

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: 1636

Rubrik: Swiss event

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Download PDF: 31.03.2026

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The Swiss Observer

Published Twice Monthly at
63/67 TABERNACLE STREET
LONDON E.C.2
Tel: 01-253 2321

Telegrams: Paperwyse Stock London
HON. PRESIDENT: Robert J. Keller
EDITOR: Pierre-Michel Béguin

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24 issues Frs. 25—or £2.50

Swiss subscriptions may be paid into
Postcheck Konto Basle 40—5718

Editor's telephone: 01-602 1378

COMMENT

SWITZERLAND PRESENT AT THE UNCTAD CONFERENCE

A Swiss team led by Ambassador F. Rothenbühler joined 3,000 other delegates at the third United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at Santiago, in Chile. The last such conference took place in Geneva in 1964. It was then that the "wealthy" countries agreed to strive towards devoting one per cent of their national product in public aid to the third world. Few countries have even approached this figure. The average ratio being 0.37 per cent for all industrialised countries. Switzerland was at the bottom of the list with sacrificing 0.16 per cent of her national income. Naturally, a much higher volume of aid was channelled through private undertakings. On this score, Switzerland was probably the leading nation. But private "aid" has the primary effect of increasing the debt of poor countries (it has grown from 21 billion to 53.4 billion dollars from 1961 to 1968). Because capitalist assistance must by its very nature, retrieve profitable returns.

In March of last year, the Federal Chambers agreed to increase the volume of public aid. Over a three year period, 400 million francs will be devoted to financial aid (low interest loans or non-repayable loans), 275 million to technical assistance and supplementary credits to humanitarian aid. There has therefore, been a distinct improvement in the level of public aid which has been brought to 0.3 per cent of G.N.P., and a growing awareness of the material injustice in the world.

Before leaving for Santiago, Ambassador F. Rothenbühler received a

letter from the Committee of the "Association of Sponsors of the Berne Declaration", a group of citizens who pledged two years ago to give away three per cent of their personal income to help fight under development. The letter raises many highly topical points. It asks of the Swiss delegate to UNCTAD to promote the following objectives: Switzerland should lead the way, and not wait for the initiative of other industrialised countries to stabilise the price of overseas raw materials such as cocoa; the agricultural exports of third world countries to Europe should not be impeded by high tariff barriers, Switzerland should give the same preferences to the exports of these countries as it does to those of the EEC, i.e., it should abolish barriers for industrial goods altogether.

Other points raised by the letter are: The capital flowing from poor countries to rich countries (debt repayment, dividends and transfer of private capital in European banks) should be deduced from the figures relating to private aid; poor countries should take part in negotiations on international monetary matters, Switzerland should pledge to increase its public aid.

At the time of writing, the UNCTAD Conference was about to begin. Western delegates were expecting an onslaught from the militant members of the group of 96 countries classified as "under developed". These will raise several key issues which the industrialised nations have come to accept, such as: Improving the terms of trade for commodities and raw materials; give a chance to the industrial exports of developing countries; re-allocate special drawing rights in their favour; give them a say in international monetary decisions alleviate conditions of financial assistance and "untie" the loans which are made to these countries; finally, adhere to the UNCTAD resolution of spending one per cent of GNP in public aid to the third world.

Young people in Switzerland and elsewhere (but particularly in Switzerland) are acutely aware of the problems of the third world and entirely agree to the above list of priorities. This may well induce the establishment to do something about it with a higher sense of urgency. Switzerland, the third richest nation in the world, is directly concerned, morally and practically, with the problems of poor countries.

Nevertheless Switzerland and the "rich" countries have their problems too (think of Great Britain) and however they help the third world, there will have to be a measure of *sacrifice*. Basically, nations have to consider themselves as *neighbours* in the Christian sense and be willing to sacrifice their interests for others. This is the meaning of "solidarity". Although it may conflict with notions of "*Real Politik*". (PMB)

SWISS EVENTS

FEDERAL

Federal Commission on Consumer Protection

An enquiry set up by the Federal Council as the upshot of a "minor question tabled in Parliament has come out with its report. A Bernese Socialist delegate, Mr. Mueller, had asked the Government to seek a solution to the problem created by a non-uniform practice of a remunerating service in Swiss restaurants. The Federal Commission on Consumer Protection, entrusted with the enquiry, came out with the following results:

Although more and more Swiss restaurants include service in their bills, the system of tipping is still predominant in the country.

