

Comment

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Editor's telephone: 01-602 1378

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COMMENT

THE JESUITS JUST MAKE IT



Wolfgang Pauli

from Yugoslavia, where he was born in 1887. He was professor at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. His most important works bear on the terpenes and polyterpenes. It was he who discovered the "Isoprene Rule". One of his later successes was the synthetic production of male sexual hormones (and rosterone, testosterone).

When the Second World War drew to its close, there was great danger of epidemics, especially of spotted fever, which, in the days of Napoleon, had destroyed the French armies in Russia. A violent outbreak of the epidemic in Naples in 1943 was a deadly threat to the armies. The danger was checked by Paul Muller of Basel (1899—1965), a scientist working in the service of the chemical industry. It was he who discovered DDT. Dr. Muller was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1948.

Tadeusz Reichstein, born in Poland in 1897 but naturalized in Zurich, was professor of Organic Chemistry at Basel University when he succeeded in demonstrating the importance and composition of the hormones produced by the supra-renal glands. After most difficult and complicated experiments executed in close collaboration with his assistants and partly in race with foreign rivals (especially with American scientists), Reichstein discovered corticosterone and succeeded, at least partially, in the synthetic production of desoxycorticosterone, which has proved very efficient against Addison's disease. In the summer of 1954, he announced the discovery of electrocortine, the most active hormone so far known. It seems to have important functions in the metabolism of mineral substances and in

controlling the water supply of the human body. Reichstein received the 1950 Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology.

In 1949, the Prize for Physiology had gone to Professor Walter Rudolf Hess of Zurich University (born 1881) in recognition of his remarkable experiments and comprehensive studies on the reactions of the vegetative nervous system of the mid-brain. In this connection he also discovered the extremely complex field of vegetative functions of the brain basis that influences sleeping and waking.

As one of her Nobel Prize men Switzerland may also claim the poet and novelist Hermann Hesse. Born in Germany in 1877, he became a Swiss citizen in 1921 and died in his home near Lugano in 1962. Our country had long been his spiritual home, however closely associated he remained with all German life and letters and with world-wide humanism. In his "Glasperlenspiel" (The Game of the Glass Beads) to which he chiefly owed the prize, he shows the dangers of modern technology and mediocrity, which he endeavours to counter in the portrayal of a voluntary ascetic hierarchy. At the same time he tries to answer fundamental questions on human existence.

If we limit our survey to Nobel Prize winners living in Switzerland we must leave out Albert Einstein (1879—1955), who was a born German and ultimately became an American. He had become a citizen of Zurich in 1900. He was subsequently an official of the Office of Intellectual Property in Berne as well as lecturer at the University and the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. It was here he made the decisive discoveries that led to his theory of relativity. For the same reason of "extra-territoriality" we must leave out the physicist Felix Bloch and the pharmacologist Daniel Bovet.

In conclusion we would mention that Switzerland possesses something like a national counterpart to the Nobel Prize in the "Marcel-Benoist-Foundation". Established in 1920, it promotes all kinds of scientific, literary and philosophic studies. Its prize-winners are also pioneers with international reputations in their respective fields.

By Courtesy of the PRO HELVETIA Press Service, Zürich, 1970. Text written by the late Dr. Eduard Fueter.

By a surprisingly low majority, the Swiss people voted to abolish two articles in the Constitution forbidding the Jesuits from exercising activities in churches, schools and universities in Switzerland and prohibiting religious orders from building new monasteries and convents in the country. The referendum was held on the weekend of 19—20th May. 790,799 citizens decided that the Jesuits should no longer be considered the enemies of the Swiss State, 648,959 chose to keep the two articles. Only 16½ cantons elected to scrap them. Berne, Zurich and Vaud were among those that chose to keep them. 38 per cent of the electoral roll participated in the vote.

The articles which the electorate decided to abrogate (nos. 51 and 52) were introduced in the Constitution in 1848 at the end of the Sonderbund War, in which a majority of Protestant and progressive cantons were pitted against a minority of Catholic and conservative cantons leagued around Lucerne. The Jesuits were held partially responsible for this short war, in which fewer than a hundred lives were lost, because of their strong educational influence in Lucerne.

