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# The Swiss Observer

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To begin with, a student is still an adolescent, that is, at an age when one is still insecure. Instead of finding security around him, he sees that his distressed parents have no sincere belief in anything and no clear notion of what they are striving for. The student is also at an age where the urge for self-assertion is the strongest. But he knocks against an overcrowded society in which everybody is struggling for a place in the sun. He studies in order to find a niche in a cogwheel civilisation run by big corporations on the sacrosanct criterias of efficiency and productivity. He's still young enough to have some idealism, but finds a world where everybody is hell-bent on making money, a world soiled by pollution and indiscriminately exhausted of its natural resources, a world where non-profit ventures such as building better schools and assisting poorer countries have been neglected. To this must be added the loosening of parental ties, the heightening of his lusts through the capitalistic pleasure-seeking principle, both of which have tempted him to make unreal claims on life. The present psychological climate has not educated him to restraint but, quite the contrary, it has favoured his licentiousness and indiscipline.

Dr. Schneebeli maintained that the elder generations grew up in a far more stable and oriented world than the present one. The problems of today were unknown to them. All this has prompted a growing minority of radical students to overreact and reject the whole system, to throw away antiquated morals, money-making, authority in the universities and elsewhere, and capitalism.

#### Steps which can henceforth be taken

After having thus masterfully explained the heart of the matter Dr. Schneebeli outlined the steps which

could be undertaken within the limited but important province of the university.

There were no real objections to a common agreement between professors and students on the curriculum. This, said Dr. Schneebeli, had actually been practised in his own student days. Secondly, students could well be given a say in the running of their universities. Mentioning the case of Mainz university, Dr. Schneebeli said that it had never been run more smoothly than since the days students had been allowed to sit at the Senate. Switzerland was adapting to the times and new legislation will be providing students with a seat in the council of their universities (but not with the right to elect their professors). There was always a very practical limit to the students' administrative involvement which was, as militants soon discovered, that running a university cost a lot of time.

Dr. Schneebeli believes that a rector should avoid trials of strength with his students. It is far wiser for him to listen to their grievances and ask them for concrete proposals. But however good-willed the elder generation may be towards students, they could not push conciliation as far as to tolerate violence on their part. Violence had attained its end if it had clearly expressed a minority complaint for all to see. Further than that, a rector was entirely justified in calling the police when an unruly mob had invaded his office, even though this may be a breach of the university immunity proclaimed by demonstrators.

The solution to the problems of today and tomorrow should be sought in common. It is right to listen to students but it is wrong for mature men to say "yes" to every decision by students on issues which they themselves spent a lifetime to solve. An 18-year-old youth cannot by himself give the answers which have eluded the generations before him.

#### Question time

This is where Dr. Schneebeli ended his speech. As one can deduce from this incomplete report, he demonstrated a deep understanding of the problem, an understanding which forbade him to support one camp or the other. Dr. Schneebeli quite visibly liked and understood youth but was also not prepared to follow the dissenter further than the point at which the fundamental laws of humans and society began to be violated.

The interest which this conference aroused was reflected by the number of questions put forward by the audience. Among the points raised were the alleged violence of police on peaceful demonstrators, the psychological background of the dissenter, the excessive freedom of modern youth and the stifling of individuality by our present society. (PMB)

# WELCOME TO A NEWCOMER

Swiss Observer subscribers may be surprised—pleasantly surprised, we trust—to find a supplement in the copy today, which is bound to attract considerable attention and also to still further enrich the reading matter regularly made available in our publication.

The new "Review of Swiss Trade", of which we enclose the first issue now, is a quarterly bulletin published under the auspices of Swiss Trade Promotion.

It is intended to send it out regularly to all Swiss Observer subscribers who, it is thought, will warmly welcome this new venture as a means of still further strengthening the many existing economic ties between Great Britain and Switzerland.

We of the Swiss Observer who can now look back on 50 years of uninterrupted existence and development of our organ, gladly take this opportunity of the very first appearance of the "Review of Swiss Trade" to extend to it our good wishes for a truly successful career. (GK)

# COMMENT

## THE CONGRESS OF THE SWISS OF FRANCE

The *Union des Suisses de France* has just held its third Congress in Lyons. The preoccupations of our compatriots in France obviously concerns us since we too, Swiss of Great Britain, belong to Fifth Switzerland.

