

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: 1623

Rubrik: Swiss events

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>

from Perpignan—not a bad average. In Berne he alighted from my car at the entrance of the Zurich and Basle motorway, conveniently poised to thumb a further stretch of the long journey home. Incidentally, the motorist with a hitch-hiker in his car can be put in an embarrassing situation when he reaches a large town. Having conversed pleasantly and struck a friendship with his passenger over many miles, he may feel it a bit cruel to drop him off at the first crossroad, knowing that it may take him several hours to find his way across the town and find a suitable hitching point on the other side to continue his journey.

On the way from Délémont to Basle, I fell on two swarthy types hitching good humouredly in pouring rain. They were Spaniards making a hop to see Basle. They had no idea of what there was to see in the town, and painstakingly read my Michelin Guide's exposition of the city. Leaving Basle for Zurich I fell on two shaggy haired, shabbily dressed youths sitting on a pile of baggage including a tent, a guitar and two sleeping bags and looking miserable. I took them in. The car sagged heavily under their weight. It required fully opened windows and 50 m.p.h. to dissipate the acrid and sweaty smell which they emanated. The two chaps had set out for England three days previously and waited in vain for *one-and-a-half days* at the entrance of the Cologne motorway. Disgusted, they had decided to turn back and spend their holidays at home. They had been waiting for six hours on the spot where I picked them up.

Closing the ring and returning to Geneva by the Oberalp and the Furka Passes, I picked up a cheery young German with blonde hair at the beginning of the Furka climb. He was a theology student hoping to spend three weeks at *"Abri"*, the faith holiday camp founded by the hot-headed American theologian Francis Schaeffer at Huemoz, near Villars. He had been waiting for several hours and had undergone the irritation of seeing three girls posting themselves near to his hitch-hiking point and being picked up

within minutes.

At the end of the Rhone glacier we stopped to give a lift to a solitary French hiker. He had not eaten for three days and survived on cigarettes. He didn't appear to know where he was, nor where he was going, and slumped into sleep in the back of the car. He had strayed away from his

village and aimlessly criss-crossed Italy and Switzerland with a pair of plimsoles and his identity card. He begged for food money with a slight blush when the time had come for him to look for another lift.

The urge to travel apparently knows no obstacles.

(PMB)

SWISS EVENTS

SWISS AID TO PAKISTAN REFUGEES

The head of Swiss diplomacy Mr. Pierre Graber made a clear exposition of the efforts by Switzerland to come to the aid of the unfortunate millions huddled together on the East Pakistan border in the course of a Press Conference at the Federal Palace. The money that had been officially spent hitherto had amounted to about 4.5 million francs. Much of it had been used to acquire and send material of immediate necessity, such as tents, blankets, bandages, medicine and water purifying pills.

Half a million francs had furthermore been sent to the Swiss Red Cross and eventually found their way to help the Indian Red Cross. Mr. Graber on this occasion announced the expenditure of a further 6 million francs, 4 million of which would be given to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and serve to buy rice and food, the remainder to private organisations.

The official Swiss efforts at aiding East Pakistan refugees has therefore amounted to about 10 million francs (£1m), that is just over a franc per refugee. This is a piteously small sum in comparison with requirements, but is proportional to what other developed countries have paid out.

The Swiss government sent a special delegate, Mr. Burkhardt, to see what the refugees' needs were on the spot. He produced a report showing the practical obstacles to humanitarian aid. For one, he described the incred-

ibly difficult and exhausting duties of workers sent by charity organisations. They have to operate in a climate of terror, collective misery, epidemic and sickness, filth, monsoons, rats and vermin and have to contend with an inefficient and hopelessly inadequate local administration.

Mr. Burkhardt raised the possibility of taking care of famished refugee children and giving them a haven in Switzerland. He saw that there were unsurmountable disadvantages and that the children would only be exposed to the cruelty of being given shelter and a taste of peaceful prosperity only to be sent back to their material miseries once the Pakistan problem would have been resolved. Besides, there were every indication that this service would not have been politically feasible. There is always a degree of powerlessness with those that would like to help in such dramatic circumstances.

Switzerland however managed to be helpful during the crisis in its own traditional way. At the joint demand of India and Pakistan, it handled the airlift of 147 Pakistanis in Calcutta and that of 257 Indian diplomatic staff in Dacca. An Iranian, Soviet and specially chartered Swissair jet were used in the minutely prepared operation.