Just as any other buyer, a restaurant patron has the right of knowing clearly what price he has to pay. It is thus necessary to arrange for a uniform system as customers tend increasingly to move from one part of Switzerland to another. This uniformity can be achieved either by returning completely to the former practice of tipping or abandoning it altogether and have a fixed percentage reserved for service. As the former solution does not appear feasible, the Commission recommends that tips should henceforth be banned. As long as this system is not generalised, all menus should clearly state whether meals are to be paid with or without service.

Employers and employees of the catering and hotel trade should together work out the means of wage payment within the new system. A waiter should not be earning less after the abolishment of tips. If this were the case, a possible solution would be to award him a fixed salary equal to the difference between his earnings before and after the introduction of the service-included system.

Finally, the Commission feels justified in recommending a generalisation of such a system as the evidence shows that, where service has been included in the bill, restaurant owners have not taken the opportunity to raise their profit margins unduly.

The Government's 1972-75 Programme

For the second time in its history the Federal Council has published a four-year programme, outlining the seventy odd messages and the fifteen constitutional amendments in every

field of legislation which the Government has in mind for the 1972-75 period. A similar "four year plan" had been published in 1968.

There is hardly a sphere which will not receive the Government's special attention. The Federal Council's Report reasserts the nation's continuing drive towards Europe, the United Nations and the Third World. But the emphasis is laid on the many reforms to be carried out on the home front. Mention is made of a "youth policy", federal aid to the Press, intensified state support to victims of illness and accidents, land planning, conservation, nuclear power stations, transports (a chapter inspired by the findings of the Kneschaurek Report).

New legislation will be introduced in the field of economic control. In particular the Federal Council will increase the powers of the Swiss National Bank. It will also recommend full membership to the International Monetary Fund.

Something will be done about the increasing population of "false seasonals", who in fact remain in Switzerland as long as the other two categories of foreign workers, without however enjoying the same advantages. A report is to be published next year on the "participation" of workers in management. This initiative will serve to preserve Switzerland's traditional "Peace of Labour". The idea of an "Ombudsman" responsible for protecting the citizen against eventual administrative abuses, will probably materialise. This concept, inherited

from the Scandinavians, has been toyed with for some time in Berne. The news is one of the most original elements of the Government's programme.

Reforms will be suggested in respect of voting procedure, namely, on voting age, maintenance of the proportional system for elections to the National Council, and reorganisation of constituencies. Another most important suggestion is to Constitutional provisions making specific reference to political parties and their status. Finally, the Report points to the necessary strengthening of cantons and the re-vitalisation of federalism, but does not enter into particular details.

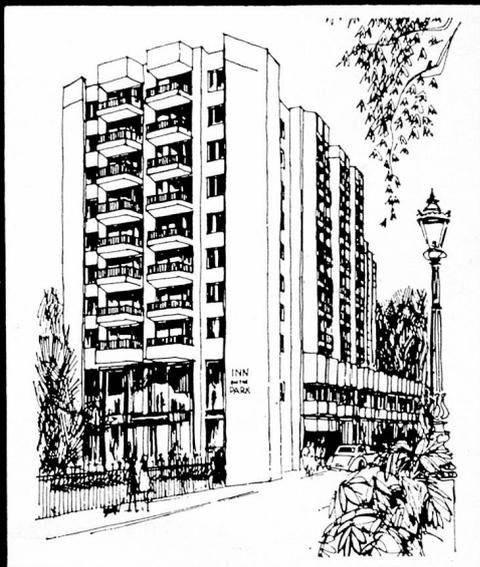
How to choose a new jet fighter

Colonel Studer, Head of the Air Force and of Anti-Aircraft troops, speaking at a meeting of 1,200 officers pointed out the necessity of devising faster ways of choosing new material for the Air Force. The evaluation for the potential candidates of the "Venoms", which have been in service since the early fifties, has now been going on for three years. Although the choice has been narrowed down considerably and several aircraft, notably the "Harrier", deleted from the short list, the specialists at the political department are still balancing, as they were two years ago, between the two most likely candidates—the French-built "Milan" and the American "Corsair". The latter machine, owing to its pliability to particular Swiss require-

ments, was held in favour for a long time. The recent decision by the American Air Force to withdraw the "Corsair" from service in Vietnam, may dramatically alter its position. Swiss Air Force experts are actively awaiting explanations from the Pentagon on the reasons for the withdrawal of the "Corsair" from combat duties.

