

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: - (1970)

Heft: 1591

Artikel: Further aspects of the Swiss press

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687611>

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: 15.01.2026

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

peutic action in diseases of the circulation. Forty prototypes are at present in operation, in Switzerland and several neighbouring countries; all the reports of specialists emphasise the effectiveness of treatment with this new machine. The action of the Vascularator is a result of the subtle combination of modifications in the pressure of the air, regular oscillations given to the whole body, heating at a distance, ultra-violet rays and the use of carbon dioxide and ozone. The combination of these different effects produces a reaction in the cardio-vascular system and the lymphatic system. The Vascularator acts therefore locally on the circulation in the lower or upper limbs by alternating positive and negative pressure. It is to a certain extent the optimum extension and perfection of the principal of the old cupping-glass. Various diseases have been treated with some success, among them arteriosclerosis, the after-effects of thrombosis and peripheral embolism, varicose veins, and oedemas. But the most spectacular results are undoubtedly the healing of varicose ulcers or ulcers of diabetic patients and the avoidance of amputation in case of gangrene. The apparatus is commanded and its functions synchronised electronically by a fixed sequence programmer. After more than five years of thorough experimentation, the Vascularator is now mass-produced by a Swiss firm.

(OSEC)

Fire-fighting: a revolutionary smoke suction apparatus

In fires, heat and smoke always cause considerable damage and hinder the work of extinction, especially in cellars. The work of a Swiss inventor will make it possible to reduce damage of this kind considerably. It is a smoke suction apparatus with a capacity of 9,000 cu.m. per hour. Several systems of aspirators already exist, but the originality of this new Swiss device lies in its power—an 8 h.p. engine—and in the use of fire-proof curtains. The suction orifice, in fact, is surrounded by an asbestos and metal panel. The panel can be applied either to a door, which it seals completely, or to a small window. It is very quickly put in place. The suction creates a flow of air in the opposite direction to that by which the firemen enter. In this way, they are able to work in a current of fresh air and under better conditions of visibility. The apparatus can stand temperatures of up to 240 degrees and can be used without it being necessary to go inside the premises on fire. Its comparatively low price is negligible in comparison with the damage it can avoid.

(OSEC)

FURTHER ASPECTS OF THE SWISS PRESS

While I was still correcting the proofs of the article on the Swiss Press which I wrote for the last issue, I phoned the Embassy to check some of my facts. As usual, the Embassy was ready with the required answers. More than that, I was given a recent book on the Swiss Press, "Das Bild der Schweizer Presse", written by Mr. Josef Jäger, Editor of the "Schweizerischen Politischen Korrespondenz" and founder of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Lokal- und Regionalpresse".

As this book has a number of facts and ideas overlooked in my article of the last issue, I have thought it worth while to give an outline of its main contents.

The geopolitical structure of the Swiss Press

Mr. Jäger is well aware that the smallness of Swiss newspapers, in a world where economic viability calls for concentrated units, is a paradox. This paradox is however well explainable in historical and geographical terms. The immense majority of Swiss newspapers are designed to serve a market which ends with a valley, so that a typical local newspaper (which also has international news as well) will not be read by citizens living fifteen miles further afield, because they will be subscribing to another paper. Cantons limited to a valley, such as Zug and Glarus, have more than one paper but each of them represent another political tendency. Very few papers cross the boundaries of the cantons in which they are printed. The two most important Swiss papers, the popular "Blick" and the politically-neutral "Tages Anzeiger" are the most prominent cases. "La Suisse" also sells extensively outside the Canton of Geneva and the "Neue Zurcher Zeitung" sells in the cantons bordering Zurich. A surprising 19 per cent of its circulation goes abroad. The multiplicity of Swiss papers then reflects the multiplicity of individual regions and the profusion of political parties.

No question of a National Press

Due to the fact that the Press is a most vital tool in direct democracy, it must necessarily be attuned to it. Switzerland's democracy is "direct" in that her citizens do not only delegate power in Berne, but actually take political decisions themselves. Many of these decisions have only a local bearing and the way the population of one canton feels on a particular problem will not, in most cases, affect the lives of citizens elsewhere in the country. The only means to keep such a democracy going is to keep citizens informed on the events which concern them, and to voice the will of the various sections of

the population as represented by the parties. This is why a national press on the British model would not only fail to work but be positively harmful to Switzerland. Two or three mammoth papers would indeed have to ignore the claims of minorities and could not concern themselves with local problems. The Swiss State can only continue to live peacefully on the federal system and it is important that this system, which has proved so successful in the past should be supported by the country's press.

