

**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:** - (1982)

**Heft:** 1792

**Artikel:** 'Dear compatriots abroad ..."

**Autor:** [s.n.]

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687211>

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# for an appraisal

high energy consuming and the cause of much pollution.

With fewer people to produce more food to feed the ever increasing populations of the cities, intensive methods of farming have to be utilised. This also uses large amounts of energy and causes chemical pollution. The result is tasteless, insipid food and vociferous protests from the environmental and back-to-nature movements.

Given the nature of the Swiss terrain – only around 1½ million hectares are cultivated – many of the farms are hill farms, if not almost vertical. The problems of these farms are especially severe. Not only are they isolated, so that their workers require compensation for unsocial conditions, but the machinery required either does not exist or is prohibitively expensive.

Some amelioration of the various problems have been achieved by legislation but, for many of the problems, nobody seems to have any ideas for their remedy.

Turning to the cities, the increasing size and population, to say nothing of the increasing industrial activity, lead to increased demands for land for homes and factories, increased demands for energy and increased

demands for food and services. They produce the logistical nightmares of rubbish disposal, sewage treatment and pollution prevention.

Although Switzerland has large amounts of hydro-power the reserves will soon be overtaken by demand and other forms of energy must be used. These bring their own problems. Oil and natural gas imply an international reliance which could compromise Swiss neutrality and nuclear energy has such well known disadvantages as not to need description.

Since peoples' expectations in the advanced industrial societies of the Western democracies have been raised to levels that are impossible of fulfillment, a growing number of young people are disillusioned with the present social order.

Being young, inexperienced and having high ideals, they are easily led to believe that the existing order is wholly evil. As a result, they either opt out of society and try to form their own or resort to extreme and often violent measures to reform the present society, which inevitably brings them into conflict with the authorities.

One of the things of which Switzerland

may be justifiably proud is the way in which they are trying to tackle this particular problem. In an attempt to open a dialogue with the young the authorities set up the Federal Commission for Youth Affairs.

This organisation, contrary to everyone's expectations, did not condemn the young although they did not condone their violence. Instead, they admitted that young people had valid grievances which the rigid enforcement of present measures for law and order only exacerbated.

A paper called "Theses" was issued as a basis for discussion. Young people were treated as individuals to be treated with respect but not indulged or patronised.

The success of this approach so impressed the West German authorities that they invited the Swiss to join them in discussions concerning their mutual problems. A pamphlet issued by Pro Helvetia gives details of the events so far. Although the problem is far from solved, the number of disturbances is down and a dialogue has been started.

Switzerland's image abroad has suffered a number of knocks in recent years, in

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# 'Dear compatriots abroad . . . '

*DEAR compatriots abroad . . .*

On August 1, we Swiss celebrate our National Day. We do so in all simplicity, without great pomp or circumstance.

Many of you have already witnessed our traditional festivities and can recall the processions of children, with torches and lanterns, the bonfires with their flames rising to the sky, and the way our national anthem gives due expression to our feelings of liberty and independence.

It is with this picture in mind that I convey to you today the cordial greetings of the Federal Council and of all the Swiss people.

Today, in particular, we feel united with you across the frontiers and the oceans. And we are deeply joyful that you have not forgotten your homeland – that small country with its alps, its lakes and its valleys.

Fortunately, life here in Switzerland is quite good. When we observe the difficulties which other countries are facing, we should be happy, thankful and

## A National Day message from the President of the Swiss Confederation

satisfied.

From all parts of the world, the news that reaches us is of political and social unrest, of unemployment, of human misery and despair. All the greater, therefore, is our duty to contribute to the best of our ability to an easing of these difficulties.

But here in Switzerland as well, we are not without our problems. Our country is poor in natural resources – a situation which has shaped our industrial evolution in a particular way. We import raw materials and semi-finished goods and then transform them, through skilled work, into high quality products largely for export.

This two-way movement links us closely with foreign countries and – for better or for worse – with the fortunes and the failings of world economy. And this dependence is of meaningful significance. It obliges us to open up our country to the wide world,

to work actively at all levels and in all organisations serving to bring peoples closer together.

Dear compatriots, a few months ago the Federal Council decided to submit to the Swiss people the question of our country's possible future membership of the United Nations.

Opinions are divided – convinced supporters on the one side, determined opponents on the other. And at the heart of the political debate is Switzerland's neutrality. Switzerland will remain steadfast and true to its policy of armed neutrality. But the Federal Council is convinced that this principle is compatible with entry to the United Nations.

Our neutrality is no way means disinterest. It does mean, however, non-involvement in armed conflicts. This policy leaves the door open for international co-operation in eliminating dissension and disputes, for aid and relief campaigns in cases of catastrophes and, in particular, for the persuasion of our policy of offering Switzerland's good services as a measure of mediation.

History has demonstrated how important such a role of a small nation can be.

Dear compatriots, your homeland is a country of many varied aspects, of diverse languages and cultures. It is not always easy to find a common denominator acceptable to us all. But we have always succeeded in finding a suitable and satisfactory solution in a spirit of compromise.

If only this formula could be applied on an international basis, then perhaps the peaceful solution of many conflicts would be easier.

Switzerland is dependent upon international understanding of its position. We would ask you to contribute to this comprehension of Swiss thinking and of Swiss ideals.

The Federal Council and the Swiss people thank you for your efforts and convey their good wishes to you and your families.