

**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:** - (1975)  
**Heft:** 1701

**Artikel:** Huge Blaze hits "Grand Passage"  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687004>

### **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:** 13.08.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

other foreign nationals wanting to be naturalised.

Some of the proposals will complicate the work of the Civil Service and have been turned down by a special study commission. It would thus be impractical for parents to choose the place of origin of their children. The wife would stick to her former citizenship, the husband would do likewise, and they might have an argument of what to do with their children. Children are like their mothers. They are given their father's place of origin. It is administratively more convenient but of course, in slight contradiction to the ideals of a completely equal marriage.

## URI GELLER ATTRACTS CROWDS IN GENEVA

Uri Geller, the world's most famous psychic, whose key-bending abilities have put the scientific establishment upside down, performed on 15th January at the Vernets ice-rink before a huge crowd of Genevise and Frenchmen from neighbouring areas.

Geller, 26, an Israeli, who has resided for the past two-and-a-half-years in the United States, proved his qualities of showmanship, in addition to his psychic abilities, by holding the stage on his own for over two hours.

He performed his standard and well-known feats with a usual degree of success. These feats consist in telepathy, in bending keys by stroking them with his fingers, in repairing watches through the effect of his "magnetic fluid" and in setting back the hands of a watch. Uri also showed a film on his life.

At the watch-mending stage of his performance, he invited his audience to supply him with material. A large crowd of people surged to the stage and displayed innumerable time-pieces of all descriptions — there was even a cuckoo clock — which Geller set about repairing through his psychic powers. His success wasn't absolute. Some particularly rusted watches refused to be set in motion. Some, according to their owners, stopped again within a few hours.

Geller's recent record was also snapped up by Genevise. It is said that one can bend a spoon as magically as he can if one attempts the experiment while listening to the record. From an absolutely reliable source, we know of a case where television viewers in Geneva watching Geller perform in Paris, have had forks bending in their very hands. Quite baffling to scientists — and most aggravating to the rationalist!

Geller was interviewed by *La Tribune de Genève* who sponsored his show at Les Vernets. He told the paper that he held his powers from extraterrestrial beings. Anyone interested in knowing more about these beings should read his biography, by Andrija Puharich (Futura Publications, London). The book reads like science-fiction since it dwells on flying saucers as though they were as commonplace as jumbo jets.

## Women lovers create Men's Lib Club in Zurich

As a vast Women's Congress was opening in Berne, seven men from Zurich who had banded together formed a "Men's Lib Club" which was duly recorded in the Swiss Register of Commerce. The new Club, which meets regularly in a Zurich night spot, was formed to help the growing number of men downtrodden by increasingly domineering wives. At least, that is how the Club's President, Mr. Ulrich Schwendener, a Zurich lawyer, explained it.

"You should not think that we are against women. Quite the contrary, we like them very much. But women have a tendency these days, and particularly in left-wing circles, to take a hold of all the levers of power. Should they ever achieve this completely — we haven't reached that stage yet, but may well do in the next fifty years — then our present political system will have come to an end."

"Take the case of Mrs. Regula Pestalozzi, an emancipated woman with a seat in the Zurich Government. A man could never have acted as she did against Dr. Haemmerli, accused of practising Euthanasia. Male politicians are more

supple — more ready to compromise. They may have a row in Parliament but are still able to have a meal together afterwards. Not so with women, they are too hard-headed for that."

"What we are fighting for is *real* equality. We agree that women should vote, but they should then also be made to serve the country, as by accomplishing some form of civic service. We agree to equal pay for women, but then, women should also pay their bit when going out with men friends and share household expenses with their husbands. We want to support those men that feel stifled or diminished by their wives. A man should be able to see his friends at the stammtisch or go for a two-day outing with the bowling club without facing a row with his wife. A woman should naturally enjoy the same rights. Take a case of a divorce I've had to handle. The woman blamed her husband for having risen in rank in the Army. She blamed him for having served his country!"

Mr. Schwendener claimed that his Club had received innumerable applications for membership, but he stressed: "We really do like women, you know. The Minutes of our meetings are taken down by a woman and we wouldn't want her to become a man."

# HUGE BLAZE HITS "GRAND PASSAGE"

A huge blaze almost completely destroyed Geneva's most important department store, the "Grand Passage" during the night of 25th January. The fire sent out an automatic alarm at 24 minutes past midnight in the Houseware Department (second floor). Within five minutes, the first firemen arrived on the scene, but the blaze had already spread out with extraordinary speed because the shop's new automatic sprinkler system was not yet operational. More than three hundred firemen were called to fight the blazing inferno during the whole night. The whole of Molard Square and neighbouring rue du Marché were lit up by 60-ft. flames rising into the icy sky. Thick smoke was still billowing from the building five hours after the alarm, and firemen were pouring their final jets of water on smouldering heaps of debris.

The fire was one of the worst in Geneva's history. Preliminary estimates of damages and losses to stock were put as high as a hundred million francs. All the floors above the second were gutted by fire and goods on the lower floor were seriously damaged by water. An enquiry has been opened into the possibility of arson. Investigators are puzzled by the fact that a mysterious fire had been started in the same Department during a night in October 1972. Also unexplained

was the fact that a second fire was set alight near the escalators on the first floor shortly after the arrival of the fire brigades. Other suspicious fires had occurred during two previous days in Geneva.

Meanwhile, the Grand Passage's management are planning to continue their business in empty premises at the Acacias shopping area, where an 8,000 square metre space was recently vacated by a perfume store. The salvageable goods will be sorted out and moved to these new premises. The jobs of several hundred people are at stake. 400 French borderer employees have already set up a Committee to defend their jobs and find alternative employment. The disaster was more than just a fire. It was likely to have serious economic implications for the city in view of the deteriorating business situation.

One cause for relief was that the blaze broke out at night. Many people might have been killed had such a fire broken out during peak hours of business. Although the Grand Passage had a well trained evacuation team and was designed in such a way that all its customers could be evacuated within seven minutes, the speed of the blaze might have impaired this efficiency.

The last big shop fire in Geneva