The attendants at Lyons discussed four main topics: The Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad, the implementation of the new Constitutional article on the Swiss abroad, the problems of keeping the Swiss abroad informed of events in Switzerland and vice-versa and the Schwarzenbach initiative.

Concerning the Solidarity Fund, the Congress was told that this Fund had in the past served an immensely useful purpose in helping out distressed Swiss in war-torn countries. It had gradually repaid an important loan contracted with the Confederation and was presently gaining in members. Many of the participants found that the new constitutional article which had been awarded to them (article 45-bis: it paves the way for closer ties between the motherland and the Swiss across the world, eventually to allow them to partake in the political life of their country) changed little in their lives. The feeling was that Berne was slow in getting the practical measures substantiating the new article under way. Concerning the problem of a centralised Press for fifth Switzerland, the Congress learnt that a special commission had made a thorough inquiry into

the 170 odd Swiss publications abroad. We feel cold in the back in thinking that they may have passed the Swiss Observer under close scrutiny . . . ) and had investigated into the possibilities of increasing the appeal of "Echo", which would become a "World Echo". This publication should attain the 300,000 Swiss abroad and keep them well informed and in communication with the homeland. The difficulty will reside in having to translate this journal not only in the three federal languages, but in English, Spanish and Portuguese for the grandchildren of emigrants who no longer speak the language of their forefathers.

The Congress finally discussed the all-important issue which will be brought to a head on June 7th: the immigration problem in Switzerland. The participants unanimously rejected the proposals of the Schwarzenbach initiative on the grounds that they were humanly indefensible and economically ruinous.

From a Swiss angle, it is highly encouraging to see that a strong body of Swiss citizens in France should cast their vote on a national issue, although this vote was not yet considered as valid at home. It shows that many Fifth Swiss citizens still have a keen interest in what is going on at home and certainly warrants the efforts undertaken in Berne to make them into fully-fledged Swiss citizens.

(PMB)

# SWISS NEWS

## CANTONAL

### The women of the Valais are awarded the right to vote

The last of the French-speaking canton to withhold its women the right of vote, the Valais, has now made an about turn with an 18,750 to 8,250 majority. The last time the issue was brought to the polls in the Valais was in 1959, when the federal right of vote for women was submitted to the male voters of the Canton. It was strongly rejected. Vaud was the first "Latin" canton in which women were granted the right of vote, then came Neuchâtel, Geneva, Ticino (last October) and Fribourg (last December).

### President Nixon gives a piece of moon rock to the Swiss people

The American Ambassador to Switzerland has remitted a stone from the moon and a small Swiss flag which the astronauts carried with them on their moon walk to Mr. Hans Peter Tshudi, the President of the Confederation. The stone is now exhibited in the crystallographical department of the Institute of Technology in Zurich.

### A dossier on Von Daeniken

A month after the trial of Erich Von Daeniken, a hotel keeper and science-fiction author who has been sentenced to three and a half years of jail for fraud and other offences, the

Cantonal Court of Graubünden has published a 200-page dossier on his past. Erich Von Daeniken appears in it as a non-recommendable character who liked to contract debts, a boaster and an imposter, a man constantly seeking his own pleasure regardless of moral considerations and a superficial personality. He was condemned on 25 charges covering breach of trust, professional fraud and falsification of securities. The Court further noted that Von Daeniken had not felt the slightest inhibitions in borrowing from rich persons and institutions without redemption. He had been living exclusively on this borrowed money on many occasions. Von Daeniken was no more scrupulous in his literary endeavours than in his other activities and wasn't particular in his appointed means of reaching fame. A German publisher had lodged a complaint against him for plagiarism. Despite these cumulative charges, Von Daeniken had been surprisingly arrogant with the judge of enquiry.

### The Editor-in-chief of the "Journal de Genève" leaves for TV

Mr. Bernard Béguin, Editor-in-chief of the Journal de Genève, has been appointed as director of programmes with French-speaking Swiss television. He will assume this new office next October. Aged 47, Mr. Béguin had entered the "Journal de Genève" in 1947 to become its chief Editor in 1959. He was president of the

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