

**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:** - (1976)  
**Heft:** 1724  
  
**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:** 10.12.2025

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

# Conscientious objectors occupy much of our Parliament's time

## SWISS EVENTS

Parliament had a busy September Session. It is surprising to see how much new legislation the two Chambers can handle in one single month. The last Session ended with a major debate on a new bill on conscientious objection. This Bill, which was handled by the National Council and will probably be examined by the Council of States in the December Session (there are four monthly sessions a year — in March, June, September and December) would offer conscientious objectors the possibility of carrying out some sort of useful civilian service instead of national service.

Another important military topic to be broached by both Councils, in which several members asked the Government for details, was the Jeanmaire Affair. Mr. Fuergler, Head of the Department of Justice and Police, gave M.Ps details of this officer's activities. He revealed that he had been working for the Soviet Union for 14 years, supplying information on Switzerland's system of air raid protection, on her territorial zones, on total defence, on mobilisation and on Swiss political and military personalities.

Never in Switzerland's history had an officer of such rank (Colonel Jeanmaire was a Brigadier and headed Switzerland's Air Defence until retirement last year) been accused of acts of treason of such magnitude.

The Council of States had a look at Mr. Chevallaz's new financial package which intends to introduce V.A.T. in Switzerland. The Upper House decided to lower from 10 to 9 per cent the suggested rate of this new tax. This would reduce by Sw.Fr. 800 million the federal revenue derived from it. The Council of States also examined Mr. Chevallaz's plan to re-model the whole system of direct federal taxation. On the other hand, it rejected a Socialist initiative to impose a new tax on wealth.

Both Houses agreed on an interim law making subscription to an unemployment-insurance an obligatory exercise. A new law will be instituted on the matter in four years time. Interim provisions were also agreed, pending definite legislation, on the environmental planning of the country.

Decisions were taken on several initiatives. The two most recent ones relating to "overforeignisation" were rejected out of hand. These were the 4th Initiative, which was launched some time ago by the Republican Movement, and the 5th, which stemmed from the National Action party with the aim of restricting naturalisations of foreigners.

The same fate was meted out to an initiative launched by Mr. Franz Weber, a vocal environmental campaigner, aiming to give the people and Parliament more say in the construction of motorways. This last initiative still has to be examined by the National Council. This is also the case of an initiative on making abortion more easy. This initiative was rejected by 28 votes to 7 par the more conservative Upper House. But the drawn-out debate on the issue is far from over because Parliament still has to examine the Government's counter proposals. Those were tabled in response to the various radical ideas contained in the initiative which a Women's committee had launched on abortion.

The National Council also took up the matter of elections to the Federal Council. It decided that the Government could not include more than one representative from any Canton, as some M.Ps had urged. Pursuing its debate on the political rights of citizens, the Council of States agreed that the deadline for collecting the required number of signa-

tures in support of an initiative should be 18 months.

But the National Council had previously suggested that this deadline should be put at 12 months. Regarding the problem of giving the People more say in Switzerland's adhesion to international treaties, the Upper House suggested that Parliament should be entitled to submit, to an optional referendum, those treaties which are not so far obligatorily submitted to the approval of the electorate. The National Council thinks, for its part, that such provisions would not be necessary.

In the field of foreign affairs, both houses have agreed to give Sw.Fr. 63 million worth of aid to Portugal. A number of laws were adopted by one or both Houses. These pertained to: federal administration, trade in explosives, hydraulic energy, an international convention on patents, Sw.Fr. 80 million of federal aid for the construction of a railway tunnel under the Furka Pass and authority to the Federal Council to raise postal tariffs.

## SWISS CULTURAL EVENTS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

October-November — Department of Geography, University College of Swansea — *Swiss Cartography Exhibition*.

22nd November to 22nd December — Edinburgh College of Art — *Exhibition of Swiss Award-Winning Books and Posters*.

22nd to 27th November: Newcastle; 29th November-11th December: Birmingham — Manola Asensio dances leading roles with the London Festival Ballet.

