

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: - (1971)

Heft: 1621

Rubrik: Swiss news

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>

the way they were chosen. Finally, in Lausanne, an enquiry was opened on four professors who had added their signatures to a petition signed by 450 students demanding the introduction of a course on Marxist economy in the curriculum.

The Swiss Union of Students reacted to the events in Zurich by publishing a high-handed statement that the right of expression was a "complete illusion" in Swiss higher educational establishments and that their rectorates were doing everything, by sacking lecturers, closing premises, refusing student confrontation, not renewing teaching contracts, to prevent a fresh wind from entering in the university and preparing students for the conditions of the modern world. Professor Hauri reacted by saying that the Institute of Technology was "not a political establishment".

This expressed the crux of the matter. Traditionally, the "Poly" was there to teach students in architecture how to build a house that would hold together and how to plan a town which would be habitable from an operational point of view. Likewise, an economics lecturer was expected to introduce the complex mechanisms of human exchanges to his class, including both Marxism and capitalism for an objective presentation. The statutes of Lausanne University prohibited the existence of a special course on Marxist Economy, and this regulation seems rather anachronistic.

But the rift in thinking between the majority of professors and students remains complete: The former just want to impart a *technical knowledge* (which will help to build houses, manage a business or cure a neurotic person, as in the case of psychiatry) their audience remaining free to apply their personal philosophy in their jobs once they have passed their exams; the latter insist that the teaching they get should be geared to their conceptions of a just society. Architecture, economics and psychiatry have their full meaning only when the present realities of their fields of application are taken into account.

The shape of a house will depend on an understanding of man and society, and it is just this understanding which the dissenting students of today are demanding from their teachers. In other words, the renovation of society should begin in the universities. The professors counter by saying that this notion conflicts with academic objectivity—and the students taunt their objectivity as an expression of slavery to the established order.

Should a lecturer be allowed to profess his own ideas or should he be coldly objective? Should students be taught what they *want* to hear? Is the University really slanting in one, traditional direction and preventing students being told the other aspects of truth? If so, is it wrong? Should professors and students form an intellectual com-

munity standing on equal footing? These are the questions and divergences feeding university unrest. It is clear that many old regulations have to be changed and it is indeed possible that the teaching corps are hardening in their traditional outlook in plain reaction to students demands.

(PMB)

SWISS NEWS

HOW DO SWISS FIRMS VIEW ENTRY IN THE COMMON MARKET?

The *Vorort* of the Union of Swiss Trade and Industry has published a 260-page document presenting the results of an extensive enquiry into the opinion of Swiss business towards a possible entry or association of Switzerland with the Common Market.

Its general conclusions are that the Swiss economy wants a free market for industrial goods in Western Europe as well as for certain services, such as patents and insurance. But a great price remains attached to the safeguard of Switzerland's monetary, financial and economic independence. Swiss business is for the maintenance of neutrality and the traditional political structure, such as direct democracy and federalism.

A certain degree of Swiss participation unpledged by institutional ties is however considered as desirable. An agreement with the European Community should be put into effect following a short transition period, to be expanded in the course of time. Switzerland should never cease during these negotiations to develop her presence on the world markets. The special status sought by Switzerland with the European Community is considered to be realisable and should fall within the framework of the policy declarations of the Federal Council of 10th November, 1970. A minority of companies advocated complete entry into Europe, but most firms are satisfied with the status quo while at the same time being well aware of the consequences of commercial isolation.

The opening of trade barriers in industrial goods will harshen competition considerably and will make business particularly difficult for the Swiss foodstuff industry owing to the fact that Switzerland cannot rally to a common agricultural policy. The report points out that numerous undertakings have already established their European contacts and do not consider European integration as something indispensable for their business. The solution preferred by most businessmen, which is also the least committal, is to have regular negotiations with the European Community on specific points when the need arises.

A WOMAN MINISTER IS SOCIALIST CANDIDATE AT THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS

With their newly acquired rights to take part in votes on federal matters, one can expect a number of female candidates to present themselves at the October federal elections.

One such candidate, and maybe the first in history, is a woman minister. The Social Democrat Party of Saint Gall are intending to present Frau Pfarrer Hanna Sahfeld-Sinner, from Altsttten, as their candidate to the National Council. But it remains to be seen whether such an election is permissible, for, according to the 75th Article of the Constitution, only lay Swiss citizens are entitled to sit at the National Council. Mrs. Sahfeld hasn't actually got a parish, but she is ordained and helps her minister husband in his pastoral work. If the 75th Article of the Constitution can be made as elastic as the Confessional Articles 51 and 52, then there should be few objections to her candidature.

The Swiss Evangelical Press Service was quick to point out that a national councillor had recently obtained the privilege of presiding at a religious service as a layman. This obviously didn't mean that a politician had thereby entered the ministry and was no longer a layman. The Swiss Evangelical Press Service maintained that this could be considered as a precedent. It also pointed out that ordination didn't necessarily mean entrance to the *Geistlichen Stand* referred to in the Constitution. To make matters constitutionally easier, Mrs. Sahfeld has announced that she would abandon any pastoral activities while in political office.

