

Knie versus Knie

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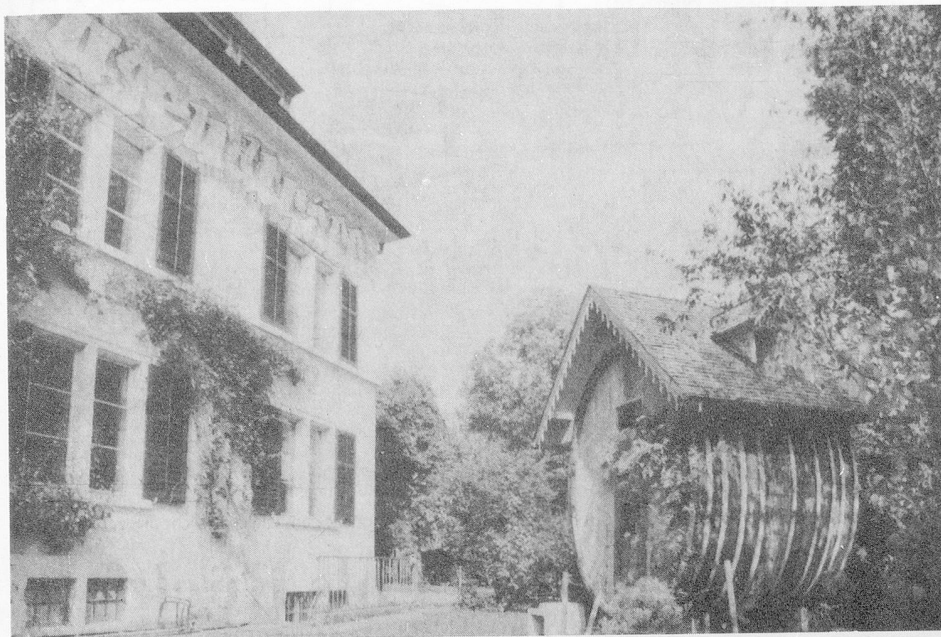
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FIGHT OVER A BARREL

It took 4 years of legal battle before the members of the youth group Rotacker in Wallisellen (ZH) were allowed to build the barrel house in the garden of their home. A neighbour objecting to its construction took the group all the way up to the Federal Court in Lausanne. Four years later, the learned judges overruled the neighbour's complaint and allowed the youth group to proceed with their plans. The result looks quite cute.

KNIE VERSUS KNIE

Knie, the Swiss national circus, under the direction of Fredy Jr. and Franco Knie, is this year celebrating its 75th anniversary. But across the border in Austria, the dissident Louis Knie has set up a rival circus under the same name. Whilst the Swiss Knie is doing very well, Louis Knie is struggling to get the name established in a country where circuses do not enjoy the same popularity as in Switzerland.

In its 75 years of existence, Swiss Knie have played to over 55 million spectators. The tradition is so well implanted in Switzerland that you do not go to the "circus" you go to see "Knie".

Now the battle between the two rival Knie's is on. Whilst Swiss Knie could count amongst its clients people like Chaplin, Peter Ustinov and Alain Delon, Louis Knie managed to get Charles Aznavour to foster his circus.

What made Louis Knie leave the family to set up his own circus? A continuous clash of personalities between him, his brother Franco and cousin Fredy left him no other solution. His departure from the family is not considered as a tragedy. Each generation of Knie's has experienced such departures but, up to now, no dissident Knie has ever been able to set up a permanent rival circus. Will Louis be the first one to succeed? Only the future will tell.

Although the Swiss Knie had plenty of horses and elephants, not one single animal was sold or made available to Louis Knie who left his beloved animals with tears in his eyes. Despite all the setbacks, Louis Knie is determined to succeed. He has already set dates to perform as close to the Swiss border as possible: Feldkirch, Dornbirn, Bregenz, Bludenz and even Schaan (Liechtenstein). He has no intention of setting up shows in Switzerland, but he has no compunction about displaying posters throughout eastern Switzerland and placing advertisements in newspapers in St Gallen and Zurich. An interesting battle of circuses in perspective indeed.



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PRIVATE PRISONS

Until now the USA and Australia were the only countries operating private prisons. But now the Swiss are getting into the act with a large company, Karl Steiner Holding who, amongst others, built the Regensdorf prison and a new company controlled by Urs Clavadetsch, ex-director of the Thorberg penitentiary having joined forces to enter this possibly very lucrative market.

As a first step these two Swiss companies are approaching the open markets of France, Italy, Eastern Europe and especially of Germany which are all in urgent need of new prison facilities. These countries' legislations even allow the operation of prisons by private companies.

As far as Switzerland is concerned, the present amendments to the Penal Code will soon open the door to private prisons. In Zurich alone, several projects are already awaiting approval, so it is only a matter of time before privately operated prisons become reality.

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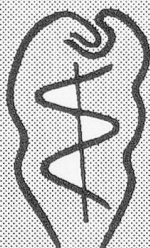
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