Wednesday, 24th November — Queen Elizabeth Hall, 7.45 pm — *Honnegger's Concerto for Flute* (Richard Adeney) and *Cor Anglais* (James Brown) is one of the works

played by the English Chamber Orchestra.

Thursday 25th November — Royal Festival Hall, 8 pm — The soprano *Edith Mathis* sings Concert Arias by Mozart with the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Bernhard Klee.

Thursday, 25th November — University of Bristol; Thursday, 2nd December (provisional) — French Institute Theatre, London — The actress *Heddy Maria Wettstein* presents monodramas, in German.

27th November to 26th December — Norwich Castle Museum — *Prints and Drawings* by Felix Vallotton, an Arts Council Exhibition.

# THE JEANMAIRE SAGA CONTINUED

Readers who follow Swiss affairs with any degree of attention will have noted that cases of espionage occur with surprising frequency. For a country that is neutral and dissociated from any power bloc, one is astonished to learn periodically of the arrest of a foreign agent or the expulsion of a communist diplomat. Not all these cases, of which there must have been at least 20 since the war, concern national defence. One of the most important non-military affairs concerned the communication to Israel of the plans of the Swiss-built version of the Mirage III fighter. The Sulzer engineer responsible for these leaks helped Israel to build its new "Kfir" fighter much faster than it would have otherwise done.

The latest case of espionage concerning national defence appears to be very important. On 9th August, the former Chief of Air Defence, Colonel Brigadier Jean-Louis Jeanmaire, who had just retired having attained the age limit, was arrested on charges of espionage. His wife, who had assisted him in his activities, was not imprisoned because of her poor health.

Following five parliamentary demands for explanations, Mr. Kurt Fuergler, Head of the Department of Justice and Police, told Parliament that Colonel Jeanmaire had been passing out information to the Soviet Union for no less than 14 years.

Having been transferred in 1957 from the Infantry to the Air Defence forces, Jeanmaire was promoted to the rank of Colonel. Three years later, in 1960, he became acquainted with the Soviet Military Attaché in Berne. Both men immediately established friendly contacts. Before long, Jeanmaire began to hand over official and confidential documents to his Soviet colleague.

In 1964, the Soviet attaché left Switzerland but, in order to keep this rich source of information, he introduced his assistant to the Jeanmaire couple. Relations between the Colonel and the Soviet Embassy were thus maintained and it was eventually proved that Jeanmaire's contact at the Embassy belonged to Soviet military intelligence.

For obvious reasons, Mr. Fuergler refused to give details on the possible harm of Jeanmaire's disclosures to Swiss security, but one thing is certain — Soviet intelligence took a great interest in the information supplied by the Brigadier, both as a high-ranking officer and as Head of Air Defence.

In the latter capacity, he had access since 1969 to all the secret documents concerning his responsibilities and, in particular, the organisation of the various air defence units and their deployment. All this data fell into Soviet hands. Jeanmaire also supplied information on

Swiss territorial defence zones, the organisation of general defence and plans for mobilisation. He supplied details on the character and aptitudes of top Army and political leaders.

Mr. Fuergler said that Jeanmaire's temperament must have played a great role in the whole affair. According to some observers, he may have betrayed his country just to assert himself. As an answer to those who wonder how a man like Jean-Louis Jeanmaire, a man of second-rate intelligence, with a difficult and fragile character, and rude manner, could have been promoted as a Brigadier, Mr. Fuergler claimed that a system of military promotion that would exclude "traitors" with certainty had not yet been found. What was possible, though, was to improve the criteria which determine an officer's selection and study more closely the character and life style of the officers concerned.

But Mr. Fuergler stressed that the system presently implemented in Switzerland worked perfectly well and that it was not possible to judge it on one isolated case. He said that measures have already been taken to prevent weak characters from yielding to the temptations of espionage.

A list of officers and civil servants entitled to take part in the receptions offered by Soviet-bloc embassies had already been drawn.

The findings concerning Jeanmaire's activities are in the hands of the "Auditor-General" of the Army. Colonel Jeanmaire will be tried by a military court under military law. At what level this trial will take place has not yet been decided. Neither has any decision been taken on whether it should be held behind closed doors.