ENVIRONMENT

"Zurich thinks, Zurich survives"

With this maxim the municipal authorities of Switzerland's largest

English in England

**ANGLO-CONTINENTAL
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH** the leading language school in England

BOURNEMOUTH

Recognized as Efficient by the Department of Education and Science (Ministry of Education) in England • Official Centre for the University of Cambridge and London Chamber of Commerce Examinations

MAIN COURSES
3-50 weeks, commencing at the beginning of every month

HOLIDAY COURSES
2-8 weeks (June to Sep.), commencing at the beginning of every week

PREPARATORY COURSES for the University of Cambridge Proficiency Examinations



LONDON OXFORD

SPECIAL COURSES for Secretaries — for Staff in Travel and Tourism — for Bank Employees — for Hotel and Restaurant Staff

HOLIDAY COURSES at University Centres. Duration 3-10 weeks, July to September

Course Programme available from Anglo-Continental School of English, 29-35 Wimborne Road, Bournemouth BH2 6NA, Tel. Bournemouth 27414; Telex 41240, or Sekretariat ACSE, Seefeldstrasse 17, CH-8008 Zürich
Tel. 051/47 79 11; Telex 52529

1002

Name _____

First Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

(Postal Coding)

town launched a vast campaign to bring home to the mind of every citizen the despair of pollution. For a week, they deliberately halted the cleaning up of the main thoroughfares and allowed refuse, papers and filth to pile up on pavements. They had the Limmat, the Sihl and the lake dredged of their rubbish and exposed them as monuments of mindlessness on street corners. The police tested 12,000 vehicles and demonstrated that 60 per cent of them were discharging useless fumes in the air owing to faulty adjustment. The dustmen of the town scraped up 80 tons of glass in a sweeping operation. Lorries stacked with collected junk paraded the streets to inspire towns people with a saintly hatred of litter. The refuse collecting service resolved to operate in a different way. In the near future they will empty dustbins according to content. One day will be for kitchen refuse, another for papers and another for used bottles and glass. This action, which lasted during the third week of August, succeeded an earlier campaign waged by the authorities against noise. The evidence is that both had some impact on the public.

10 communes unite

The district of Vevey had a particular pollution problem to solve. It had to scoop the effluents of neighbouring Fribourg roaming down the Veveyse river, and the refuse of the Valais carried by the Rhone into Lake Geneva. In 1962, the communes of Vevey, La Tour-de-Peilz and Montreux banded together to fight this

scourge and created a purifying plant at Clarens capable of processing the used waters of a town of 45,000 inhabitants. As there was little space available the building was erected on the lakeside in a residential area, but particular pains were taken to safeguard the aesthetics of the place and it is now planned to cap the whole plant with an ice rink. Ozonisation devices made sure that no unpleasant smells emanated from the premises. At a later stage, the plant will be equipped with de-phosphorating machinery to help fight the overgrowth of algae in the lake.

The Swiss Riviera has 55,000 inhabitants. The three communes had to foresee the day when this population will double and have in consequence planned a second purifying plant at Aviron, due to be completed in 1972. Now seven other communes have joined in this effort and will participate in future environmental investments. Grouped into the "Intercommunal Water Purifying Service" they own a vessel capable of gathering all the floating debris lying above a fathom of depth. It harvests 120 cubic metres of refuse a month from the lake and about 50 heavy trunks dangerous to navigation. The ten communes have also mounted a service collecting used oil from garages. It currently disposes of a ton a month, a proof of its usefulness.

Controversy in Kaiseraugst

Fourteen communes of Basle Country and Fricktal have made a

joint declaration expressing their concern regarding the planned erection of two cooling towers at the Kaiseraugst nuclear power station. They are afraid that "enormous quantities of hot air" escaping from the towers will influence the weather of the region and quote the opinion of experts who had predicted the possible formation of a perpetual mist and a rise of atmospheric temperature. They are demanding that the consequences of building these towers should be seriously investigated before work begins.

The anti-polluting engine

The technical services of the Swiss Touring Club are putting an engine working on a mixture of butane and propane gas to the test. The device may prove a major breakthrough in the search for a non-polluting engine. The major advantage of replacing petrol by a mixture of butane and propane (contained in the liquid state in two pressurised vessels) is that no lead is released with the exhaust. The device adapting a normal engine to the new fuel can be installed in a day for the modest sum of 500 francs. The efficiency of an engine is only slightly reduced with the new fuel.

