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# The Swiss Observer

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# HOME NEWS

## ELEVEN YUGOSLAVS INVOLVED IN MINOR SPYING INCIDENTS

The Department of Justice and Police announced that legal action was being taken at federal level against a number of Yugoslav nationals charged with political and financial espionage. The Department's communique announced three distinct cases. Two of them were not infrequent among the working community of Yugoslavs in Switzerland: In the first instance, a Yugoslav was accused of spying on his compatriots on orders from the Yugoslav government; in the second, a man was charged with bringing pamphlets hostile to the Belgrade government into Switzerland and asking a compatriot to transport this literature to Yugoslavia. He was forbidden entry to the country for an unlimited period.

The third case could involve attempts at breaking Swiss banking secrecy. It is known that the Yugoslav authorities are concerned by the growing number of Yugoslav-held numbered accounts. This trend is due in particular to the presence in Switzerland of thousands of Yugoslav workers. The case reported by the Department refers to attempts by two Yugoslav civil servants to obtain information on a particular firm based in Switzerland, which a Yugoslav bank was interested in acquiring. Two Yugoslav executives of this firm and another person had broken into the Zurich flat of another Yugoslav employee in order to obtain certain confidential documents. These were handed to the Yugoslav civil servants. Eleven Yugoslav nationals have been involved in these cases, which were reported with considerable indignation by the Belgrade daily *Politika*. The paper complained over the total absence of evidence supplied for the Swiss move and at the fact that the Yugoslav Embassy had not been informed.

### Delicate workers

The Public Works Department of Canton Aarau resorted to flocks of sheep to trim the grass growing on the banks of the Motorways crossing the Canton. After two or three years, the experiment had to be abandoned. The sheep proved to be of precarious health and unable to live in the polluted atmosphere surrounding the motorway. They had to be moved to more salubrious pastures.

displays all of the Swiss cantonal shields as a permanent part of its exterior design. Towns called Geneva and Berne are sure reminders of the origins of their founders. Prosperous Swiss colonies were founded in the alpine valleys of northern Utah and southern Idaho. They have received an influx of new Swiss converts as recently as the immediate post-war years. Swiss dialects and tradition play an important role in the varied Mormon ethnic patchwork.

Polygamy was instituted by Brigham Young in 1852 but was banned in 1890. It appears that only a fraction of the Swiss Mormons availed themselves of this right during these thirty-eight years. One of them was the pioneer Henry Reiser, who had four wives, but left them to carry out his missionary calling in Europe. It appears on the other hand that the settlers had some difficulty in abiding by the teetotal rule imposed by the Mormon leader and were told to uproot the wine vines of Santa Clara. The Mormon ban on alcohol eventually

became so strict that the wine for Holy Communion was substituted by water.

Today, the Swiss National Day on 1st August is an important occasion in Salt Lake City and "Swiss Days" in the highlands of central Utah draw thousands of tourists to their annual fair. The traditions of Swiss folklore—native costumes and music—and of Swiss culinary arts have by no means been forgotten.

1st August celebrations traditionally feature a concert by the Swiss Edelweiss Chorus and a lively dance in one of the city's Mormon Wards. Salt Lake City's Peace Garden has a Swiss section in which a huge concrete replica Matterhorn stands amid ornamental flower beds with transplanted edelweiss dominated by a flag that flutters in the dry winds of Utah.

These displays are a sure sign of the impact of the Swiss in the heroic history of this area and of the bonds that still exist between its citizenry and the homeland of their forefathers.

smoke-bombs in the hall at Delemont where he was addressing a crowd attending the Jura's annual "*Marche Concours*".

Over the past three years the Beliers have made their existence felt with several other "pranks" such as lighting a bonfire in the heart of Berne, walling up the entrance of the capital's town hall, pouring asphalt over tram-lines and storming into the middle of a world-championship ice-hockey match. They have also sent delegations to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Surprisingly, they have had remarkably little trouble from the law. A highly-publicised trial following their occupation of Police headquarters in Delemont two years ago ended in a few trivial prison sentences.

The authorities have shown great restraint in an effort not to deteriorate the situation of the Jura, whose inhabitants have an identity distinct from Berne, but are prepared to work towards self-determination democratically and constitutionally.

