

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: - (1972)

Heft: 1651

Rubrik: Comment

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his beautiful soul. Moreover, he did not speak of individual salvation, but of the coming of the Kingdom, which is a community. How can one bear witness to the King of such a community if one refuses to obey his practical commandments in social, political and other domains? It is no longer possible to abide by an entirely theological faith ignoring concrete realities.

This brings us back to Bonhoeffer's question: How does one live the Gospel in the world today?

Firstly, Christians should bear witness to the fact that the Gospel was given to them as a free gift by commit-

ting themselves freely in some voluntarily service, with joy and no expectation of a reward. Under the guidance of the Holy and creative Spirit, they need to find new solutions and free themselves from the prejudices rendering all change impossible. Such a task can only be achieved in a life of loving and intimate communion with the God of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Christians should give serious and competent consideration to the problems of society. Obviously, the Gospel may not supply a textbook answer to every particular problem that crops up. There may therefore

not be *one* Christian answer to the problems of pollution and abortion. Nevertheless, these problems must always be approached in the guiding, and sometimes perilous, light of the Gospel.

The Lord of joy and dancing tells us to go in the world, take all our fellow human beings by the hand, and build a kingdom. The magnificent task which we are called to undertake with an uncompromising sense of responsibility will bring its reward of priceless joy.

COMMENT

THE FREE-TRADE AGREEMENT HOW IT WILL AFFECT THE SWISS

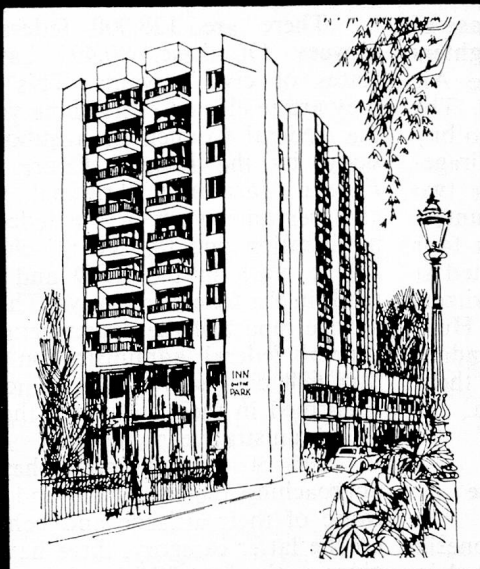
The Swiss people expressed their approval of the Swiss-EEC agreement on 3rd December. This democratic exercise was an almost foregone conclusion. The Swiss-EEC agreement being mainly a technical one, with direct effect on exchanges in industrial goods, our institutions will be left unchanged and the political involvement in Europe will remain as it has been so far: symbolic. Because the cherished principles of neutrality and direct democracy will not be put into question by the agreement, and also because it will not effect the livelihood

or way of life of significant sections of the population (as the fishermen of Norway), the issue cannot be said to have aroused much controversy.

The Swiss people, whether or not they have studied the lengthy document which was sent to them for their information, took the Swiss-EEC agreement as an accepted reality. All the parties except the National Action and Republicans have accepted the term of the agreement, and so have virtually all industries. What is more, the trade unions, which in Great Britain are the standard bearers of opposition to entry, supported the Brussels agreement. Contrary to British trade unions, which consider the Common Market as an invention of international capitalism, Swiss trade unions have realised that it offered possibilities for the improved welfare of their members.

There had been no constitutional need for bringing the issue to the people and the idea met with strong opposition from several experts. But the Federal Council and Parliament considered that direct democracy was not a dead letter and gave the Swiss people a chance of expressing their position on a matter affecting the future of the nation in the world.

The central provision of the agreement is that within five years, Swiss industry will enjoy a market of 290 million consumers. Present agreements with the Free Trade Association will naturally be ended with an initial impact on certain branches of industry, more particularly watches. But as barriers are progressively abolished, Switzerland will be open to, and have free access to, the first economic power in the world: the European Economic Community.



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Inn on the Park

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Agriculture will be left practically unaffected by the agreement, which foresees only minor changes and includes a letter of intent to strengthen relations in this field. Representatives of Swiss agriculture described the agreement as the best imaginable as it left their position unchanged. Trade in farm products between Switzerland and the EEC is very important as it is. As for the other sectors of the economy, they will in the main have to face up to increased competition but not be unduly affected.

The machine tool industry, which is responsible for nearly 40 per cent of Swiss exports will hardly feel the change as it is not cost, but technology and quality of service which determine their place in outside markets. Technology will be particularly important to offset the expected shortage of manpower and will require more mergers and larger plans. But this process has been under way for many years and would have been necessary, market or no market. The thousands of small, specialised Swiss firms will survive because they fill a special slot in the world market. Thus the structure of Swiss industry will hardly be affected by the destruction of tariff barriers.

