

**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:** - (1979)

**Heft:** 1756

  

**Rubrik:** Letter from Switzerland

### **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:** 02.04.2026

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

# LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

by GOTTFRIED KELLER

## SWISS FOREIGN POLICY UNDER INCREASED DISCUSSION

Ever since the present Swiss Foreign Minister, Federal Councillor Pierre Aubert, has come into office, Swiss foreign policy has become widely discussed on television, in the radio and in the press. This is partly due to Mr. Aubert's dynamic personality, although foreign policy, like any other policy — military, for example, or economic — is and remains the responsibility of the whole Federal Council. Partly, however, this is also due to circumstances unconnected with any particular personality. For many years past the man in the street has had no idea that such a thing as a Swiss foreign policy existed. Switzerland was neutral and was on the whole well served by its policy of eternal neutrality and if it had not been for Mr. Aubert's predecessor, Mr. Pierre Graber, starting to travel abroad frequently, the problem of Swiss foreign policy would probably never have become a topic of general interest and discussion. But then one day the PLO — the Palestine Liberation Organisation —

uttered the wish to open an Information Centre in Geneva, a wish which after due consideration was granted by the Federal authorities. Was this a wise decision to take? Many people think that it was not, since the PLO indulges in frequent acts of terrorism and proclaims as its foremost aim the destruction of a state — Israel — with which Switzerland enjoys and cultivates friendly relations.

The Federal Council, as is well known, would like to lead Switzerland into the United Nations as a full member. But it has to tread warily, since full membership in the UN — as opposed to membership in many of its so-called special agencies — would have to be approved both by a majority of the Cantons and one of the population as a whole. But as long as people like Yassir Arafat are received there with open arms and given a hearing, it would be difficult for any member of the Swiss Government to hold up the UN to the public as a Club which it would be advantageous or desirable for Switzerland to join. To be perfectly frank: the Federal Council fears that a

negative vote on the part of the Cantons or the population would be quite possible and this, of course, would be very embarrassing for the authorities. Hence the decision to make haste slowly, but as a first step to appoint a Commission of Experts to study the problem and to report on their findings.

Several Swiss Parliamentarians have, of late, postulated increased participation in the formulation of Swiss foreign policy. "Our foreign policy", one of them has recently declared, "should have as its prime aim the conservation of the liberty and independence of the country". And he added: "We should always be conscious of the limits set to us and we should be careful not to fritter away our limited foreign political means".

The foreign policy of a democratic country like Switzerland cannot be made in an ivory tower but has to be carried, as it were, by the whole population. It is therefore a good thing that it becomes the object of increased public debate.

## Banking Problems?

Put 80 years' experience  
of serving the private and  
commercial sectors  
of the Swiss community in London  
to work on your financial affairs.



1872

### SWISS BANK CORPORATION

(a company limited by shares, incorporated in Switzerland)

#### Principal London Office

99 Gresham Street  
PO Box No. 114  
London EC2P 2BR  
Telephone 01-606 4000

#### Representative Office for Scotland

66 Hanover Street  
Edinburgh EH2 1HH  
Telephone 031-225 918617

#### West End Branch

Swiss Centre  
1 New Coventry Street  
London W1V 8BR  
Telephone 01-734 0767  
(Savings Account facilities available)

**SOCIETE DE BANQUE SUISSE SCHWEIZERISCHER BANKVEREIN SOCIETA DI BANCA SVIZZERA**

Offices throughout Switzerland, in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Bahrain, Singapore and Tokyo.