However vocal and militant, the Beliers are a minority among their own people. Their attitude has brought increasingly more pressing calls for a firmer stand against them in the Jura.

P.M.B.

## COMMENT

### PROSPECT OF VIOLENCE IN THE JURA

The demonstrations of the *Belier Group*, or youth organisation of the Separatist movement of the Jura, is confronting modern Switzerland with the prospect of internal violence for the first time.

While many of the activities of the Beliers can be ascribed to their ebullient Latin temperament, and to a certain degree of gameness, the possibility of an outbreak of violence in the Jura and elsewhere cannot be ignored. The Separatist militants have been the first to talk of violence. Recalling that their struggle for independence from Berne has not reached its objectives 25 years after the creation of the "*Rassemblement Jurassien*", their spokesmen have often threatened to speed up proceedings by resorting to violence.

The Beliers have stepped up their activities during the past few weeks. Their main outburst was the occupation of the Belgian embassy in Berne, and of the Swiss embassy in Brussels. A few days later, they heckled the President of the Berne Executive Council, throwing bangers and

# HOW TO WIN ON FALLING £

The fall of the pound sterling and the dollar has opened new savings opportunities to those travellers sufficiently crafty or intent on bargaining to take them. A Scottish businessman recently bought a Geneva-Edinburgh return ticket for 792 francs, or the equivalent of 111.60 pounds at the rate valid on the day of his purchase. He was understandably surprised to learn that the same company offered the return ticket the other way for only £83.60, or 25 per cent less.

Passengers going to New York will meet the same experience. The ticket from America to Switzerland is 20 per cent cheaper than one the other way. This can be made use of in various ways. Instead of taking a Geneva-New York return ticket, for example, tourists take a one-way ticket to London and take a London-New York flight paid for in pounds, and the New York-Geneva return journey bought in dollars in New York. Given the depressed exchange rates of the British and American currencies, they can make substantial savings. When the pound was quoted at 7 francs 50 and the dollar at 2 francs 93, the difference between the cost of a Geneva-New York return ticket (2,646 francs) and the method outlined (2,205 francs) was 441 francs. But it

takes some trouble to achieve this. A simpler way is to buy a London, Geneva, New York return ticket and buy it in London. In this case, the saving would amount to 600 francs. A similar scheme for Sydney, consisting leaving from London via Geneva would allow savings of 1,200 francs.

These anomalies are due to the system of payment within IATA companies. This system is based on the conventional exchange rates of sterling and the dollar. The rates are set at 3 francs 90 for the dollar and 10 francs 16 for the pound – obviously no longer valid. In fact, they have been depressed by 25 per cent since they were established at one of the innumerable IATA conferences.

IATA (International Air Transport Association) countered by various measures which proved rather ineffective such as: surcharge of 6 to 10 per cent on tickets bought in countries with weak currencies (USA, Britain and Italy); freezing tariffs in national currencies to their February level; obligation to buy a ticket in the currency of the country of issue. These measures are inherently unfair because they have not led to a reduction of journeys from countries with strong currencies to those in a less

favourable position. This they should have done, since strong currencies have gone up in value. A Swiss passenger leaving from Zurich pays more for a ticket subjected to a tariff freeze because of the revaluation of the franc. In effect, passengers from countries like Switzerland subsidise those from Britain and America.

## THE HORSES OF ZERMATT ARE ALL SICK

One of the great attractions of Zermatt is its total absence of motorised traffic. All cars must stop below the resort and transport within it is carried out by horse-drawn taxis – sledges in the winter, and coaches in the summer. During the third week of July, the fifty horses of Zermatt ensuring the execution of this service fell ill with flu. Tourists were told to carry their luggage themselves to their hotels, although snow tractors were occasionally called to the rescue. Struck by a peculiar virus, all the horses of Zermatt with the exception of two or three were unable to work and were convalescing during the last two weeks of July. The symptoms of this equine flu were high temperatures and sweating. The virus had been brought into the resort by a newly acquired German-Swiss horse who had picked it up from a military horse. The unfortunate victim was found dead in its stable but the contagion had already been primed and within days all the horses of Zermatt were stable-bound and receiving the daily care of a municipal vet.