How to keep small papers alive

Having established that small papers (with circulations falling as low as a thousand) are there to stay, it becomes important to find the way in which they can achieve this economically.

Some small papers manage to have correspondents in foreign capitals. On the technical side, many of them manage equally impressive feats. The author mentions the case of a publication circulating at just over a thousand which has four teletypewriter receivers and wants to acquire a fifth. Another similar publication has its own rotary press. Owing to present labour costs, newspapers must be equipped with modern time-saving equipment. Because this kind of equipment is so expensive (a rotary press for a daily with a 10,000-circulation and 16 pages costs about two million francs) it is necessary for small papers to share this equipment. They should not only share equipment, but also their editorial staff. The basic problem which must be solved is to preserve the individual character of small papers in spite of a mandatory co-operation between them. This has been made possible thanks to recent advances in printing technology.

How to modernise the manufacture of a paper

The most important piece of equipment in a newspaper composing room is the linotype, a machine with a complicated keyboard which produces lines of type in lead. These types are put together in the "make-up galley" and become the mould of the newspaper page. The correctness of the page can be checked by "pulling a proof of the galley", an operation consisting of placing a sheet of paper onto the galley and passing an inked roller across it. If the newspaper only possesses a flat press, then the corrected type will go directly onto the machine, which automatically picks up the ready-cut sheets of the newspaper and compresses them against the type (which is inked between each movement). Such machines work slowly and are wholly inadequate for large circulations. The rotary press is then

necessary, but the lead type must be used to cast a cardboard "flong" which is in turn used to cast the curved plates which will be fitted on the rollers of the rotary press. This requires supplementary equipment, such as a moulding press to make the flongs and a casting machine to produce the curved plates, but will lead to a far speedier production of newspapers. New inventions, such as the automatic linotype and the offset process will change this traditional pattern and allow the manufacture of newspapers with limited staff.

The automatic linotype

The operator of the traditional linotype, the typesetter, is a highly specialised worker and must therefore be well paid. He can now be replaced by a mundane ordinary typist working on an ordinary keyboard. The text that she writes is recorded on a paper tape by means of punched holes. This punched tape is fed into the automatic linotype, which reproduces the text. With this system, the typist has to indicate to the linotype when it has to change lines. Sophisticated apparatus already takes on this job. The primary tape goes to a computer which decides when lines have to be changed (it can also undertake corrections) and gives the correct information to the machine. Automatic linotypes not only have the advantage of requiring lesser qualified staff, they have the advantage of speed. A good typesetter can a best write down 8,000 signs an hour, a typist 11,000 signs an hour. Furthermore, the oncoming message can come at any speed (magnetic tapes achieve the output of one million signs an hour) and be recorded, changed into punched tape and subsequently fed into one or more automatic linotypes.

Doing away with the teleprinter

The teleprinter, or telex, is a "telephone for writing". Newspapers make great use of this means of communication because they rely on news agencies for their information. This is especially true of Swiss newspapers, which can only afford a small number of correspondents across the world. The result is that dozens of small newspapers will be repeating exactly the same news coming from a common source. The paper subscribes to a news agency (examples of which are Reuter and Associated Press) and is branched on it through the telex network. The telewriters-receivers of a newspaper churn out their reams of news and it is for the editor to pick out the material he wants to use for his next edition. The telewritten text does not distinguish capital from small letters, a fact which is liable to lead to more typesetting errors when the typesetter is not in full control of the language in which his text is written. This text must therefore be recopied by the typesetter, corrected, adjusted in a galley and framed as a mould for a whole newspaper page.

This system is still universally used but Mr. Jäger considers it to be obsolete, especially so for the small

paper. Telewriters will be replaced by "teletypesetters". Such machines, which have the ability to typeset at distance are already used by the large papers with two or more printing presses. A British national paper with production facilities in London and in the Midlands need not duplicate the job of typesetting and composing pages which are to appear the same in the two areas. This work can be done at one end and reproduced automatically at the other. This arrangement means however that a typesetter will lose his job and the printing unions do not allow (in some cases at least) the use of the teletypesetter. As an example, the "Daily Telegraph" employs teletypists to send the contents of its future editions to the other production and distribution centres in the north, where they are re-set.