TOURISM

Ski-ing and Curling Packages

Many Swiss resorts are organising ski courses lasting a week or a fortnight. The journey to and from these resorts are left to the vacationers, but the rest is arranged for them in a complete package. This includes a room



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

TELL WILLIAM, I'd sooner trust my ROAMER

OF SWITZERLAND

Our Target—
Precision Perfection.

Our aim—
Prices within
everyone's range.



ROAMER WATCHES (ENGLAND) LTD.
29-35 Farringdon Rd, London EC1.
01-405 2858



COMPACROW

**—the brilliant answer
to your storage problems**

Compacrow Mobile Storage Units eliminate the need for space-wasting aisles between individual pairs of racks. Compacrow units glide at fingertip pressure to give you access just where you want it.

You need only one aisle in a whole run of cabinets – you'll double your storage capacity and save money all round.

Our storage experts will be glad to show you how to get more out of your available space. Pick up the phone now, tell us your problems and we'll show you how Compacrow will save you rates, money and space.

ACROW

Acrow (Automation) Ltd., South Wharf, London W.2.
Telephone: 01-262 3456. Telex: 21868.

(double and single), three daily meals, service, ski-ing instruction and an all-round ticket on the mechanical means of ascent. Free entrance is also provided for skating and curling rinks in the resorts that are equipped to that effect.

The whole inclusive package is at a reduced price, the average price for a week's holiday with full board and ski transportation is of the order of £40 for a week and £70 for two weeks.

Adelboden, in the Bernese Oberland offers ski-ing and curling weeks at reduced rates during February and March. In this typical case, the package includes seven days of half pension, reduction for the indoor swimming pool, free entrance to the artificial ice rink, a seven day ski-lift season ticket, six days tuition in the ski school. The curling week package offers instead five days of free curling tuition.

Other resorts with similar schemes are Andermatt, Arosa, Davos, Engelberg, Flims, Grindelwald, Gstaad, Interlaken, Locarno, Montana, Murren, Pontresina, Bad Ragaz, St. Moritz, Saas-Fee, Sedrun, Verbier and Zweisimmen. Other resorts may have announced their own schemes after the compilation of this list.

Anyone interested in these ski-ing and curling packages should ask for complete information at the Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, London W1V 3HG. Tel: 01-734 1921.

CONSUMPTION

Glut of tomatoes

This year again the Valais is flooded with an excess of tomatoes for which the propagandists of the canton's fruits have failed to find sufficient outlets. A thousand tons of tomatoes have already been dumped and it is reckoned that the total surplus for the year will reach 3,000 tons. These will have to be destroyed because the refrigerators owned by the fruit growing co-operatives are not vast enough to save them.

Housewives paid 1 franc 40 for a kilo of tomatoes. Although the market

could have been swamped with tomatoes, it was not economically possible to sell them for less than this. The logics of economics conflicted with a Swiss hatred of wastage and the fruits were destroyed rather than sold at cut-down prices. Many lorry loads were, however, driven to other cantons and offered free to hospitals, prisons and old peoples homes.

The Valais grower who is paid 52 centimes for a kilo of tomatoes and has to pay each seedling 30 centimes complains that the cash offer has reached its rock bottom level. Nevertheless, Valais tomato growers as a whole have contributed to their own undoing by planting 240,000 more seedlings despite last year's wastage. They also protect themselves against a saturation of the market by a co-operative consumption fund topped up by levies on their sales. In this way they have a guaranteed income, even if they have to dump their production in the Rhone.

There are at present no regulations for tomato growing (as there are in the case of vines) and there is a free-for-all amongst growers. The existence of large estates and cheap seasonal Italian labour hasn't simplified the situation. The government tries to back the Valais' production by helping to pay for its publicity. Large advertisements announcing the imminent arrival of the Valais tomato could be seen in supermarkets. Surprisingly, these tomatoes came later than scheduled because an excess of sun had delayed their ripening.

The competing Tessin also produces tomatoes but has less difficulty in selling them. They come to maturity earlier and find more favour among German-Swiss wholesalers.