Colonel Studer said that the procedure actually applied to the purchase of military material was adequate for hardware such as lorries, field guns, and even armoured vehicles, but too slow for highly sophisticated modern aircraft. The present procedure required that Parliament should be informed of the exact number of aeroplanes to be bought, the cost of spares and ground equipment, the amount of ancillary investments—all of which could only be known, approximately, when the plane in question was at an advanced stage of development. In other countries, he said, Parliament decided to buy a particular plane before details were known about its cost and performance. The number of units actually bought would depend on available funds and the progress of development work. Colonel Studer said that this procedure allowed work to be started on an aircraft without delay. Swiss procedure, on the other hand, tended to inhibit development in an effort to stick to guidelines unrelated to this development.

The Air Force Chief said that the detailed description of an aircraft's performance required a thousand pages. Cost analysis for tens of thou-



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sands of spare parts required several months and were usually complicated by modifications in the aircraft under consideration.

Mr. Graber in Paris

Mr. Pierre Graber left on 12th April for a three day visit to Paris. He was accompanied by the same team as during his London visit in February. His entourage thus included Mr. Paul Jolles, Head of the Commercial Division, and Ambassadors Ernesto Thalmann, René Keller, Rudolf Bindschedler and Pierre Thevenaz.

His arrival in Paris was extensively covered by the French news media—a far cry from the insignificant publicity he got in London. Shortly after his arrival, Mr. Graber was invited to a friendly meeting at the Elysée Palace by President Pompidou. He paid a courtesy call to Mr. Jacques Chaban Delmas, the French Prime Minister. He had been greeted at the airport by Mr. Maurice Schumann, French Foreign Minister. In London he had been welcomed by a Parliamentary Under-Secretary.

Most of Mr. Graber's Paris talks were with Mr. Schumann. They were naturally centred on Europe and the Common Market. Apart from reaching agreement on their reading of the international monetary situation, the two men didn't reach complete agreement during their first series of talks. On some of the pending common market issues. Thus France would like to freeze existing tariffs on watch products for three years, whereas Switzerland wishes to include her watch production in the list of free trade industrial goods immediately. Likewise, it is not clear whether the two parties have agreed on the principle of resorting to the safeguard clauses which would be included in any agreement between Switzerland and the Community.

No visas for Yugoslav workers

The Swiss Embassy in Belgrade has provisionally halted delivering entry permits to workers leaving for work in Switzerland owing to an outbreak of smallpox in Yugoslavia. The Political Department stressed that this measure was only temporary and did not affect tourists. Many of the men looking for work abroad in fact come from the Yugoslav province where the epidemic broke out last month.

One Yugoslav building worker in Berne, aged 30, showed symptoms of smallpox and was examined in the Cantonal Hospital.

BEHAVIOUR

Drama in Oensingen

An atrocious drama took place in the large village of Oensingen in the Canton of Solothurn. Rudolf Lehmann, a hard-working and devoted family man decapitated his wife and his three young daughters and put an end to his life a few hours later when he was surrounded by the police.

This dreadful tragedy, which stunned the whole area, was the result of conjugal strife. Lehmann's wife, Heidi had been unfaithful for some time and the couple were contemplating a divorce. But Lehmann would not "see his wife living with another man" and at 6.30 one morning, he got up, got hold of a hatchet and hacked off the head of his wife as she lay still sleeping. He locked the conjugal bedroom and entered the neighbouring room where his youngest child, nine-month-old Karine, lay sleeping. He put an end to her life in the same way. He then went to the room where the two sisters Ruth and Vreneli, six- and four-years-old were sleeping in the same bed. They too met with the same fate.

Still in his pyjamas, Lehmann descended to the ground floor where his mother was living and told her, with complete composure, that he was going out and that she needn't worry if he didn't come back for lunch. He dressed, took his father's car and drove off.