The first of these articles stated the following: "The Order of the Jesuits and affiliated societies may not be admitted to any part of Switzerland and their members are forbidden any sort of activity in church or school. This prohibition may be extended, by means of a federal decree, to other religious orders whose activities are dangerous for the state or disturb the peace among the different creeds".

The second stated: "The establishment of new convents or religious orders and the re-establishment of those which have been suppressed are forbidden".

When these provisions were decided, the Jesuits were not only considered as an obstacle towards progress and intellectual evolution, but their attachment to Rome appeared as a barrier in the way of creating a new nation.

It was obvious that the two articles no longer had any justification in 1973. The preservation of confessional peace (an argument put forward by the "anti-Jesuits") was already provided for by Article 50. Secondly, the influence of the followers of Ignatius of Loyola is no longer what it used to be in the past as religious passions are hard to arouse nowadays. Moreover, the Confederation

is a lay and firmly grounded state, and no longer the loose association of semi-independent cantons of 1847.

It was highly surprising, therefore, that so many Swiss should have shown so much wariness at the recent Referendum. It proves that mentalities and prejudices change slowly. The fact that a referendum was held was largely due to the efforts of a Zurich professor, Dr. Werner Kagi, who wrote the general document which served as background to voters. It took him many years of effort and persuasion to get the constitutional machinery moving for the benefit of Jesuits.

The latter will however not see their condition change dramatically. There are already 200 of them in Switzerland, more in relation to its population than in Italy, where they number 1,828. Of the 200 Jesuits working or living in the country, 81 are professed members of the Order and the remainder are auxiliaries or postulants. The enforcement of the two *articles d'exception* had become less stringent over the years. Although no Jesuits are found in university or public school teaching, many are engaged in student and hospital chaplaincies, as spiritual counsellors in theological seminaries (Chur and Sion) and as journalists (the magazines *Orientierung* and *Choisir*). Moreover, Article 51 did not prohibit foreign or Swiss Jesuits from taking up residence in Switzerland.

P.M.B.

SWISS EVENTS

No more military tax for Swiss abroad after three years

The Federal Council have just introduced a bill exempting Swiss residents from paying their Military Tax after three years providing they are permanent residents and have not served in the Army during that time.

This bill, which should be generally accepted by both houses, will replace the present system, whereby Swiss residents abroad theoretically pay Military Tax for eight years if they are in the Elite Troop category, and five years if they are of *Landwehr* age. This revision meets the demands of the Commission for the Swiss Abroad.

It is easy to see its justification: Payment of Military Tax was arbitrary as embassies have no way of enforcing these payments. Although Military Tax theoretically amounts to 2.5 per cent of gross income, the proceeds from the tax are not worth the administrative effort. It is expected that the new bill will cost only 1.5 million francs of lost revenue from abroad. Some have criticized the inequality of the new treatment, claiming that the privilege of being Swiss should be paid for by the duty of every Swiss citizen: to partake in the defence of the Motherland. Practically, it is recognised that the Swiss abroad, with no military practise and living as

they do away from the national scene, are not in a position to contribute efficiently to the defence of the country – at least, after a few years' absence. This is one more reason why the former provisions were unjust.

FRENCH DEMO IN NEUCHATEL

Two hundred French workers from the "Lip" watch manufactory in Besancon demonstrated in front of the Ebauches S.A. headquarters in Neuchatel against the proposed closure of several Lip plants. Ebauches, which is the leading watch component group in Switzerland controls 43 per cent of Lip. The French firm is in serious difficulty. Its former general manager has resigned and the commercial court of Besancon has appointed two temporary administrators with the task of finding the possible outlets to the company's troubles. One immediate solution is to close down or sell – at the cost of possible redundancies – the non-horological departments of the group which have made heavy losses. In fact, Lip's trouble stem from non-profitable ventures in military and civil procurements and, of course, from the invasion of Japanese "Seiko" and American "Timex" watches on the French market. Possible redundancies naturally touched the unions on a sensitive cord. Workers took the train to Neuchatel to lobby Ebauches' Managing Director, Mr. Leo Dupasquier and distribute pamphlets to onlookers outside the head office. They were told that Ebauches, as a minority

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