Consumer protection in the Constitution

The Federal Council indicated that an article on implementing economic policies and consumer protection would probably be necessary in the Federal Constitution. This statement was contained to an answer to a question by a Genevese national councillor troubled to know why prices were

continuing to rise despite the Federal Council's appeal to the goodwill of importers and retail organisations. The Federal Council admitted that an economic and a consumer policy fixed in a constitutional framework would be more efficient in holding prices than appeals to the goodwill of interested parties.

FOREIGN LABOUR

Thaw in Swiss-Italian relations

If there is a country where criticism of Switzerland is often heard or read, it is Italy. The Italians are sensitive to the conditions of life of their compatriots working as seasonal workers in Switzerland and the left-wing press takes occasional bashes at the iniquitous treatment imposed on them by the profiteering Swiss.

This tone was tempered somewhat in a recent number of "Il Popolo". As the writer put it: "Although a third anti-foreign popular initiative is under way, and 50,000 Swiss are gathering to endorse it, there is no question of renewed talks with the Swiss government". The article points out that a "détente" in Swiss-Italian relations could be felt as a result of the meeting of Mr. Pierre Graber and Mr. Aldo Moro, Foreign Ministers of the two countries.

The paper goes on to say that the salient features of this encounter was the recognition that the conditions of seasonals was related to Switzerland's position to Europe. The paper recalled an EEC document stating that "The importance of the manpower from the Community working in Switzerland and contributing to her economic expansion cannot leave the EEC indifferent".

The secretary for Italian emigration was with Mr. Moro during his meeting with Mr. Graber. He presented four demands in favour of Italian seasonals. They were: Gradual replacement of the status of seasonal workers by the granting of an annual permit; less rigidity on the part of the immigration authorities and acceptance of seasonals' families; granting to seasonals of facilities in the field of insur-

Telegrams and Cables: TRANCOSMOS LONDON

TELEX 24777

Telephone: 01-407 4433 (8 Lines)

COSMOS FREIGHTWAYS

INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS

By Road, Rail, Sea and Air

1, CATHEDRAL STREET,
LONDON BRIDGE, LONDON, S.E.1.

REGULAR GROUPAGE SERVICES WITH

SWITZERLAND

ANGLO-SWISS CUSTOMS EXPERTS.

AGENCY
LIMITED.

OFFICIAL FREIGHT AND
PASSENGER AGENTS FOR
SWISSAIR AND ALL AIR LINES
TO SWITZERLAND AND ALL
PARTS OF THE WORLD

Agents: WELTIFURRER INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT CO. Ltd., Zurich, Basle, Schaffhausen, Geneva, St. Gal*

The average tourist will drop 2.5 pairs of gloves during the season!

So it's as well that the Swiss invented Velcro touch and close fastener. A couple of inches sewn to the outside of ski pants and you've a handy place to park your gloves whilst you reach for your ticket.

it's better with
VELCRO
touch and close fastener



Write for sample length to
Selectus Limited, BIDDULPH, Stoke-on-Trent.
Tel. Biddulph 3316

I've always had a straight answer from the Union Bank of Switzerland



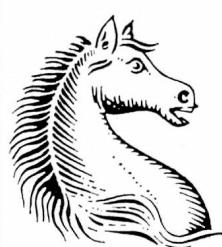
UNION BANK OF SWITZERLAND

SCHWEIZERISCHE BANKGESELLSCHAFT
UNION DE BANQUES SUISSES
UNIONE DI BANCHE SVIZZERE

117 Old Broad Street, London, E.C.2

**EXCLUSIVE SHOES
by Bally of Switzerland**

116 New Bond Street, W.1.
30 Old Bond Street, W.1.
260 Regent Street, W.1.
22 Sloane Street, S.W.1.
132 King's Road, S.W.3.
Swiss Centre, 10 Wardour Street, W.1.
49 Golders Green Road, N.W.3.
19 Heath Street, N.W.3.
46 King Street, Manchester 2



**G.T.WHYTE
& COMPANY
LIMITED**

MERCHANT BANKERS

All domestic and international banking transactions—including:—

- ★ Company and Investment Management
- ★ Corporate Finance
- ★ Capital Issues
- ★ Documentary Credits
- ★ Discounting of Trade Bills (including East European and South American)
- ★ All types of Export Finance and advisory services
- ★ Clearing, Barter and Compensation Trading
- ★ Blocked Currencies

**3 COPTHALL COURT,
LONDON, E.C.2.**

Tel: 01-606 0381 Telex 884851 Telegrams Whytebank London E.C.2.