The tragedy was discovered by his mother at 7.30 when she went upstairs to do the beds. A vast search operation was immediately organised. The Police, feeling that Lehmann must have gone in the mountains, as he was used to doing, searched several small roads. As they were arriving at the restaurant called "Zur Alp", in the Commune of Oberbuchsiten, at an altitude of about 750 metres, a detachment of police saw Lehmann coming down from the pastures above. He turned back quickly and reaching the top of a gravel quarry, took out an old German pistol and a gun serving to kill cattle and shot himself in each temple just as a policeman was crying out for him not to do it.

His wife was the eldest daughter of fourteen children of Mrs. Johanna Ackermann, who lived at Holdenbank, near Balsthal. She had been aware of her daughter's behaviour and later said that she bore the responsibility for this dreadful tragedy.

The writer Durrenmatt is sued for libel

Playwright Friedrich Durrenmatt was sued for libel by journalist, Mr. Hans Habe, before the District Court of Zurich. The plaintiff had written an article on Harry Buckwitz, former Director of the Schauspielhaus in Zurich, and presently Director of Frank-

furt's Municipal Theatre, in which he had raised Buckwitz's Nazi affiliations. This article, based on a propaganda pamphlet allegedly written by Buckwitz, appeared in "Welt am Sonntage" on 31st May, 1970.

An irate Durrenmatt took Buckwitz's defence the following week in an interview with the "Sonntags Journal". The three declarations for which he was sued were as follows:

"Even if what Buckwitz had reportedly written is exact, Habe is a thousand times worse than Buckwitz ever was at the time he wrote the pamphlet".

2. "The only fascist in this whole business is Habe".

3. Asked whether he would give a reply to Habe, Durrenmatt had said: "One avoids stepping on the human and animal excrements one finds in one's path".

These three declarations were considered by Habe as "injurious to his honour". His lawyer claimed that Durrenmatt had acted without reflection and had involuntarily lied. "A man held in high public esteem is not free to violate other people's honour in his writings".

Durrenmatt's lawyer pleaded for his client's acquittal and said that the propaganda brochure mentioned by Habe was a forgery. This, he said, had been the cause of Durrenmatt's anger.

RELIGION

Catholics in majority in Switzerland

The December 1970 Census showed that the relative importance of the two main confessions in Switzerland has changed dramatically since 1950. The Roman Catholic population has grown from 1,960,000 to 3,100,000, an increase of 58 per cent, whilst the number of Protestants has risen from 2,660,000 to 2,990,000, an increase of only 12 per cent. These figures, needless to say, relate to formal religious membership, and not to personal conviction. By that token, 97 per cent of all residents in Switzerland belong to either one of these two confessions (members of sects have been included among the Protestants), this leaves only 3 per cent for Christian Catholics, Jews and people "without religion". The effectives of the latter have increased from 29,000 to 72,000 from 1950 to 1970.

The growth of Catholics is mainly due to the influx of thousands of foreign Catholic workers. Other important factors are: The higher birthrate of Catholics and the marriage of Swiss men to foreign women. In fact, only 475,000 of the new Catholics are Swiss, while 665,000 are foreign. Of the new Protestants, 260,000 are Swiss and only 70,000 foreign.

The relative importance of Protestantism and Catholicism varies



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strongly from canton to canton. The proportion of Catholics varies from 81 to 96 per cent in the six cantons of Central Switzerland, Fribourg, Valais, Tessin and Appenzell Inner Rhodes. The Protestant majority has been lost in Berne, Appenzell Outer Rhodes, Schaffhausen, Vaud, Zurich, Neuchatel and Basle-Land.

CANTONAL

160 workers laid off in a machine-tool factory

La Société des Instruments de Physique, a highly reputable Geneva firm specialising in precision machine tools, has had to make 160 workers and employees redundant owing to a sharp drop in export orders, which usually accounts for 90 per cent of its business. These redundancies follow previous ones which had been decided in November and had affected about eighty workers. Although most of the redundancies will be cleared up by vacancies in other local firms, many of the highly qualified workers will not obtain the same earnings in alternative employment.

These mass redundancy measures, involving about 12 per cent of the firm's payroll, are the most important suffered by any Swiss firm since the present deterioration of the monetary situation and the American and German economies. Orders have gone down by 22 per cent and its order book is about half that necessary for normal operations. Mr. Pierre Turretini, Chairman of the Company, said that the situation was now at its lowest and "bound to improve". The machine-tool sector has been suffering from a slump in other industrial countries as well, particularly Great Britain, America and West Germany.