Swiss chemical firms, which are responsible for Switzerland's second export item, are well established in every country of Western Europe and will hardly feel any change from a financial point of view. Their Swiss operations may suffer from labour shortages and require faster rationalisation. Their dominant position in the field of know-how will help them to weather the storms of increased European competition. The only two industries which will have to struggle harder are textiles and watches. Fifty years ago, these were the first Swiss export items. Today, they fall considerably behind engineering and chemicals.

Eurofinance, an organisation specialised in the study of European companies, is not so optimistic on Switzerland's material future. It considers that productivity per employee will rise by only 3.7 per annum during the next eight years, compared with 4 per cent in the rest of the community. Moreover, the labour force will increase by only 0.1 per cent a year, compared with 3.7 per cent on average in the community. Thus Switzerland's national product can be expected to rise more slowly than that of her European neighbours and competition will become stiffer. However, the evidence is that the Swiss will be able to cope with the situation and continue to live prosperously, so long as there is no crisis abroad.

There will be no change politically. Berne is only giving a finger to Europe. There is no question of polling in the European Budget, or being represented in the European Parlia-

ment. Switzerland will not take part in the monetary union of the old continent and maintain intact her institutions. The July agreement has altered nothing in our country's peculiar poli-

tical predicament, which can be described as being friends with everyone while not being committed by any ties.

(PMB)

SWISS EVENTS

FEDERAL

Destruction of Rhine dams proposed

In answer to a written question by a national councillor, the Federal Council announced that the Military Department would investigate whether part of the dams built on the upper Rhine during the war could be dismantled. The Bernese Independent National Councillor, Mr. Baechtold, had called for a complete removal of these dams. He said that they accumulated considerable quantities of effluents and garbage and were environmentally harmful. The groupments concerned with the protection of the area had also called for a removal of the dams. This, said the Federal Council, was only partially possible. The dams had been erected to defend military installations on the north-east border. They could not be pulled down without risk to the defence organisation in that sector.

The Air Force to get thirty "Hunters"

The Federal Council will ask for Parliament approval to the purchase of thirty second-hand Hunter jet fighters as a stop-gap solution while the Air Force decides on a new aircraft. The decision follows the decision not to buy either the "Corsair" or the "Mirage-Milan" as planned for the past two or three years. The thirty Hunters would be paid for over the next four years. Their cost has been estimated at 108 million francs. Last year, Switzerland passed a first order of thirty Hunters to complete the fleet of a hundred that she already had. The first of these Hunters was delivered this month.

Visit of Indonesian Head of State

President Subarto of Indonesia visited Switzerland and was greeted in Berne by the President of the Confederation and the Swiss government. He was accompanied by his wife and by his Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Malik. He and his following were invited for lunch in a Berne hotel by the Federal Council. The official part of their visit in Switzerland lasted 24 hours. The President also visited Geneva.

Parliamentary Agenda

The Winter Session of Parliament opened on 27th November. The main problems which will be discussed by the National Council will be the 1973 Budget, the purchase of property by foreigners (Furgler Law), the increase of federal taxation and the transformation of the Cavalry. Both Houses will examine the federal budget and the budgets of the railways and the post office.

There will be a number of substitutions: Mr. Roger Bonvin, actually Vice-President of the Confederation, will succeed Mr. Nello Celio. Federal Councillor Brugger will be the new Vice-President. Three new federal judges will have to be elected. Mr. Hans Tschopp will be the new President of the Federal Court. The chairmen of the National Council and the Council of States will be replaced. Mr. Franzoni will replace Mr. Vontobel in the former, and Mr. Marius Lamoert will replace Mr. Feruccio Bolla in the latter.

The Civil Service

There are 128,000 federal employees. Of these, 90,491 have the status of civil servants. This means they are re-elected every three years by the Federal Council or a subordinate body, by the Federal Court or the Federal Insurance Tribunal. 28,618 civil servants work in the federal administration and the federal chancery, 29,355 work in the GPO and 32,518 work in the federal railways. The latest service report of the department of the general federal administration recalls that 638 civil servants have not been confirmed in their status for the 1973-76 administrative period.

596 of them because they were approaching the age limit, and 41 because of their attitude and behaviour. Of the latter category, three have been given notice and 38 have been kept in their jobs as simple state employees.

Switzerland at the European Security Conference

Switzerland has sent a delegation to the preliminary talks which have opened at Helsinki in view of a conference on European security. Berne is