

Swiss news

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1971)**

Heft 1627

PDF erstellt am: **28.06.2024**

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SWISS NEWS

MODERN LIFE

Educational guidance

The duties of the career guide was the theme of a Forum of Education held in Berne. The value of career guidance was seriously put in doubt by certain speakers. The head of a Basle school, Mr. Morgenthaler, said that career guidance was a "universal enemy" and a job that was bound to disappear in its present form. He said that it had failed to achieve its aim and that career consultants were hopelessly lacking in professional training. There were 500 primary trades and 10,000 variations which they had first to examine before giving advice to children and parents. Furthermore, of the 235 career guides operating in German-speaking Switzerland, only 12 had University education. Another speaker said that the most difficult task of the career guide was to probe into the hidden motivations of the children under his guidance. These motivations were often warped by the aspirations of their social background and the wishes of their parents. These cloaked the true picture of a child's ability. Another speaker had rejected forcefully the notion that career guidance was at the service of the economy. The career guide had doubtless to face a double burden—the consideration of both the needs of the community and a child's aptitude—his aim was to merge both these objectives for the good of the child, which remained his primary pre-occupation.

Petition against gym classes

The beginning of the new school year was marked by a demonstration by 700 Geneva secondary school youths demanding a ban of the optional gymnastics exam which, they said, amounted to a para-military institution. This exam comprises an 80-metre race, long jump, rope-climbing and throwing. Because these exercises were judged similar to those practised at military recruitment, the students of the four final classes of Geneva's secondary schools wrote a petition to the local authorities complaining that the examination "tended to infuse discipline, hierarchy and blind obedience in youth" and was contrary to the free and enjoyable practice of sport. The gymnastics exams have in fact hardly any bearing at all on school life. It is used by some sports masters as a basis for giving notes. This was however a good pretext for the first demonstrations of the new school year.

The training of driving teachers

Since the Federal Order of 2nd July, 1969, all candidates to the driving teacher's profession have to submit to a stringent training course consisting of 440 hours of lessons during eight months at the cost of 4,500 francs. This training is given by a special school for driving teachers, which makes them pass a series of psychological, pedagogical and technical tests before accepting them. Despite these requirements, the profession appears to have a measure of success and 45 new candidates started their training this year in French-speaking Switzerland alone.

The greatest scourge of motoring schools are those self-appointed driving teachers who induce bad habits in their pupils during week-ends. The schools are therefore asking for regulations in this field. They also want an extension both in time and in mileage of the driving exam, which still contains an element of chance. They also want a two-phase driving licence which would allow the learner-driver to drive unaccompanied only after a year's driving without serious offences and mistakes.

OBITUARY

Jules Humbert-Droz

Jules Humbert-Droz, who died at La-Chaux-de-Fonds on 17th October at the age of 80, was by far the most prominent Swiss figure in International Communism.

Surprisingly, he had begun his life as a minister, having brilliantly completed his theological studies at Neuchâtel University and published a thesis on "Christianity and Socialism". He was suffragan pastor in London before becoming editor of the French-speaking Communist daily "La Sentinelle" and founding "l'Eglise du Peuple" in 1916. Three years later, following a conflict with the Socialist leader Charles Naine and E. P. Graber, he left the Socialist Party and founded the Swiss Communist Party. He left for Moscow and was appointed Secretary of the Communist International with Rakosi and Kusinen. He was demoted by Stalin in 1931, having been accused of "Bukharinism".

Back in Switzerland, he became the Secretary of the Swiss Communist Party. However, his hatred of Stalin caused him to be evicted from this post and from the Party itself in 1942. The

Communist Party was however soon to be banned. From 1946 to 1959, he was Secretary of the Socialist Party, and from 1959 until 1965, Secretary of the Neuchâtel branch of the Party. He had been sole Communist National Councillor during the legislature that ended in 1939, however, with 5,500 votes, the Communists then lost their only seat.

Humber-Droz was one of the promoters of the 1918 General Strike. He was totally devoted to the emancipation of the working classes and the blossoming of a brotherly society combining the ideals of the original Christians and those of political democracy. He wrote innumerable articles and political works throughout his life. He knew and admired Lenin and had been the Secretary of the third Congress of the Communist Party in Moscow in 1921.

Jo Siffert

A daily newspaper which usually spreads colours over its pages turned to black the day Jo Siffert, standard-bearer of Swiss motor-racing, was killed on the "Mike Hawthorn" bend at Brands Hatch, on the very circuit in which he had won his first World Championship race on 20th July, 1968.