Separatist demonstration in Berne

About two thousand members of the *Belier* movement assembled in the heart of the capital at the end of last month. Their leaders: Mr. Germain Donzé, President of the Rassemblement Jurassien, Mr. Françoise Lachat, Vice-President of this organisation and Delegate to the Great Council, and Mr. Rémy Marchand, Separatist delegate to the Great Council, made inflammatory speeches before a packed gathering of young people waving a forest of Jurassian flags and panels saying "We've had enough!". "The Jura's roads—a disgrace".

The speakers claimed for better roads for the Jura which was the theme of the demonstration. Speakers held that Berne had received 200 million francs for her motorways last year,

while the districts of the Jura hadn't received "one centime". Mr. Lachat compared this with the situation prevailing in Berne in the 19th Century. The speakers also called for an "independent" Mediatory Commission, and the tabling of a motion to the Great Council demanding for immediate road credits to the Jura.

The police, although aware that something was being prepared, were caught off their guard and the demonstrators had time to march towards Bärenplatz and paste a hundred yards of tramways with asphalt. This produced a few scuffles with outraged on-lookers, but no serious incidents. The police managed to lay their hands on one of the tar-smearers.

The march broke up at Bärenplatz. It had clogged the traffic in the centre of the town for one-and-a-half hours. The demonstrators handed out leaflets stressing that it was in "Berne's interest to set the Jura free".

Elections at Basle-Town

The elections to the Executive of Basle-Town on 18th-19th March, ended with a Conservative landslide, despite a poor attendance. A fortnight beforehand, the Socialists managed to have three officers at the Executive Council re-elected, whereas the Conservatives (two Liberal candidates, two Radicals and one Christian Democrat) did not build an absolute majority.

The results of the second vote were reversed. Confident after their initial success, the Socialists set about improving it further in a second ballot and obtaining the position they had enjoyed twenty years ago. They threw a newcomer into the battle, Mr. Helmut Hubacher, a turbulent Socialist always ready to be "in the wind". A considerable amount of propaganda surrounded his candidacy, and he gained the immediate support of several small, far-left and communist groups. But the bulk of the organised working men were unmoved. Fewer people turned up to the polls (40,000) than a fortnight before (66,000). The Independants and the National Action invited their members to stay out of the voting.

The fight turned out to pit the Conservatives against Socialists. Four right-wing candidates were present on a single list. Mr. Lukas Burkhardt, a Liberal, won 30,500 votes, followed by two Radicals and a Christian Democrat candidate. Mr. Hubacher, despite the backing of the trade unions, the progressists and the Communists, managed to capture only 15,600 votes.

Thus the Socialists of Basle lost a wager, and the town's government will continue for some time to have a Conservative majority.

New aquarium at Basle Zoo

Basle's Zoo has a new and unique aquarium. It is next to the main entrance and is designed to offer as close a resemblance as possible to the natural environments of a host of European and tropical fish and amphibians.

The visitor enters through a ramp gently going underground and has the impression of walking beneath the sea. Vast windows on both sides of the gangway give him a panoramic view of marine sceneries, rocks and algae. Each window has different kinds of fish—from the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, the Pacific and the North Sea.

As the visitor resurfaces along a gently winding ramp, he can also admire a few giant porpoises, a python and various amphibians. The new aquarium at Basle Zoo (called the "Vivarium") is a technical feat which has required several years of study. Few aquariums are known to imitate the natural environment as well as Basle's.

Large drugs take

Geneva police had a lucky catch as they raided the apartment of a woman and found 31 kilogrammes of marijuana and 500 grammes of opium. This may not seem much in comparison with the million pound drug hauls occasionally made in Marseilles and America, but then Geneva is not the Chicago of Switzerland. The police initially found the opium and a small quantity of marijuana in the woman's flat. It was when they had the idea of investigating the cellar that they found over 30 kilogrammes of marijuana hidden in three suitcases.

Two young people, aged 23 and 20, were arrested in connection with the case. They were accused of dealing in marijuana, which in this case was said to have come from Nigeria.