Member of the Triumph Investment Trust group

ance; making changes of work more easy for them. Switzerland later sent a memorandum to Rome containing a number of counter-proposals.

FEDERAL

Review of the arms ban initiative

The Buhrlé affair resulted predictably in an initiative by a group of concerned citizens anxious to place the control of Switzerland's arms manufacture in the hands of the Confederation. They also wanted to restrict all exports to neutral countries only and to submit these deliveries to a stringent official supervision.

The Federal Council reacted by appointing a study committee on which sat two-well known Socialists, the former Federal Councillor, Max Weber, and the trade union leader, Waldemar Juker. This commission, however, came up with the finding that an implementation of the terms of the proposed initiative would be harmful to the Swiss arms industry. It was not possible to restrict arms exports without avoiding a considerable increase of armament costs to Swiss defence. The nationalisation of arms production would no longer ensure the same degree of quality and would be a burden on the community.

At the same time, a law project was drafted laying down more elaborate controls in the field of arms export. It is this law project and the two-year-old initiative which the National Council will have to debate, probably after the October elections. The topic is quite delicate. There is no doubt that, economically speaking, Switzerland would stand to lose certain advantages by abstaining from arms export, but the moral uneasiness resulting from the Buhrlé affair has left its mark and it is doubtful whether the promoters of the initiative will be willing to abandon it in favour of the projected law.

An atomic shelter for every Swiss

The Federal Council has released a report, fruit of a specialised commission, presenting the guidelines of Swiss civil defence for the coming 20 years. It is estimated that within this span 6.75 billion francs will have to be absorbed in the individual protection of Swiss civilians.

The report states that civil defence should be made to work in the event of natural calamities. It is however in the eventuality of a nuclear attack on the country that everything has to be provided for. The report, sounding rather like a General Staff manual, makes a forecast of the wars we should expect in the next two decades. These strategic hypotheses led to the straightforward conclusion that the only chances of survival of the population

lie in an efficient, rationalised and all-embracing civil defence system. In particular, every inhabitant should be provided with an atomic shelter sited at his place of residence.

The report foresees that all delays allowed for evacuation in the expectancy of a nuclear attack will have to be out of the question. Every civilian should therefore, be able to leap into his shelter at the first alert. The report acknowledges that such a system will obviously not guarantee the safety of everybody. It also recognises that the political and strategic circumstances may change completely within the period for which it is laying down plans, but asserts that the national community has the right to expect from its authorities provisions against unknown hazards. The report concludes in underlining the necessity of striving for peace and recalling the efforts already undertaken by the Swiss government.

THE JURA

The second report of the Petitpierre Commission

The Great Council of Berne began its Autumn 1971 session on 6th September, which is expected to last for three weeks. Three amendments to the cantonal constitution will be submitted to the delegates. They will pass a vote after the second reading of a motion instituting the right of vote for women in the Canton. They will be presented with a first reading of a proposed repeal of the second paragraph of the 61st constitutional article stipulating that political and press offences should be tried by jury, and a first reading of a proposed amendment of the second paragraph of the 10th constitutional article intending to replace lawyers offices for infants by juvenile courts.

The Petitpierre Commissions has concluded its work and will shortly be publishing a second report on the Jurassian problem. The findings of the mediatory "five wise men" commission were not expected to be made public during this parliamentary session. It is hoped that the publication of the document in German and French will be forthcoming at the end of September.

Mutilated Rangiers "Sentry"

A large statue of a sentry was erected in 1924 in the presence of Federal and military authorities as well as representatives from Berne and Neuchatel at the crossroads in Les Rangiers where the way is open to Ajoie, the Franches Montagnes and Délémont Valley. This was a national monument commissioned to the sculptor Charles Leplattenier and commemorating the 1914-18 mobilisation. Be-

fore dawn on 20th August, persons believed to have driven up from the Ajoie in two cars used the scaffolding erected against the statue for the purpose of cleaning it and disfigured the dutiful sentry by hammering its nose off. They "disarmed" him by breaking his bayonet and further knocked away the tuft and the peak of his cap. This act of vandalism was signed by the "Front Populaire Libre du Jura", a movement unrelated to the Rassemblement Jurassien. It had attempted to break into an ammunition depot a few days earlier.