The commentator of that same newspaper wrote that "Siffert had sacrificed everything to his calling. He had become a racing driver as others became priests: With a touch of naivety and a deep faith. Naivety had given way to experience, but his faith had remained intact".

He was 35 and had just accomplished the most brilliant season of his career. The last round of the World Championship which should have been fought in the Mexico Grand Prix had been cancelled because of the death of the Mexican racing driver Pedro Rodriguez. This meant that the season was over for Siffert. He had ended it in fifth position and had the better of the unbeatable Jackie Stewart in the Austrian Grand Prix at Zeltweg. The fatal Brands Hatch event had replaced the Mexican Grand Prix. According to eye witnesses, Siffert appeared to have trouble with his gear box, lost control of his vehicle and crashed on the embankments at 130 m.p.h. His BRM flared up immediately and the tragedy was over within seconds. The race was called off.

Jo Siffert, who was 35 and came from Fribourg, tended to be unlucky with his cars. He owned a garage and climbed to the summits of Formula 1 racing very much through his own efforts and energy. He had an impressive list of victories to his name in prototype-racing, in which he drove consistently for Porsche. He had twice been the winner of a World Championship race.

LABOUR RELATIONS

Intolerance at Television

The troubles that have been brewing for some time at French-Swiss Television reached their climax at the end of last month by the sacking of six producers and directors. At the time of writing, it was not known whether these measures were related to the strike that had previously interrupted the organisation's regular programmes. What seemed certain, however, was that these persons had leaked out a confidential report on the state of working relations within French-Swiss Television and had published a number of unauthorised tracts. All the persons involved were of left-wing tendency. One of them was Nathalie Nat, whose films had been refused screening owing to their subversive tendency. Their colleagues met in council shortly after the sackings had been made public and a show-down was feared.

Strike in Lausanne

The J. Bobst & Son machinery factory near Lausanne, which employs 2,000 workers, was the scene of a strike by 90 Spanish labourers after 14 of their comrades had been given redundancy notices. The management was very firm and warned that all would be sacked if they didn't return to work by a deadline set less than 24 hours after the beginning of the strike. All the strikers complied, less, it seems, as a result of the management's intransigence than as a result of the exhortations of their leaders, who had told them that there was little they could do for their redundant friends once they were out of a job. The union conciliation machinery was immediately put into action (in this case the union involved was the Federation of Metal and Watch Workers) and arranged with the management the ways to ease the fate of the 14 men. There were very few members of this union in the factory and none among the foreign manpower. Moreover, many of the workers mistrusted the union, criticising its failure to serve their interests properly. The very few strikes that are reported in Swiss industry all seem to be caused by unsatisfied foreign workers—which is of course not a healthy development.

FEDERAL

Balanced 1972 Budget

The Confederation's 1972 Budget is 416 million francs in surplus. Total income amounts to 9,750 million francs and federal expenditure is planned at 9,928 million francs. Income and expenditure have increased respectively by 1,458 and 1,141 million francs over the last year. The main sources of income are: Purchase tax (3,223 million francs), Customs (2,793 million) and

Federal Income Tax (2,549 million). The main areas of expenditure are Federal subventions (of which 745 million francs go to agriculture, 489 million to old age pension and 421 million to education and research), Federal Personnel (1,064 million) and the share of Federal receipts with the Cantons (666 million).

The cost of Federal Personnel has increased by over 12 per cent. The Federal Services actually require 1,200 more staff. The Budget is balanced, as it has been for the past few years. However, the Head of the Department of Finance, Mr. Nelio Celio, warned that it was too soon to jubilate. The cantons and the communes still had to balance their own budgets. But the situation must be considered favourable: The National Debt is now reduced to 1,289 million francs from the 8,479 that it was immediately after the war. It now amounts to about a seventh of the Annual Budget of the Confederation.

In the course of his Budget speech, Mr. Celio said that there was a slight easing-up of the pressures on industry and a slackening of private consumption. The strongest growth of demand on production currently came from public authorities. There were 129 registered unemployed in August of this year.

Increased Old Age Pension

The 8th Revision of the Old Age Pension since its creation in 1948 and a project enforcing the contribution to pension funds by employers will double the income of retired persons by 1973. At present, single people get pensions varying from 220 to 440 francs a month, depending on their income upon retirement. The 8th Revision and the Government's proposals will boost this income to 400-800 francs within three years. The fact that the Government takes Social Security and old people seriously, pre-empting the demands of the Socialists, is evident from the fact that Old Age Pension benefits will have nominally increased six-fold between 1948 and 1973 whereas incomes will have increased four-fold. Under the new scheme, every pensioner will be getting upward of 60 per cent of his final salary.