Swiss communes group to float public bond issue

One hundred and sixty communes, members of the Association of Swiss Communes, have joined a central fund which will issue bonds on the market in their name. Communes will be responsible to investors in proportion to the amount each one has subscribed from the common fund.

The idea is original. While the large local authorities have in the past contracted loans from the general public and issued municipal bonds, the small commune neither has the administrative means nor the financial weight to have such issues underwritten. The expenditure of small communes has however risen constantly in the past. This is due to rising costs, urbanisations and the obligatory in-

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vestments often required by the Cantons or the Confederation.

Despite growing commitments, communes have been finding it harder to obtain funds by traditional means, namely bank loans, as banks are either wary of their credit worthiness and make credit conditions difficult, or are prevented from lending by official guidelines regarding credit restrictions.

An offer will now be made to the investing public by a central fund to which a great many small communes have joined. The first issue, amounting to 20 million francs, will be launched in May. The bonds will carry interest and will be negotiable like any other securities.

To curb vice in Zurich

Zurich's local authorities are to make life more difficult for the towns' 630 registered prostitutes. New by-laws now forbid them to exercise their profession in the neighbourhood of schools, churches, bus stops, hospitals, inhabited squares as well as in the city's green spaces. In fact, the area where they remain free to operate, within the strict time limits of 8 p.m. to 3 a.m. is the Niederdorf area.

These new regulations follow a petition made by townspeople who were disturbed at night by prostitutes carrying out their business by car. An official team set out on a tour of Austria and Germany to see how these countries were tackling the problem. A spokesman said on his return that there was "no question of adopting the German brothel system".

Mr. Walter Hubatka, Zurich's police chief, said in a press conference that, taking account of the women who only occasionally negotiate their assets, the number of prostitutes in Zurich probably reach about 1,200. The "regulars" earn on average 20,000 francs a month, but they are heavily taxed (on estimated income as exact earnings are impossible to assess) and bring in considerable monies to the coffers of the Commune. Each one of them has a file in police records stating which model of car she owns, whether she operates with a wig on, or has a dog, etc.

Mr. Walter Hubatka came out with various statistics giving insight on how women engage this trade. We will quote only the following: Nearly half of the prostitutes (48 per cent) of Zurich are between 20 and 30 years old, 10 per cent are below 20, 23 per cent between 30 and 40, 14 per cent between 40 and 50 and 5 per cent above 50. Mr. Hubatka said that prostitution was an ill that could not be stamped out. Official policy was to keep it within reasonable limits. The problem was no worse in Zurich than in other Swiss towns, the only difference being a quantitative one due to the size of Zurich and its suburbs.

The master guide

"For 35,000 to 50,000 francs, Mr. Hanz Lenzlinger will undertake to organise repatriation from countries of Eastern Europe."

This small ad appeared last month in the Swiss and the German press. The man who offers such a service is a Zurich businessman aged 44. He claims that he can bring back any citizen from Communist countries. His purpose is by no means idealistic it is honest and plain quest of profit.

"I have already saved eleven persons, seven others will soon be secretly brought over to the West."

Hanz Lenzlinger has a taste for risk. He has opened an office in the heart of Zurich. So far, he claims, he has never met with failure. Of course, one has to believe him because the victims of eventual mistakes are not available for comment. The East German security police don't usually allow candidates to the West a second chance.

Hanz Lenzlinger relies on disciplined adventurers. As the men take immense risks, and are liable to sentences of ten years hard labour if they are caught, they obviously have a right to be well paid. They have recourse to various methods of stowing away the people they have the job of transferring to the west. Recently, Lenzlinger's organisation managed to "export" to Krevelingen, a 33-year-old, partially paralysed East German biologist, Hellen Rieske. She was picked up in Prague and hidden under the back seat of a large American limousine. The car hauled a horse caravan (with a real horse inside), the purpose of which was to divert the attention of Czech customs officials.

Hanz Lenzlinger usually gets 35 per cent cut of the cost of each operation. The people who seek him out are (usually wealthy) former East Germans, Czechs and Hungarian citizens willing to spend a small fortune

to be reunited with their friends and relatives from whom they have been separated by political circumstances.

The Association of 1914-18 Veterans

The years have not weakened the survival ties of the members of the Geneva "Union des mobilisés 14-18". There were 363 of them five years ago. 245 members were still alive at the time of their 1972 AGM, and a fair proportion were in sufficient good health to participate at a lunch at the Buffet of Cornavin Station.

