

Swiss neutrality is no obstacle to international co-operation

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unit and one can rightly speak of the indivisibility of war and peace. The global connexion does not exclude local conflicts, but there is a direct interest in a general appeasement.

As opposed to this, there is the old experience that too great a unity among the Powers will have unpleasant results for the small countries. The Holy Alliance, after 1815, with its attempts at internal intervention, and the unity of victors after 1945 who had manoeuvred us into a certain isolation and imposed upon us the agreement of Washington, belong to the most unpleasant periods of our history. Thus, the small State has a certain interest in conflicting trends in world politics. The somewhat amplified role played by the weak neutralist States thrives on existing tensions.

The small State has no influence on these realities. It has to put up with them.

One's own concrete position also has to be taken into consideration. The fact of its being a small State is decisive for Switzerland. The given factors are well known: a small territory and therefore limited space with all the ensuing military consequences, no raw materials and an insufficient food supply which means dependence on export trade, no direct access to the sea, a population which is rather too big in relation to the territory and too small in comparison with other countries. With some reservations, the character of the population may be described as hard-working, soberminded and persevering, but not free from illusions and occasional over-estimation. All in all this is a very minor power potential which cannot bring about an effective influence on world politics. There exists, however, strong inner cohesion; moreover, military efforts on a more than average scale are being made — two factors which are at the root of a remarkable power of resistance against outside pressure.

But Switzerland also belongs to Western civilisation and adheres to the Western concept of life, and, above all, Switzerland is situated in the centre of Europe.

3) These data are in accordance with the politico-juridical expedient of Switzerland's foreign policy: its permanent neutrality, grown out of long historical experience. We may presume that the character, the contents and the consequences of Swiss neutrality are known.³⁾

Ever since Federal Councillor Petitpierre made his speech before the Council of States (Ständerat) on 7th October 1947, and principle of solidarity has been set beside the concept of neutrality. Both these principles aim at entertaining well-ordered relations with all nations, at maintaining a sufficient military preparedness, at co-operating for the maintenance of peace and for the establishment and strengthening of the authority of law.

However, there might be other conceivable alternatives. One of them would consist in isolation, i.e. in an extensive reduction of the international obligations of our country, which would then content itself with a minimum of relations with other States. Yet, such a radical change would be impossible in the world of today, where a small country is much more directly involved in world politics than only a hundred and fifty years ago.

Another solution would be to enter permanent alliances or to adhere to a union of States. An adaptable policy of alliances would also come into consideration as it would permit — depending on political developments and on existing threats — to change allies. The small

Italian States of the Renaissance period followed such a policy. These alternatives, however, ought to be considered under the aspect of neutrality as they would entail abandoning neutrality. (To be continued.)

- 1) Raymond AKRON: Paix et guerre entre les nations, Paris 1962, p. 18.
- 2) The Second World War, London 1948, S. VII.
- 3) See BINDSCHEDLER: Die Neutralität im modernen Völkerrecht, Zeitschrift für öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht, Volume 17, No. 1 (1956), p. 1-37, as well as the official definition of neutrality as decreed by the Federal Authorities, "Verwaltungsentscheide der Bundesbehörden," 24 (1954), p. 9-13. With regard to aspects of military policy, see: Botschaft des Bundesrates betreffend die Organisation des Heeres (Truppenordnung), of 30th June, 1960, p. 2-10.

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SWISS NEUTRALITY IS NO OBSTACLE TO INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

When the debate preceding the drawing up of the San Francisco Charter seemed to suggest that neutrality and membership of the United Nations were incompatible, Switzerland opted for neutrality.

This does not debar her, however, from joining in the activities of several of its specialised organisations: the International Labour Organisation with its headquarters in Geneva, the World Health Organisation, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation). The European headquarters of the United Nations is established in Geneva, where a number of international conferences are held. The Universal Postal Union, the International Telegraph Union, the Central Office for International Transport by Railway, and the International Union for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works also have their head offices in Switzerland. In the scientific field, this country collaborates in the work of the European Centre of Nuclear Research (CERN), whose laboratories are on Genevan soil; the International Atomic Agency and the European Organisation for Space Research. The Swiss universities, particularly the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, attract a large number of foreign students, who account for almost 8,000 out of a total of 24,000. A growing number of foreign firms are opening research laboratories in Switzerland. Switzerland became a member of the European Payments Union and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation at their inception and is a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which has succeeded the latter. It plays an active part in the meetings of GATT (General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade) whose object is to liberalise trade. Although it is not a member, the Swiss Confederation co-operates with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The International Bank of Settlements has its headquarters in Basle. Finally, although Switzerland is not a member of the European Economic Community (EEC), it is a member of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). And then there are innumerable economic, scientific, and cultural undertakings, both public and private, which are members of hundreds of international organisations. It will also be recalled that the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is made up entirely of Swiss, is permanently engaged in various activities and carries on its good works in every part of the world through representatives who are all Swiss by nationality. In short, the network of Switzerland's international relations is one of the most extensive there is, and its interchange of ideas with the rest of the world — in spite of, or perhaps because of, its neutrality — is at least as brisk and lively as that of any other country.

[S.N.T.O.]