SEQUEL TO THE PERREGAUX TRIAL

The flair of the KGB

As reported in our last issue, a young Swiss professor, Francois de Perregaux and a Russian physicist, Dmitri Mikheyev, attempted to substitute their identities so that the latter could escape to the West. According to the Russian youth organ "Komsomolskaya Pravda", the Soviet security services had followed the adventure which was to cost Perregaux three years imprisonment and the Russian eight years from the beginning. The paper asserted that the whole operation had been organised by the "Swiss Oriental Institute" directed by Mr. Peter Zager, with the alleged purpose of exercising "anti-Communist and anti-Russian" activities.

The paper goes on to say that Perregaux had agreed to take part in the operation after having conscientiously prepared it with a Swiss friend who had studied in Moscow, and who had called on his services because of his close resemblance to Mikheyev. Perregaux had a picture of the Russian physicist and had two photos of himself specially retouched for his visa to Russia. These photos accentuated his resemblance with Mikheyev and were designed to confuse the Russian customs as Mikheyev was to use the same visa on his escape attempt.

Geneva's Socialist Party addressed a letter to Mr. Semenovitch, Soviet Ambassador in Berne, stating that "the trial of the Swiss biologist Francois de Perregaux and the Russian physicist Dmitri Mikheyev illustrated the extremities to which your citizens wishing to leave the USSR are reduced". The letter added that these sentences were a flagrant violation of the universal declaration of Human Rights, which proclaim the right of everyone to leave his country and to return to it freely. The Geneva Socialist further expressed the hope that the Soviet government will soon mitigate the sentences on the two men and allow the free movement of its citizens.

MODERN LIVING

First Popular Initiative in favour of abortion

Housewives who went shopping on the La Palud market place in Lausanne saw an unusually crowded stand. Nothing was sold there, but signatures backing a popular and federal initiative for the legalisation of abortion were being collected *en masse*. The text circulated by the initiative committee ran as follows:

"The Article 120 of the Penal Code authorising an interruption of pregnancy in certain cases is being interpreted differently from canton to canton and from doctor to doctor. There is a great inequality throughout Switzerland."

"The Articles 118 and 119 punishing abortion when it is not practised according to Article 120 are hardly respected any more. Serious enquiries have led to an estimate of 50,000 illegal abortions in Switzerland every year. A quarter of one per cent of these abortions come to the knowledge of the courts. The repression has therefore become a total illusion but nevertheless conduces to considerable harm owing to the principles which it upholds and the secrecy which it enforces.

"Women of small means are those facing the greatest difficulties in obtaining legal abortions or making the journey to another canton. They are the ones who risk their lives and their health.

"Our goal is to have the interruption of pregnancy accepted as an ordinary surgical intervention practised by approved doctors.

"Our initiative will NOT allow anyone to carry out abortions. It will put an end to sanctions against abortion, but not against those who practise medicine illegally.

"On the moral plane we respect life as much as our opponents. But we will not accept a demographic explosion endangering the lives of our own children.

"It seems to us hypocritical to try to defend morality by a prohibition which no one takes seriously. Every person should be allowed to take a decision in all freedom."

Mrs. Claudine Gabus, a lawyer in Neuchatel and a member of the initiative committee, presided over this signature collection. She said that the objective of the movement was not to promote abortion, but to free it from a legal condemnation. She recalled that in western countries, there was one abortion for each birth. It was no use trying to halt the trend by punishing two or three women in a thousand.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Roman villa discovered at Avenches

Students from 15 countries, in two weeks' excavation work at the little

hilltop town of Avenches, south-west of Berne, have uncovered a large section of the paved courtyard of a Roman villa of the luxury type.

The courtyard, not more than six feet below the present ground level, is perfectly preserved, with a rainwater tunnel along its length and the portico pillars lying as they fell 18 centuries ago.

Over the past decade Mr. Hans Boegli, archaeologist-curator of the museum here, has made a series of surveys of the district. "Only about 5 per cent of the original Roman city of Aventicum has been excavated so far", he said. "It had more than 20,000 inhabitants compared to the 2,000 of the modern town."