The purpose of this association? To remain a refuge for great national values such as respect of tradition, spirit of service and loyalty, which are expressed by one's attachment to the Motherland and the Army. It was in this vein that the veterans, the youngest of whom is only 74, listened to a speech by Mr. André Ruffieux, Head of the Cantonal Military Department and a municipal councillor, who lashed out against the "Thirty-two" (re: the priests and clergymen who last February said they would refuse to pay their military tax) and the "Forty-three" (a subsequent groupment backing the assertions of the former). Mr. Ruffieux said that these movements aimed at "misleading youth". He criticised them for not using the legal means that were open to them to change the traditions of the country, if this they must do.

The old "mobilised" heard an address by Captain Georges Wyss, President of the Bernese Society of 1914-18 Veterans, who brought them the greetings of the Confederate Veterans. The municipal band of Plainpalais entertained the gathering. After the raising of the flag, and the reading of the list of the twenty deaths recorded since the last meeting by Sergeant-Major Paul Birchmeier, 75, he band played a subdued interpretation of "J'Avais un camarade". The former Secretary, the *appointé* Raymond

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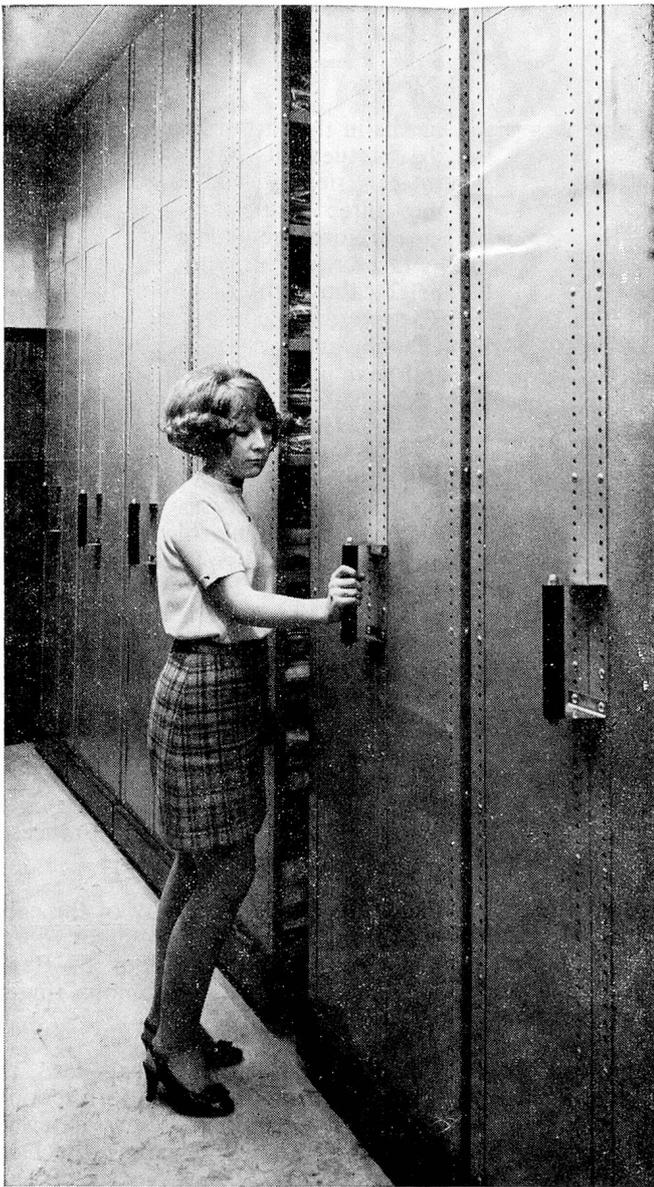
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Vernet, who was at one time President of the Geneva Bar, was elected President by acclamation. He succeeds to Corporal Auguste Bernoud, 80, who resigned on account of ill health.