## CLOCKS WITH A SPORTY LOOK

A clock factory at Bienne has just marketed a new range of very original table-clocks, the Cavallino, whose case is an exact replica of the helmets worn by Formula 1 drivers. These mini-helmets are equipped with a battery powered movement and provided with a centre hand indicating the seconds. Sporty and very much in keeping with present tastes, the new clock bears witness to the close ties with the automobile world maintained by this Swiss firm specialising in the manufacture of chronographs and timers; in fact, it co-operates technically with Ferrari, installs many time devices for Grand Prix and other automobile races and sponsors a number of world-famous drivers.

## Berne shows bookings boom

A record number of exhibitions have already been booked for Berne for 1977 — evidence of the Swiss capital's increasing importance as a top venue for national and international events. The city itself is ideally located in the heart of Europe. And Berne's Guisanplatz Exhibition Centre is conveniently close to both the city centre and excellent motorway connections, and also offers unlimited parking facilities. The most important exhibitions in Berne during 1977 will include the following:

16th-20th January — Baking and Confectionery Fair (FBK)

2nd-3rd April — International Dog Show  
7th-11th April — JUPHILEX 77 (international youth stamp exhibition)

30th April-10th May — 26th BEA Exhibition (industry, agriculture, commerce and crafts)

15th-22nd June — Building and Architecture (international trade fair)

14th-17th August — ORNARIS 76 (trade fair for household products, arts and crafts, toys, giftware and fashion accessories)

4th-7th September — 26th SPISO (trade fair for toys, souvenirs, boutique, Christmas and winter articles)

19th-24th September — SAMA INTERNATIONAL 77 (trade fair for assembly, automation and miniaturisation)

18th-21st September — LIGAM (furniture trade fair)

9th-11th October — BESPO 77 (trade fair for summer sportswear and equipment)

14th-17th October — Swiss Caravan Show  
10th-20th November — 31st MOWO (fashion, art, home and leisure interests)

25th-28th November — WIR Christmas Fair (household, sports, clothing, healthcare, giftware, food and drinks)

## VAST INCREASE IN BALANCE SHEET OF SWISS BANKS

The total balance sheet of the 563 banks and finance houses submitted to Switzerland's banking laws rose by 12.7 per cent in 1975 and reached Sw.Fr. 323 billion at the end of the year. Statistics released by the Swiss National Bank show that assets in foreign currency amounted to 27 per cent of the total.

Liabilities in foreign currency rose to 24 per cent. The United Kingdom was the country with which banking ties were the closest. The four other countries which had strong banking relations with Switzerland were the United States, France, Italy and West Germany. About half of the foreign dealings of Swiss banks were carried out with these countries.



# Former ambassador reaffirms that we do have a foreign policy

Switzerland has a foreign policy, even though this policy has to be defined within certain limits, said Dr. Albert Weitnauer, General Secretary of the Political Department, during a Press Conference in Berne. Switzerland's former ambassador in London stressed that, on account of its neutrality, our country was playing a larger role on international forums that its small size and position as a small nation would lead one to suppose. He said that the diplomatic exercise

consisting in making visits abroad didn't deserve the bad reputation it had obtained. He told of his own good experiences abroad. "The gates open for the representative of Switzerland", added Dr. Weitnauer, who had just returned from a visit to Italy where he had met several ministers.

Referring to the possibility of transferring some of the United Nations' facilities from Geneva to Vienna, he said that the whole issue had been "blown

up". He said that he was personally in favour of Switzerland adhering to the United Nations. He claimed that the General Assembly was a platform where very useful contacts could be established. He deplored the fact that the Press tended to depict the shortcomings of the World Body and forget its many positive achievements. But Dr. Weitnauer said that it will be for the Swiss people to decide one day on whether or not to join the UN as a full member.

## Two news goliaths are all set to fight it out

The *Weltwoche* and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, which are among Switzerland's most respectable newspapers, have filed suites against one another for unfair competition. The first to start action was the *NZZ*, which took exception to a large advert published by the *Weltwoche* in which it claimed to have won 38,000 readers in one year whereas the *NZZ* was said to have lost 32,000 readers during the same period.

