese Cantonal Parliament and Commune President.

Dr. med. Henry Schwabacher (71), Ascona, children's specialist in Zurich from 1933 to 1963; from 1939 to 1961 President of the Jewish National Fund in Switzerland; under his guidance, the Swiss *Jerusalemwald* and the Henri Dunant Park in Israel were created.

Prof. Dr. Marcel Dubois (73), Berne, well-known surgeon and Chief of the University Clinic Insel for many years; President of the Bernese "Aerztegesellschaft."

Albert Feller (78), Laupen (Berne), industrialist; his life's work is the "Polygraphische Gesellschaft" at Laupen; for 12 years President of the "Verein Schweizerischer Lithographiebesitzer".

Mrs. Cécile Bieler-Butticaz, Geneva, the first woman engineer, graduating at the "Ecole Polytechnique" of Lausanne University in 1907; doctor of physics (Geneva University); teacher; founder of the Lausanne Group of Soroptimists; member of the "Schweiz. Ingenieur- und Architekten-Vereins"; member of the Geneva and Vaud "Akademikerinnen-Vereinigung"; founder of the Protestant School at Brigue; member of the Geneva Committee for Protestant Diaspora Parishes.

Barthelémy Brouty (75), Berne, former Librarian and Deputy Director of the Swiss National Library; active in the Vaudois and Romand R.C. Communities in Berne.

Mrs. Célestine L'Orsa-Zschokke, Kilchberg (Zurich), creator of the "Celestina" Foundation in 1964 under the Council of Europe; she left her estate near Carona (Ticino) to the Foundation, and according to her wish, an academic centre is to be started there as a meeting and study place for professors and students from all countries in Europe.

[A.T.S.]