Rise in Federal Railways fares

The Federal Railways have increased all their fares and season tickets by an average of 13.2 per cent. The cost of a journey is based on the price of 17 cents per kilometre applicable to second-class single journeys. The grading of fares with distance remains the same. From Saturday, 18th December, to Sunday, 26th March, 1972, the Federal Railways will issue half-price week-end tickets. They have also facilitated family transports.



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Proposed rejection of an Initiative

The Federal Council has proposed to annul a popular initiative, whose 87,577 signatures were remitted to the Federal Chancery on 1st October, 1969. Sponsored by the Peasants, Artisans and Middle Class Party, the Initiative demanded that the Confederation should be entitled to determine the beginning of school years, to fix the duration of obligatory education, to lay down the guiding principles on teacher education and to streamline school programmes across the country. At present these things fall within the competence of Cantons. The Federal Council considered however that the revision of the 27th Article of the Constitution on educational matters currently under way and the success of the recent inter-cantonal Convention on Education covered the requirement of the Initiative Committee. On the other hand, it was necessary to delimit clearly the Confederation's responsibilities in the field of education, and therefore to go beyond the initiative.

JURA

A political dispute

The multiplicity of Swiss parties can make "politicking" more lively than elsewhere, even though the issues are not always of primary importance. In the dispute between two Christian Democrat delegates from Laufen and the Jurassian Christian-Democrat Party, the issue was the safeguard of a seat at the National Council of a Bernese Christian Democrat.

The two Laufen delegates were part of an inter-party group within the Jurassian delegation at the Great Council of Berne. This group comprised 9 delegates in all, 5 from the Peasants, Artisans and Middle Class Party, 2 Liberal-Radicals and 2 Christian Democrats.

The first two parties named are anti-Separatist, whereas the Christian Democrats are Separatists. Thus the two Laufen Christian Democrat delegates were at variance with their colleagues of the Jurassian Christian Democrat Party by teaming up with an anti-Separatist lobby of the Jurassian delegation. However, the branches of the Party have to share the same electoral list in the Laufen district, because it would be impossible otherwise to save the seat of a Bernese Christian-Democrat National Councilor. This delegate's seat can only be safeguarded by an excess of votes on the Jurassian List (which at present includes Laufen) in the cantonal share-out of National Council seats. However, the condition that the Laufen and the Jura branches of the Democratic Christian-Democrat Party could fight the elections under a common list

was that the two Laufen delegates should dissociate themselves from the anti-Separatist faction at the Great Council. This they grudgingly did, claiming that they were "outcasts" and that a "dagger had been put under their throat".

EQUIPMENT

How to map motorways

The four French-speaking cantons, Geneva, Vaud, Valais and Fribourg, generally complain that they are not getting a fair share of the motorways planned by the Hurlimann Commission. Each canton has its particular desires and priorities, however, they prepared a counter-project with amendments which consisted in completing the Lausanne to Berne (via Vevey) link and the Lausanne to Val-orbe links by 1979. The completion of these stretches was originally planned for a far later date. However, an association of over 100 communes of Vaud as well as the Department of Public Works of that Canton disagreed with this choice, considering that the Lausanne to Berne link via Yverdon (N1) was far more urgent than the Lausanne to Berne link via Vevey (N12). This started what people called the "N1-N2 Match". It seems at present that the N1 will gain favour with the Hurlimann Commission, if it agrees to satisfy French-Swiss demands.

An original pipeline

A peasant with six hectares of vines perched high above the Rhone valley between Martigny and Sion decided to streamline his operations by building a kilometre-long pipeline linking his wine press to storage tanks in the valley. Thus the 50 tons of must which his sunlit ledge of vines surrounded by precipices produced each year will now be conveyed cheaply and quickly to civilisation. It is surprising that the idea had not been tried before. The only way to reach the property was by climbing up a treacherous path only used by alpinists until the recent opening of a ropeway. This is probably the first "wine pipeline" to be built since Roman days.

The problem of Basle-Mulhouse Airport

The citizens of Basle refused to grant the 26-million franc credits necessary for the extension of the Basle-Mulhouse runway at local elections in September. This extension would have allowed the largest jets to land at the Airport and increased its capacity. The citizens were naturally motivated by environmental considerations rather than by a relatively minor expenditure.

The concept of the "Regio Basiliensis" obviously had less impact on them than that of Noise and Pollution.