One of the students, Anne Riordan, aged 17, from Swansea—she hopes to read archaeology and social anthropology at Cambridge—who has worked at a previous dig at Gloucester, describes Avenches as totally different. "There it was a military camp," she said, "but here one finds far more things of beauty. A soldiers' camp is a different thing from a town. It is nice to find jewellery."

The reason Avenches is an archaeological treasure house is that after the Roman town was destroyed by the Alamanni and the Huns subsequent habitation was confined to the capital hill, leaving undisturbed the remains of the original city. It was surrounded by a four-mile protective wall.

The soil that covers the Roman remains is hardly more than plough-deep in many places. Farmers have long been accustomed to unearth fragments of pottery, coins and medals.

Apart from a few limited excavations last century—when the theatre for 12,000 adjoining the main street on capitol hill was partially cleared—the first extensive work at Avenches was carried out only in the 1940s. A systematic scheme has been introduced by Mr. Boegli, who has verified the indications shown by electrical methods by sinking shafts at various points.

He hopes that this year's archaeological camp for students may be the first of a long series, and expects satisfactory results.

(The Times)

BANKING

Settlement of the United California Bank debacle

The head office of the United California Bank in Los Angeles made it known that the Court of Appeal of Basle had ratified the convention between the bank's Basle branch, which failed last year, and its creditors. A spokesman said: "We are satisfied of the favourable ruling of the Basle court of appeal concerning a convention satisfying our customers and wish to thank our Swiss auditors for having helped us to find a solution". This le-

gally-ratified agreement will mean that all the bank's creditors will be reimbursed by the home branch.

In August, 1970, a large overdraft was discovered in the bank's account. Executives were found guilty of engaging in unauthorised commodities speculations and the bank has been under appointed trusteeship since September, 1970.

BEHAVIOUR

Weapon haul in Geneva

The Federal Police are handling an unusual case. A complete arsenal of ordnance automatic rifles, a bounty of ammunition, General Staff survey maps, personal files on the Geneva police and the customs forces were discovered in a cellar somewhere in the heart of Geneva.

These arms had been stolen from individuals. In fact, the police of Vaud and Geneva had been aware for many months that unwatched automatic rifles had been stolen from citizens ascribed to regular military duties. In May, 14,000 cartridges had been stolen from the shooting range of Gland and it was proved that a substantial part of the uncovered ammunition proceeded from this source.

Three young people, all under 20, have been arrested in conjunction with the arms haul. A third, said to be the leader of the gang, was still at large at the time of writing. He is a 22-year-old biology student known to be "quiet and pleasant". He was totally uninvolved with the Anarchist Movement until he was caught up by the demonstrations for an autonomous youth centre in Geneva.

The police had long suspected that the arms and ammunitions had disappeared in the hands of Anarchists. The many demonstrations which have perturbed the tranquility of Lausanne and Geneva this summer gave police an opportunity to trace the Anarchist groupments and helped them to land the arms cache.

The 22 rifles were in perfect condition, kept in dampness-tight crates and ready for use. It is not known for certain what the self-styled Anarchists intended to do with them. The violence of their unsigned tracts suggested that they kept them in view of a full-scale battle against the establishment and the "fascist pigs" keeping it in place. Many left-wing youth, however, believed that this was the work of romantics wishing to enjoy the life of a cheap novel. But the official authorities in Berne were not prepared to take this affair so lightly and were determined to clarify it entirely.

The Langstrasse hooker

The night life of Zurich has received an upward swing with the authorisation granted to 40 public establishments, from luxury night clubs

to beer taverns, to remain open until 2 a.m. Formerly the "Polizeistunde" rang at midnight and Zurich was officially asleep thereafter.

However, the illegal night life of the town never ceased by that early hour and prostitution thrived while the inhabitants of *Kreis 5* and the Langstrasse struggled to fall asleep. There was nothing the police could do as its hands were practically tied following a ruling at the Federal Tribunal in 1968. Attractive prostitutes in hot pants and slacks carry out their work unimpeded on the busy Limatquai, at the Zähringerstrasse and the Langstrasse as soon as the sun has set.

The police cannot charge a person, male or female, with soliciting or "hooking" someone else on the street. A ruttish bank manager can stop his Jaguar next to a waiting lady under the very nose of a policeman with impunity. If, however, he drives round the same block of buildings once too often during his quest, he can be summoned for loitering and importuning the neighbourhood under article 207 of the Penal Code.