To subsidise political parties

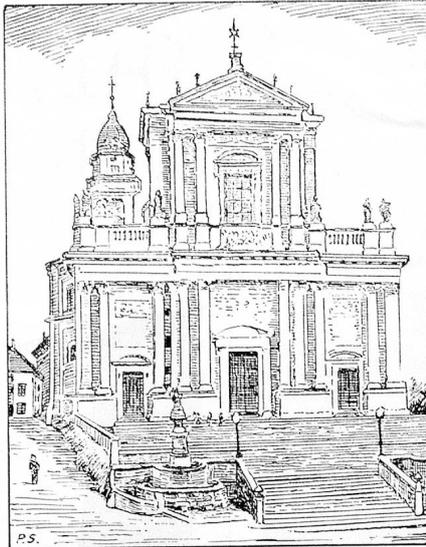
A delegate to the Great Council of Zurich has tabled a motion inviting the cantonal government to "study the possibility of allocating financial support to political parties, and to examine the feasibility of deducing contributions paid to those political parties from the taxable income of firms and individuals". This proposal was backed by 93 out of 115 delegates. It seems more doubtful that the people of Zurich, to whom such a scheme would eventually have to be submitted, would be in favour. It would anyway require an alteration of the tax law.

For and against the "32"

The collection of signatures is actively under way in the Valais and the Jura for a petition to be addressed to Parliament expressing support for the "32" ministers and priests who had declared their opposition to the present form of national service. The petition which was launched in Sierre demands the speedy creation of an alternative Civil Service.

Meanwhile, ministers and priests in Zurich organised a counter-petition expressing a clear and unequivocal "yes" to the Swiss Confederation and its Army. The text of the petition which citizens are asked to sign says: "In saying 'yes' to the Army, we are saying 'yes' to the right and to the duty of the State to guarantee its own independence. Our militia system should not only help to secure the strongest possible defence, but also reflect the responsibility of every citizen in the protection of his country".

SWISS CATHEDRALS



SOLOTHURN: ST. URSUS CATHEDRAL

The cathedral of St. Ursus and Victor on a height East of the town, can be seen from a great distance. Since 1828, it is the cathedral of the new bishopric of Basle. A temple of Apollo must have occupied in Roman times, the site of the present church. A Christian church was built in the 5th Century on the graves of Ursus and Victor, martyrs of the Thebean legion in the Burgundian epoch. It is to this first church, constructed by Werthrada, the mother of Charlemagne, that the legend of Ursus and Victor is connected.

The construction of the ancient cathedral dates of the 11th century; the western tower collapsed in the 18th.

The renowned architect Gaetano Antonio Pisoni (1713-1782) and his nephew Paolo Antonio Pisoni (1738-1804) both from Ascona (Ticino) constructed the actual cathedral between 1762 and 1773. It is a beautiful building in the best Italian Renaissance in Switzerland. Between two artificial

basins in the form of sea shells bearing the statues of Samson and Moses, three series of eleven steps lead to the three sculptured porches. The facade, ornamented with statues and candelabrum of stone, rises to a great height above the neighbouring houses. The interior is cruciform. Ten powerful columns support the vaults of the central nave and of the transept; the small lateral naves have each three altars.

An imposing cupola, with three demi-cupolas, rises above the middle of the Latin cross. The cathedral numbers eleven marble altars artistically decorated by Domenisco Corvi, Joseph Escher, F.-J. Wirtz, Guiribal and J.-H. Treu. The ceiling frescopaintings are from Domenisco Pozzi, and Gottfried Bernhard Götz, of Augsburg. The pulpit, ornamented with sculptures in relief, is the work of Doret, from Vevey; the high altar and sarcophagus of the Thebeans, as well as the beautiful works in stucco, were executed by the Ticinese Francesco and Carlo Pozzi.

At the N.E. extremity of the cathedral, the tower of Saint-Ursus, 60 m. high, rises above the door of Basle. It contains a very harmonious ringing of eleven bells.

The 15th Century has seen the greater part of the town's fortifications disappear, including a few gateways of great architectural value: the Door of Berne and the Door of Bienne (Gurzelenthor). The Door of Basle (Eichthor) has been preserved, for ever we hope. It was constructed by the architect Jean Gibelin between 1504 and 1508. His son Conrad perfected the construction in 1535, in providing the towers with defensive works of protection. This beautiful doorway, enhanced by the Cathedral tower of Saint-Ursus, is one of the most admirable sights of Solothurn.

Pierre Savoie

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