The Zürich daily claimed that such

an advert constituted an act of "unfair competition" and stressed that the figures mentioned by the Swiss-German weekly were based on uncertain statistics. The *Weltwoche* then went to court after an editorial in the *NZZ* had contained "misleading accusations and false assertions". It also said that the figures mentioned in its original advert had been established by non-committed research bodies used by advertisers.

## BRITISH AIRWAY GETS ZÜRICH-BERLIN AIR LINK

The Swiss air transport authorities have given British Airways a one-year concession on the Zürich-West Berlin route. The regular flights were to start in November but the Soviet Union had stated its opposition to the opening of an air route between Berlin and Zürich. All air communications between West Berlin and the outside world are carried out by airlines of the three Western powers in Berlin, France, Britain and the U.S.A.



### SPECIAL AUTUMN ARRANGEMENTS

## ZÜRICH

**Weekly departures  
for  
7 and 14 days**

**PRICES FROM: £49**

Price includes: ★

- ★ RETURN JET FLIGHT (EX. GATWICK)
- ★ PORTERAGE AT AIRPORT
- ★ TOURIST ACCOMMODATION, EN PENSION, ON BED AND BREAKFAST BASIS
- ★ BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE — 15 kilos (33 lb.)

Contact:

**CROSSGATES TRAVEL LTD.**  
273 NEW CROSS ROAD, LONDON SE14  
Telephone: 01-692 7471/2

IN CONJUNCTION WITH CHANCERY TRAVEL. A.T.O.L. 359 B

N.B. Our special Xmas arrangements are now ready.



# Penal reform looks to be gathering momentum

The Criminal Chamber of the Federal Court in Lausanne has recently overruled six regulations on the detention of detained persons in Canton Zürich. Following its decision, detainees will be allowed to keep personal and non-dangerous objects such as their watch, objects of sentimental value, such as family photographs, or other things affording them a distraction, such as pencils and paper. They will no longer be obliged to keep their bed folded against the wall, so that they will be able to lie down during the day. Strict limits on the food that is brought to them as a present are lifted and detainees will be able to take a half-hour walk every day, and no longer twice a week. Detainees will also be allowed to ask for books from outside with the exception of study books.

The Federal Court has also asked the Zürich State Council to be more flexible in the implementation of those

regulations that prevent prisoners from receiving the visit of former fellow inmates or children over 12 years old. The Court claimed that there are generally no valid reasons for preventing a wife, or close relative, from visiting a prisoner even if they may have been in prison with him.

Explaining its decision in a 39-page document, the Federal Court said that the Zürich regulations violated a fundamental but unwritten law of the Federal Constitution: that of individual freedom.

This right applies to detainees when they are subject to regulations that are unnecessary, that offend their dignity or that cannot be objectively justified. The Federal Court noted that it had already voiced reservations regarding Zürich's regulations on prisoners back in 1973, and said that these observations had not received sufficient attention.

## Company must pay Fr. 16 tax

A company that had refused to pay Sw.Fr. 16 Church Tax was ordered to comply by the Federal Court. This limited company was held to pay the amount to a local parish in Zürich. Invoking the 49th Article of the Federal Constitution, the company had appealed to the Federal Court stating that the said article protected people from making ecclesiastical contributions to a religious community they were not a member of.

But the Federal Court rejected the appeal by six votes to one. It declared

that a precedent by the Court had laid down nearly 100 years ago that the provisions of article 49-6 applied only to "physical persons" and not to "moral persons", such as companies and organisations, which, because of their abstract nature, "do not possess a conscience or religious beliefs". For this reason, a company cannot invoke this law to avoid paying Church Tax. The Federal Court also noted that 16 Cantons had already submitted companies and "moral persons" to Church Tax.