This does not mean that the runway will never be extended. There has been some talk that the French might carry out the extension by themselves. However, this has been discounted by local officials, who recalled that the running and financing of the Basle-Mulhouse Airport was subject to a contract excluding unilateral action. The strongest pressures for a development of the Airport will probably come from neighbouring Bad-Wurtemberg. The Germans have complained in the past at having been kept out of negotiations on the Airport, which they hope will take the traffic overspill from Stuttgart whose airport will be saturated by 1990. It is therefore not impossible that a new multilateral agreement on the Basle-Mulhouse Airport will be reached, and the finance for its enlargement found in Germany.

THE QUEEN STOPS IN SWITZERLAND

The Queen's special "Trident II" made an unexpected landing at Zurich on the return flight from the Royal visit to Turkey. The plane was originally scheduled to re-fuel at Venice, but was prevented from doing so by fog. It remained for 40 minutes at Kloten Airport. For security and protocol reasons the Queen had to remain in the aircraft. But the Duke of Edinburgh boarded an RAF machine which flew him to Altenrhein, from which he drove to Vaduz by car.

SWITZERLAND ABROAD

New Glarus, a Swiss Village in the United States of America

New Glarus is located in the southern part of the State of Wisconsin.

In the forties of last century, the then highly industrialised Canton of Glarus went through a major economic crisis, coupled with overpopulation and famine. As in other areas of Switzerland, the population was faced with the alternative of either emigration or misery. Many Swiss endeavoured to build a better existence abroad.

On April 16, 1845, 196 people from all parts of the Canton of Glarus left their homes. Arrangements were made through a committee of the Glarus Emigration Association, which was established with Government assistance. Two experts were sent ahead and entrusted with the purchase of land suitable for settlement. After a journey of four months, 118 emigrants established New Glarus. Their tenacity and willpower were the foundation stones of New Glarus.

Conditions encountered by the settlers were harsh. Only few of them

were farmers. Most had worked in textile factories or as artisans. In contrast to homeland conditions, climatic contrasts such as drought and wide seasonal differences in temperature had to be overcome. The land was divided by lot and each family had to cultivate their part of the communal land.

The New Glarus area consists of hills and plains. The settlement bears no resemblance to the city of Glarus. The village plan shows block structure with a straight road network. The original houses were log cabins. The centre of the village was a church, which initially was also used as a schoolhouse and a place for social gatherings. Until 1850, the name of the settlement was "Swiss Colony of New Glarus". Thereafter it was called "Town of New Glarus" and since 1900 "Village New Glarus".

The first emigrants were followed by emigrants from the Canton of Berne and from Norway. The village now has a population of about 1,500. The houses are built in the style of Swiss chalets.

Emblems of Swiss Cantons decorate buildings and street lights. However, street names like 'Ennendastrasse' and 'Diesbachstrasse' have disappeared and were replaced by a system of numbers. Numerous family names, like

Zweifel, Streiff, Kubly and Grossenbacher bring to mind their Swiss origin.

The wheat-growing period of the early pioneers was followed by dairy farming. The production of cheese led to great prosperity. Niklaus Gerber contributed much to the development of the New Glarus cheese industry. He established the first cheese factory and introduced the 'Emmentaler' cheese, which in the U.S. is now commonly called 'Swiss cheese'. The once famous 'Sapsago' cheese (Schabzeiger) is no longer produced on a large scale in New Glarus. As a result of the setting up of a factory for condensed milk in 1910, many small cheese factories had to close down.

However, since quite some time, condensed milk has no longer been produced in New Glarus. Dairy farming is increasingly declining in importance. On the other hand, tourism has become a major source of income.

Whenever there is an opportunity, the people in New Glarus cultivate their traditions. Schiller's "William Tell" is performed during the Labour Day week-end since 1938. Thousands of spectators traditionally watch this open-air production in either German or English. There are also regular performances of the children's play "Heidi" by Johanna Spiry. Folklore is

much in evidence throughout the year, be it a village event or on the first of August (Swiss national independence day).

The Glarus dialect is still spoken in New Glarus after four or five generations. This dialect is even closer in many of its expressions to the old Glarus language than the one now spoken in the more remote areas of Glarus. However, it is becoming more and more influenced by the English language. From these two languages, the peculiar New Glarus dialect has evolved.

In earlier times, German was spoken not only at home but also at school and in church. The local weekly newspaper "New Glarus Post" was printed in German until 1929.

The growing Americanisation of New Glarus cannot be stopped. This change is reflected by the modern farms which are fully mechanised. The American way of life puts its imprint upon the language and Swiss traditions of New Glarus. Close contacts between the people of New Glarus and their country of origin are important so as to maintain the unique traditions of this Swiss village in the Middle West.

(Fragments—Swiss Volksbank)

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