The small Swiss newspaper can by no means afford such a costly duplication of work and should use, according to Mr. Jäger, a teletypesetting system instead of the current telewriting (or telex) system in its communication with the news agencies. There is a technical snag however, and it is that every paper should have the identical column width and the same type. By teletypesetting its information, the news agency actually makes up the paper's column. Since it sends out the same instruction to every subscribing paper and tells each one of them to pass to a new line at the same time, they must presumably have an identical make-up. Although electronic adapters and computers at the receiving end could eventually find a way out, the fact remains that full use of teletypesetting involves a certain uniformity in column width and type. Although "Times" and "Excelsior" types are predominantly used in Swiss papers, there are over thirty other types still in use, a fact considered as ill-placed individualism by the author. He believes that the normal reader is inattentive to the type used by a paper and that papers would lose none of their "per-

sonality" if they shared a common type. Apart from some technical polishing-up, the use of teletypesetting by news agencies would mean that the text that they send should be written in good language and corrected, so that it can appear without retouching in the pages of a paper.

Modernising and sharing printing machinery

The majority of Swiss papers still make use of flat presses for which the virgin sheets have to be cut and folded separately. As we have seen, the principle of their operation is to convey and press the sheets of paper on the type either by means of an oscillating platen or a moving roller. This can take many hours and once the paper is printed it must be left to dry for a day. Rotary presses not only work infinitely faster, but cut and fold the raw paper with which they are fed, transforming newsprint into ready-to-sell newspapers. However, with their ancillary equipment, they are very costly machinery, and, considering that they serve only an hour a day, are the most wasteful investments in the manufacturing industry. The only way to avoid this considerable loss is to make greater use of the machines, and this is only possible if newspapers are ready to share them. The author shows how two typical provincial papers could easily share a same rotary press. If one of them had a circulation of 5,000, it could be produced in a quarter of an hour. Even if it were to be distributed fifty kilometres away, this would involve no more than a forty-minute van ride.

The author considers the advantages and disadvantages of offset printing at length. This relatively recent procedure can do away with a linotype. A typewriter with newspaper-letters can be used to type the page of the paper as it will be published, this page is photographically reproduced on a sheet of tin or aluminium which can easily be folded on the rollers of a rotary press. The

THE ZURICH GROUP

ZURICH INSURANCE COMPANY
(a limited Company incorporated in Switzerland in 1872)

THE BEDFORD LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY LTD.
(an associate member of the Life Offices Association)

THE BEDFORD GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.
(a member of the British Insurance Association)

**UNDERTAKE ALL
CLASSES OF INSURANCE
BRANCHES THROUGHOUT THE U.K.**

HEAD OFFICE:
FAIRFAX HOUSE, FULWOOD PLACE
HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.1

Telephone 01-242 8833

GROUP RESOURCES EXCEED £500,000,000

picture of the original page is not reproduced on the tin plate as a relief but as zones which, when the whole plate is moistened, will accept ink, contrasting with the other parts, which will not. The rolled tin plate impresses its image onto a rubber roller which, in its turn, prints the wanted picture (which is often the picture of written text) onto the paper. This system is particularly convenient for photographs and drawings since it does not require the preliminary preparation of picture blocks in a special workshop. Photographs and drawings are treated as ordinary text. Offset is also suitable for colour reproduction, a factor which is important in an age when newspapers rely so badly on publicity. Offset equipment is still more expensive than the traditional machinery, but has the great advantage of not requiring typesetters and makes composing much easier. It is presently used by most colour magazines, it will soon be interesting to the small paper.

Communications simplify the editorial aspect of a paper

Traditionally, the editorial and printing staff of a newspaper were housed in the same building. This is no longer necessary with the advent of teletypesetting and other means of communication. As a consequence, it is possible for a number of small newspapers to pool their editorial resources, as well as their production facilities, while at the same time maintaining their individuality. One way in which two or three papers of common political outlook could co-operate would be to have a central editing office which would send political, sports and other universal material to each of the papers concerned, which would be solely responsible for adding local news and localised advertisements. The inverse solution would involve two or three local editing teams sending their local material to the central office, which would not only be concerned with publishing material of common interest, but which would actually print the respective papers. The slightly increased cost of distribution which a common printing press for two or three individual papers would imply would easily be offset by savings on the production side. The cost of typesetting and page-composing can nowadays reach 50 per cent of the cost of an issue.