## Japan visit for OSR

The Suisse Romande Orchestra has left on a 16-day tour of Japan during which it will give no fewer than 14 concerts. The 105-member orchestra and the five officials accompanying them are led by Wolfgang Sawallisch, official conductor of Switzerland's most prestigious symphonic ensemble. The same orchestra visited Japan eight years ago under the

leadership of its founder, Ernest Ansermet, and Paul Klecki. Both tours have been made at the invitation of a Japanese Radio Station. The Orchestra will also perform twice in South Korea. Its programme covers a wide range of composers, including Beethoven, Frank Martin, Mozart, Richard Strauss, Ravel and Berlioz.

### CELEBRATIONS AND THE SAINT

Two special exhibitions opened at Berne's Historical Museum on 26th October. One — "Coins and Medals of Ancient Berne" — marks the opening of a new room donated by the museum

society to celebrate its own 75th anniversary. The other exhibition — "Berne and its Patron Saint" — lasts until January, 1977 and includes documents, tapestries and other works of art relating to St. Vincent, in whose honour Berne Cathedral was built.

### MORE SWISSAIR FLIGHTS TO MIDDLE EAST

The major feature of Swissair's winter schedules, effective from 1st November and to be operated by a fleet of 45 jets, is a further increase in services to the Middle East.

Frequencies are to be stepped up to Kuwait and Dhahran. Cairo is to have three DC-10 flights weekly compared with one last winter, and Tel Aviv four DC-10 flights against three. The additional services to Damascus and Baghdad, introduced in the past summer, are being retained.

From London the frequency to Zürich and Geneva is maintained at three flights daily to each city; in addition there are three night flights weekly to Zürich and three evening departures from Zürich to London. London-Basle remains at six times weekly, with night flights on Saturdays. No change is made in the daily Manchester-Zürich service.

Elsewhere in Europe schedule improvements are being made on services to Belgium, France and Italy.

### SUCCESSFUL SWISS WEEK IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK

Two Swiss musical groups met with a resounding success in Washington and New York. The "Landwehr" band from Fribourg and a costumed group from the "Fête des Vignerons" took part in several rallies and processions in the two cities. In New York, where they received exceptional acclaim, they took part in the traditional Columbus Day Festival which marks the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. This annual celebration is now organised by the Italian community of New York. The visiting musicians, who have been invited to return to New York at the same time next year, also gave a performance at the Military Academy at West Point.

### SWISSAIR VICE-PRESIDENT TO HEAD INTERNATIONAL AERONAUTICAL FEDERATION

The International Aeronautical Federation (FAI), the world's leading sports aviation association, has elected Swissair Vice-President and Delegate of the Management Adolph Gehriger as its new President. The appointment was made by the Federation's general assembly in Teheran.

Adolph Gehriger, 60 a former Swiss military pilot and an active glider pilot, was one of the Federation's founder-members. As Secretary-General of the Swiss Aero Club and later with Swissair he played a major role in promoting basic pilot training.

Gehriger is the third Swiss to become President of the Federation; he retains all his functions within Swissair.



# Give thanks for the sinner who repents

Miracles really do happen. Regular readers will doubtless recall that the October edition of the *Swiss Observer* carried a profile of Lord Arran — the man most of us love to hate.

As a matter of courtesy a copy was sent to His Lordship with just a modicum of fear and trepidation on my part. The result was somewhat surprising. Lord Arran, while stopping short of being actively penitent for the sins of his past, wrote a friendly review of the profile of himself. The review is reproduced here with grateful acknowledgement to the *Evening News*. WGS

## FRIENDLY

*Believe it or not — one Swiss likes me, and has openly said so. He is the Editor of the Swiss Observer.*

*You may remember that I took on Switzerland some 14 years ago. It was like taking on a moo-cow. I felt rather badly about it.*

*But now we are friends. At least I think we are. The Swiss editor has referred to me as an "enigma" and a "tease". The second word was right, the first more doubtful.*

# A cultural event that really is a must — try not to miss it!

## HEDDY MARIA WETTSTEIN MONODRAMAS

On Thursday, 2nd December, at 7.30 p.m. the Swiss Actress Hedy Maria Wettstein will give a performance of monodramas at the French Institute Theatre, Queensberry Place, South Kensington, SW7.