THE OUTSPOKEN BRAZILIAN BISHOP

Dom Helder Camarra, the fiery left-wing Archbishop of Recife, Brazil, made a speech to the people of Zurich assembled on Helvetiaplatz, which the officials of the federal public ministry could hardly have appreciated. He questioned the value of neutrality towards good and bad, hinting that it could be a cosy rampart against the poverty of the world. He criticised the large Swiss banks, guilty of sheltering money earned off the sweat of the masses in the developing countries. In speaking in this way, the archbishop was taking a risk of falling under a federal decree of 1948 which forbids non-residing foreigners from making political statements, and in particular from interfering with national affairs, without a special authorisation. His speech was still being examined by the public ministry by the time he left for Brazil. But the next time he comes to Switzerland, Dom Camarra will most probably be asked not to make any political speeches, with a warning of extradition if he does not comply.

THE NOSTALGIA FOR STRIKES

Peter Dürrenmatt, one of the best-known editors of the Swiss Press, commented in an article in the *Basler Nachrichten* the recommendation passed at the congress of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union to demand an abrogation of the federal law which prohibits strikes in the public services. The article entitled *Sehnsucht nach dem Streik?* was written in the pungent style of a right-thinking man not prepared to forfeit any of the advantages acquired in 30 years of Labour Peace.

With a 289 to 170 majority, the railway unionists passed a toned-down resolution on the freedom to strike in the public services. The writer commented that there were among Swiss trade unionists variably vocal minorities poised against the Labour Peace which had been accepted for so many years, and also against the notion that the recourse to strike action must only be taken in the very last resort.

The railwaymen's congress showed that the men indulged in a latent flirt with the possibility of strike action and back this with arguments unquestioningly accepted. Speakers at the railwaymen's congress said that the unwillingness of workers to go on strike was a proof of the satiety of Swiss people and the uneasiness of their lives. Other arguments thrown in were that the exercise of the right to strike was giving way to a legitimate impulse towards freedom.

Another speaker said that this

right belonged to essential human rights and that the federal prohibition went against the European Convention on Human Rights. Mr. Dürrenmatt had no difficulty in proving that the European Convention stated no such thing. He went on to disqualify the beliefs fluttered about that the Labour Peace was a "false peace". He stressed the point that public servants were not working for a self-interested capitalist but for the public at large and that there was therefore no justification for an amendment to the prohibition of strikes within public services.

He concluded his article by referring to a television programme on the Labour Peace, which had shown that the original agreement passed between employers and unions of the engineering industry in 1937 was not based on union capitulation, but quite to the contrary on a mutual acceptance of the common interests of management and labour.

THE BULGARIAN FAMILIES STILL WAITING

Three Bulgarian families that entered illicitly into Switzerland nine months ago are still waiting for asylum. After two rejected appeals they are hoping for the positive results of an ultimate appeal by their lawyer, Mr. Grobet, of the League for Human Rights, addressed to Federal Council and asking for a reversal of the decision by the Department of Justice and

Police. The 10 people concerned had fled from Bulgaria into Turkey, where they were granted asylum. However, their goal had not been Turkey, (where they found life difficult and precarious) but Switzerland. They obtained tourist visas from the Swiss general consulate in Istanbul with the naive intention of settling down in Switzerland. Upon their arrival, they were found sleeping in the hall of the Cornavin Station with not a cent in their pockets, by a federal inspector. The logical consequence of the laws actually in force was that they were extradited and driven to the aeroplane that would fly them back to Turkey and put an end to their hopes. On the way to the airport, a few members of the family managed to jump from the car. They were picked up by an architect who happened to be driving by. This was the beginning of a nine-month legal hurdle between the Bulgarians, their defence (the League for Human Rights) and the Department of Justice, which claimed that they had no right to asylum, having already been granted asylum in Turkey. But the Bulgarians obstinately refuse to return to Turkey. Having no permit to stay, they are naturally not allowed to work and must live idly off charity. Two of the women have threatened suicide if the final appeal to the Federal Council fails.



SWISS BANK CORPORATION

(a Company limited by shares, incorporated in Switzerland)

Principal London Office
99 GRESHAM STREET,
P.O. Box No. 114,
LONDON EC2P 2BR
Tel. 01-606 4000

West End Branch
SWISS CENTRE,
1 NEW COVENTRY STREET,
LONDON W1V 8BR
Tel. 01-734 0767

(Savings Account facilities available)

SOCIÉTÉ DE BANQUE SUISSE

SCHWEIZERISCHER BANKVEREIN

SOCIETÀ DI BANCA SVIZZERA

Offices throughout Switzerland
in New York and San Francisco