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## MYSTERY OF THE MISSING BUEHRLE SHARES

The Buehrle family empire announced two years ago that it was going public. Mr. Dieter Buehrle, Chairman of the Group, said at the time that the "thorny problem of armaments production could only be solved by public participation". He added that this would lend "transparency" to the firm's dealings in accordance with federal desires. Buehrle is a thriving company with about a billion franc annual turnover. The main factory is the Oerlikon-Buehrle plant at Oerlikon (Buehrle) famous for its guns and machine tools.

By going public, the firm's capital was increased from 180 to 230 million francs and the issue was underwritten by a syndicate of Switzerland's main public and private banks. Shares were sold at 500 francs for a face value of 250 francs. The day after the launch of the issue they were being exchanged outside the Zurich stock-exchange at 575 francs, and reached 640 francs the following day. But the demand was such that thousands of savers interested in this stock were unable to get any. It was revealed that even an important Zurich private bank had only managed to obtain five. Financial writers charged the Syndicate with keeping the shares for themselves or their regular customers. They criticised this attitude as it went against the Buehrle family's purpose of making their company "public". Mr. Dieter Buehrle left the shares issue to the entire discretion of the Syndicate, only asking for a 7 million franc slice to be kept in reserve for the

2,000 Buehrle employees who had shown interest in buying their company's stock.

They had been entitled to a maximum of ten shares each.

## SLOW TAKE-OFF OF PORNOGRAPHY

In the main, the German-Swiss are considered far more serious, law-abiding, red-tape conscious than their French-speaking compatriots. This is obviously a question of Latin versus Germanic temperament and culture. This very hazy opposition also applies, it is sometimes said, to the sphere of morals. The German-Swiss have traditionally had the reputation of being more puritanical and "serious" in moral matters than the Westerners.

The reality behind this picture has probably been reversed completely during the past ten to fifteen years, as the Press reports more and more instances of drug addiction and sexual permissiveness in the large cities of German-speaking Switzerland. Another surprising fact is that no sex shops have yet opened in *Suisse Romande* whereas there are three of them in Canton Berne alone — in Berne, Thun and Biel.

The one in Berne is on a main and central street. It is hardly different from similar shops seen in Britain and sells the various products and instruments designed to enhance the joys of the seventh heaven. However, the shop also sells obscene literature — an item belonging to specialised bookstalls in London. The literature admitted in Switzerland to be sold openly is mainly German. Hard-core pornography of the

Swedish and Danish kind is still too rough for Switzerland and confiscated at the border. There is nevertheless a considerable amount of smuggling of blue films and obscene magazines.

The firm running the Berne sex-shop intends to open one in Lausanne, where they claim that there is a good market. They have two problems. One is purely technical: as the French may not legally produce pornography, the shop would have to sell German literature. This could inhibit sales. The other problem is that of Cantonal authorisation. Although there are federal guidelines on pornography, this is a field where legislation belongs to the Canton. It is up to local authorities to decide whether it is in the interest of the community to allow trade of this kind.

Questioned by *la Tribune de Genève* the Head of Geneva's Department of Justice and Police said: "Opening a sex shop is in my view more of a moral than a legal problem. The boutiques of this kind that I've seen in some large cities are really pathetic. Do we have to fall that low?"

### Trade deficit increases

Switzerland's trade deficit during the first six months of the year has increased by 1.7 per cent over the same period last year. Imports rose to 17,628 million francs and exports totalled 14,248 million thus producing a shortfall of 3,380 million francs. The trade deficit is usually balanced by invisible exports such as tourism, banking, investments and insurance. The strength of a national currency is directly related to a country's trade balance figures. By that token, some experts have said that the Swiss franc has become overvalued following the heavy fall of the pound and the dollar. The pound fell as low as S.Fr. 6.60 but was selling in Zurich for about S.Fr. 7.20 at the end of July.