For the last 13 years, she has had her own theatre in Zürich. In 1967 it was enlarged thanks to support of private donors. Today, her theatre at the Winkelwiese is Zürich's finest small-stage home of drama and comedy. Hedy Maria Wettstein is an expert in both, and her monodramas are unique. They are no sterile monologues, on the contrary, the artist enlivens the whole stage with fictitious characters who come to life thanks to her tremendous creative powers. Swiss authors write new pieces for her again and again, although her extensive repertoire contains works by many foreign writers.

Her shows have been televised, and she has recently had a most successful

tour in Israel, sponsored by the Swiss Cultural Foundation "Pro Helvetia". The present tour in Great Britain is also under its sponsorship.

Prior to her London appearance, Miss Wettstein will be giving performances in other towns:

23rd November: University of Sussex, Falmer-Brighton, 7.30 p.m.

25th November: University of Bristol.

30th November: German Society, Oxford, 8 p.m.

On Miss Wettstein's programme for Great Britain are "Demeter searches for Persephone", "The Tower of Salome" and "The Window". There is no need to know German — a synopsis in English is given for each monodrama.

For the London performance on 2nd December, which is under the patronage of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, tickets are available at £2, £1 and 50p, either at the door or in advance from NSH, 53 Priory Road, London NW6 3NE. Please enclose remittance and stamped/addressed envelope.

Hedy Maria Wettstein's appearance in Great Britain is a cultural event not to be missed, for she is an outstanding artist of extraordinary talent.

MM

# Jet to Geneva

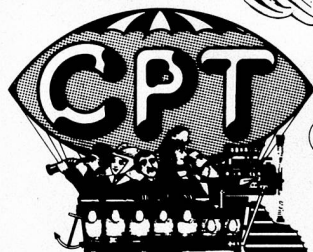
and take a  
Crawford-Perry  
Winter Holiday

Cervinia, Zermatt, Courmayeur — Europe's finest ski centres. Six days a week, there's a CPT jet flight to Geneva, with luxury connections to the best winter holiday you could want.

Geneva flights and accommodation from just £39 return, skiing holidays from only £59 for 7 days, including flights!

Full details of flights, holidays, group travel discounts, and our refundable deposit scheme are all in the new CPT brochure.

Get your copy by telephoning us today.



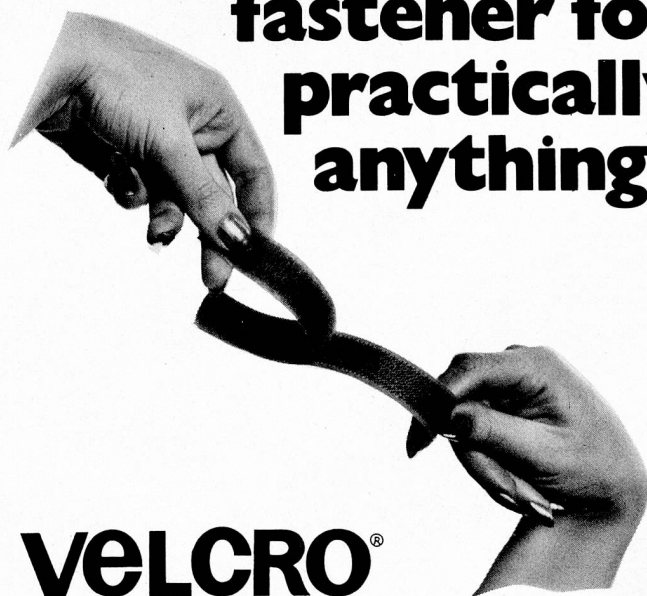
**Crawford Perry  
Travel Ltd**

260a Fulham Rd, London SW10

Tel: 01-351 2191

ATOL 369B

# the practical fastener for practically anything..



# VELCRO®

**TOUCH & CLOSE FASTENER**

Sole U.K. Manufacturer,  
Selectus Limited, Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent.  
Telephone: Stoke-on-Trent 513316 (0782).