A year ago the indwellers of the Langstrasse area, the most Italianised and affected part of the town, tried to compensate the helplessness of the police by taking down the car numbers of people frequenting prostitutes and causing a disturbance during the night, and sending them warning letters. This method enjoyed a short lived success. The subsequent idea of setting up a register of "customers" conflicted with public opinion and was replaced by the suggestion of enrolling "civic guards". This was turned down by the police, who were concerned by the possibility of incidents arising from the scheme. Instead, they invited professionals to remove their activities to the sparsely inhabited "toleration zones".

They have begun to distribute warnings to those who failed to practise immorality in silence and have thus diminished the night noise of the areas regularly under control.

A new trend for the professionals of pleasure has been to set up shop in a variety of men's massage studios and body building parlours, of which there are a great number listed in the professions directory. They are more easily intercepted by the police and charged with procuring, but the arrangement has other advantages. There are (supposedly well informed) people who "guesstimate" that the men's massage studios may have anything up to 20,000 regulars.

SWITZERLAND ABROAD

The mark of Swiss families in South America

The head of the Peruvian General Staff is known as General Winkelried.

This astounded a Swiss reporter who went to seek the Swiss ambassador in Peru, Mr. William Frei, for explanations on this startling fact and other similar examples. He was told that this high-ranking officer not only hailed from a Swiss family, but was highly attached to the country of his forefathers and never missed an opportunity to take part in Swiss activities in Lima.

Peru also has an admiral, Admiral Mathey, whose name has a strong scent from Vaud. Many Swiss have contributed to building modern Peru. They were architects, doctors, teachers and businessmen. One of them, Martini de Pietri, emigrated from the Tessin and was responsible for building the church of the Fathers of the Cross and a vast Dominican monastery in Lima.

Switzerland has given the Americas a series of presidents, not counting President Hoover and Dwight D. Eisenhower (who had distant but undeniable Swiss origins), there were at least six presidents in Paraguay, Guatemala, Uruguay, Nicaragua and more recently in Chile, who could pride themselves of Swiss origins. It is common for Latin Americans of Swiss ascendancy to reach high positions in the church, in the army and public office. The governor of the State of Brasilia in Brazil has the name of Montandon, which reeks of Neuchatel. The governor and senator of the Rio Grande do Sul, the "gaucho state", is called Bornhauser, which clings from Schaffhausen. One of the most prominent figures in Brazil a few years ago was Marshal Odilo Denis, a typical Valais patronym.

Brazil in fact attracted Swiss emigrants very early on. Many of them were forced to leave their country by the hardships wrought by the Napoleonic Wars. The town of Novo Friburgo was founded by a band of adventurous men from Fribourg who had

fought with Napoleon. The last emperor of Brazil, dom Pedro II, assembled around him a cohort of Swiss scientists. The best-known was the "Sankt-Galler" E. A. Goeldi, who has left his name to a museum and several streets in the towns of Belem, and the Bernese bacteriologist Adolfo Lutz, who was nationally honoured by a special stamp on the centenary of his birth in 1955.

There are even more Swiss in positions of responsibility in Argentina. An Admiral Perren was commander of the port of Buenos Aires and the minister for agriculture was until recently Mr. Gabriel Perren, a man of Valais origin. Two of the largest towns in the country are governed by men holding the name of Bittel and Ueltschi. The province of Rios is governed by an air force general by the name of Favre (Neuchatel), the Central Bank is managed by Mr. Ricardo Gruneisen (Basle), the Argentinian Under-Secretary of the United Nations, Mr. Roberto Guyer, is born of Swiss parents. Finally, the military governor of Cordoba has the name of Lopez Aufranc of Jurassian origin.

ABOUT THE NEW LAY-OUT

In this and the last issue we have somewhat re-ordered our lay-out, replacing haphazard items by "chapters" reminiscent of some well-known magazines of record. The introduction of these chapters should not be considered as a pretentious effort at emulating these magazines, but rather as a costless step at making the "S.O." more readable. We have also changed the heading of "Swiss News" by that of "Swiss Events", an alteration which should have been performed long ago, because it is materially not possible for us to deliver anything which can honestly be qualified as "Swiss News".

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