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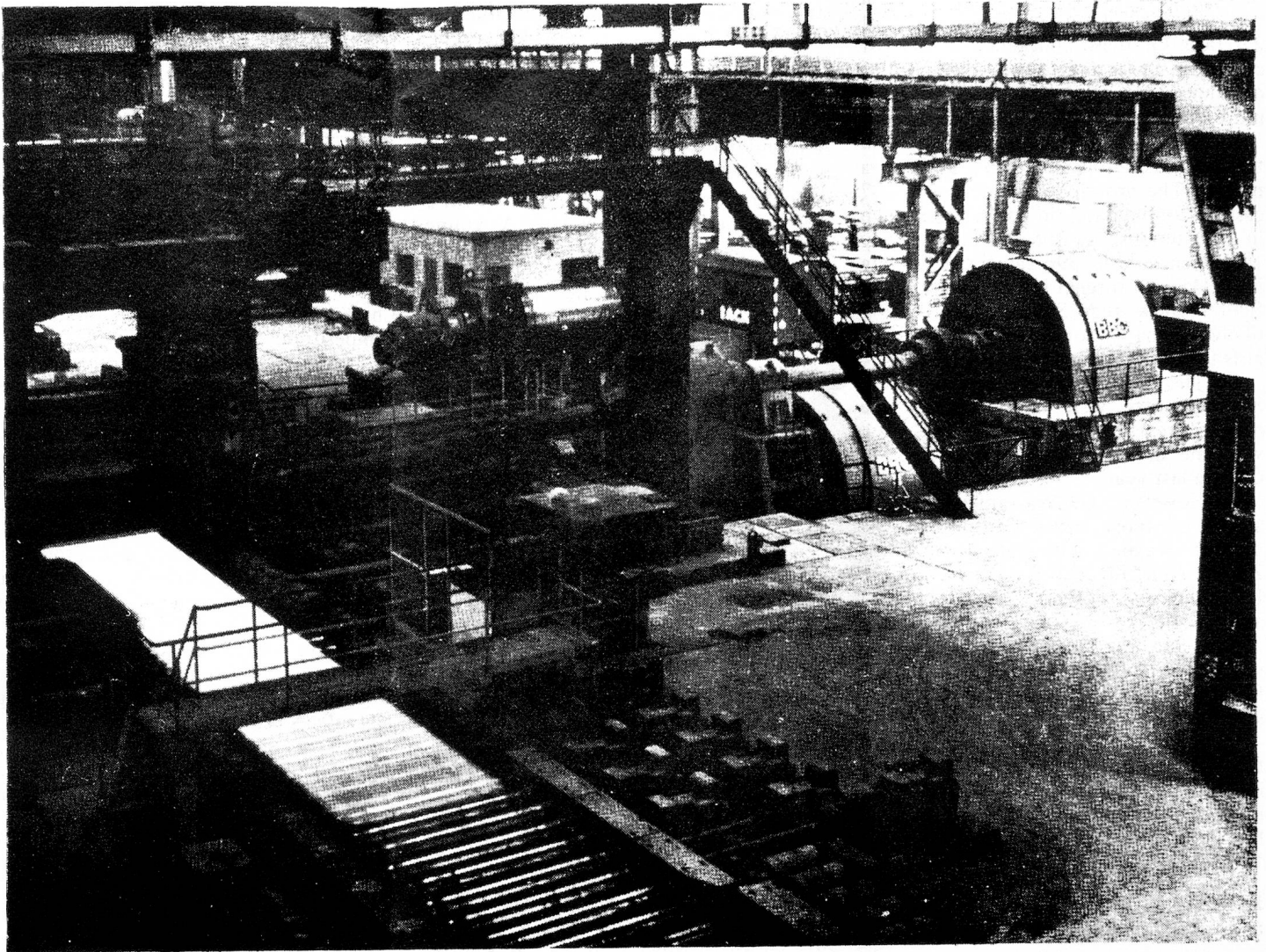
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## ONE DIVORCE FOR THREE WEDDINGS

The population statistics of the city of Geneva should reflect the same trends as in other urban areas of Switzerland. Figures recently released showed that 3,768 babes were born last year in Geneva, which has a population of about 220,000. Of these children, only 41 per cent were Swiss and the rest foreign. 187 of them were illegitimate, 15 per cent more than the previous year.

2,293 marriages were celebrated in the whole Canton and 1,295 in Geneva proper. The groom was Genevese in 607 cases, "confederate" in 1,046 and foreign in 640 unions. As for the brides, they were Genevese in 396 cases, confederate in 1,045 and foreign in 852 cases. These figures show that Swiss men are more likely to marry foreign girls than Swiss girls to marry foreigners!

The divorce rate has also increased. 874 divorces were recorded by the cantonal registrar, which means that there was one divorce for three marriages in Geneva last year.