Similar arrangements have already been passed between small Swiss newspapers. For example, the "Neue Zürcher Nachrichten" has partners in Glarus, Olten, Basle, Argau, Solothurn and Lucern. It is responsible for the backbone of the paper and sends out all the foreign and federal news, cultural features, sports and general advertisements in the form of flongs sent by express post to its partners during the night. They are free to do what they choose with this "backbone" and add their own stories and local news. The "Rheintaler" at Heerbrugg and the "Ostschweizer Tagblatt" at Rorschach

are edited in common at Heerbrugg, although the "Ostschweizer Tagblatt" keeps a small staff for local news at Rorschach. The Rorschach printing works are linked by teletypesetter to Heerbrugg. A similar arrangement spares staff in the dailies of Gridelwald and Meiringen, which are linked by an improved telewriting system.

Co-operative editing

A daily with a circulation of 10,000 might have four full-time editors. One would be specialised in foreign affairs, another in cultural, economic and home affairs, a third in cantonal affairs and a fourth in sports. If four dailies of common political orientation, each with a staff of four, agreed to have common reporters on foreign affairs, federal affairs, business and sports, they would in fact enjoy a staff of seven, and not four. Moreover, the man writing on national and international politics could be stationed in Berne, where the relevant news is more readily at hand, the business writer could be stationed in Zurich, and the sports editor could be sent to witness various events. This necessary specialisation will increase the quality while not diminishing the individualism of the papers who co-operate editorially. Small papers sometimes have only one or two editors who have to resolve administrative chores on top of their editorial work. They

have moreover to be in touch with all the news and spend more time in sorting out what they are going to publish. Their work will only be made rational by a co-operation with other papers.

Conclusions

The fragmentary structure of the Swiss Press may not be altered, for the sake of Swiss federalism. The only way to adapt this political option to an economic reality calling for a concentrated press is for small papers to invest wisely in modern labour-saving machines, to pool their resources into purchasing and maintaining this equipment, to rationalise and standardise the various aspects of printing, to share their specialised correspondents and achieve a more efficient separation of labour. This must, and can be achieved without the loss of the individuality of these respective papers. Whether a number of small papers appear individually in one common press, or whether they are produced distinctly but edited centrally, or whatever other working solution is adopted, they will continue to appear under their traditional titles and cater for their traditional markets. The use of teletypesetting and computers is not beyond the reach of small papers, provided they accept to abandon what in many cases is only an appearance of economic individualism.

(PMB)

SWITZERLAND CALLING

The European and Overseas Service of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, in carrying out its double mission to strengthen ties with the Swiss Abroad, and present Switzerland to foreign listeners, has decided to revise its short-wave programming policy on the basis of a thorough examination of the requirements of international broadcasting. Despite the political, demographic and, above all, technological evolution characteristic of our time, SBC's European and Overseas Service continues to play an extremely useful role in projecting the "Swiss presence in the world". Short-wave radio's potential for long distance transmissions, when fully utilised, becomes *the only way to reach distant listeners directly and immediately, no matter where they may be.*

Immediate information is, therefore, the cornerstone of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's short-wave programming policy: our transmissions are an extension of the domestic broadcasting services to Switzerland and its neighbouring countries; they supplement the press, radio and television in the regions of the world where our listeners live; they provide a preview of Swiss newspapers, respected abroad but dependent on the relative slowness of air transportation to get them to for-

ign readers. In short, SBC's European and Overseas Service plays an important role as a neutral source of quick and reliable information, reflecting both daily life in Switzerland and world events as seen through Swiss eyes.

In studying our new programming concept based on the need for information and our ability to provide it, we have formulated various standards which will be applied to SBC's short-wave programmes, as of May 3rd, 1970: the number, length and times of our directional transmissions will be affected, as well as their form and content.

Our six-month programme schedule will appear, in future, in *regional* editions instead of language editions (with the exception of the Arabic version). The first issue for 1970 will be published soon, and free copies will be available on request.

Although we cannot go into detail here about the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's new programmes on short-wave, we felt it would be useful to outline the basic concept of our new broadcasts. We appreciate the interest you have shown in our programmes, whether by listening personally to our daily transmissions or by making them better known to interested persons and groups.

(Swiss Short Wave Service)