However, Geneva appears to be ahead of most other Cantons in the divorce league. Although figures for Zurich (one divorce for six weddings), Lausanne (one for five), Neuchatel (same) and Basle-Town (one for six) are comparable, the situation is rosier in the more rural cantons. There is one divorce for nine weddings in Berne and one in seventeen in Fribourg.

Switzerland's divorce rate is about the same as Britain's. For 10,000 inhabitants, there are 9.6 divorces a year in Switzerland, 31.6 in the US, 7.2 in France, 18.3 in Denmark, 10.4 in Britain 10 in West Germany and 0.5 in Portugal.

### Kaiseraugst campaigners astir over a "toy"

The impassioned campaigners who fought against the Kaiseraugst nuclear power station realised that they were battling over a trifling issue when the learnt of what was at stake on the other side of the Rhine. At the German village of Schoerstadt, about fifteen miles upstream of Basle, the German electricity board is planning to build a power station which will be the largest in the world. Developing 3,600 megawatts and costing 4.5 billion deutschmarks, it will be more

powerful than Beznau 1, Beznau 2, Mulheberg (which are operational) and the planned power stations of Kaiseraugst, Leibstadt and Goesgen put together. It is not clear how the Germans will cool this mammoth power-station. If they use the Rhine, they may face some stiff opposition from environmentalists. The Swiss Government has banned the use of rivers for the necessary cooling of nuclear power stations as heating natural waterways would affect their ecology.

### A school-master sacked for his sexual teaching

Parents in St. Gall are astir with a new teacher-sacking incident. A young primary teacher, Mr. Roland Stark, was formerly reprimanded and then unexpectedly sacked by the school authorities for having dispensed sexual education which was deemed too "audacious". Although the great majority of parents had supported Mr. Stark's methods, one father was shocked and lodged a complaint which led to the teacher being deprived of the holiday camps he had been in charge of. During one of these week-long camps, it was alleged that Mr. Stark had preferred swimming pool outings, mini-golf and sexual education classes to showing his pupils the beauty of the human and natural heritage of the Engadine. Mr. Stark was moreover charged with using non-official textbooks on sexual matters and allowing his pupils to call him by his Christian name with the familiar "du".

Mr. Stark's sacking came as a surprise as the school authorities had previously announced that a reconciliation would be attempted. They explained that Mr. Stark had to go as confidence between him and them, and between the parents and the school, had broken down. But the local population was hardly satisfied with this explanation and is expected to press for Mr. Stark's speedy reinstatement.

### 15,000 drug addicts in Switzerland?

The Association of workers in rehabilitation centres reckon that between 12,000 and 15,000 young Swiss are drug addicts and crave for regular intravenous injections. Their average age is 17 and new addicts are as young as 13. Of the drugs leading to hospital

internment, those derived from opium are naturally the most prominent. From 1955 to 1964, it was estimated that a quarter of the patients of rehabilitation clinics attempted to commit suicide. This proportion has today risen to nearly a third.

Investigations have failed to yield a precise figure for those who are dependant on certain medicines or chemical drugs. However, five to ten per cent of the Swiss population regularly takes pain killing or sleeping tablets. One to five per cent require stimulants. Abusive use of tranquillisers was a rare occurrence until 1960. A considerable increase has been noted since then and the drug Valium accounts for 62 per cent of all tranquillisers sold.

### Cheese-makers angry at unfair foreign competition

Angry Swiss cheese producers held a special meeting in Berne to pass resolutions against what they consider excessive imports of foreign cheese. They are demanding new controls and protection against the invasion of different types of cheeses, particularly cream and soft-paste cheese from neighbouring countries. These products, they claim, should submit to the same quality and hygiene regulations as home-produced cheese. But above all, they have called for renewed support policy. The Government has refused to back cheese producers by offering guaranteed prices, as in the case of milk. Instead, a system of sponsored price reductions has been put in operation. The government spends 175 million francs a year to support home-made cheese, 75 million francs of which is used for lowering the price of home made cheese.

### Too many celebrations in the Nyon district

One of the problems facing the communal presidents in the Nyon district (Lake Geneva) is the means of reducing the number of village celebrations. The "syndics" noted that during 17 days in July, nine were devoted to various "fêtes" in the villages of the area. It was felt that this was too much. The meeting agreed to institute a voluntary convention asking communes to coordinate their official festivities and limiting them to two days and two nights at most.



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