

# Reports and Documents

## CRITERIA OF ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

### I

#### SWITZERLAND: THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

##### A CONTROVERSY ABOUT M. JEAN ZIEGLER

ON 4 December, 1976, Mlle. Jeanne Hersch, professor of philosophy at the University of Geneva, addressed a long letter to the rector of the University regarding M. Jean Ziegler's candidacy for a full professorship of sociology. On 4 January, 1977, the letter was published in the *Tribune de Genève*, Professor Hersch having decided in the meantime to place her views before the public. In her note to the editor when sending him the letter, she wrote: "My name having been mentioned on several occasions in connection with the candidacy of M. Ziegler and certain journalists having apparently had access to the confidential file, I request you to enable the public to see this letter which I wrote to the rector on 4 December, 1976, and which has been transmitted to the Conseil d'état."

The publication of Professor Hersch's letter brought into public discussion an issue which had been troubling Swiss university teachers for a number of years, but which they had only once mentioned in print previously. The partisans of M. Ziegler claimed that he was being harassed because of his recent publication of a radical denunciation of Swiss society. For two months, the academic qualifications of M. Ziegler were treated at length in the Swiss press.

Most of the matter which was published in the "Ziegler affair" is reprinted herewith. I begin with a communication from Professor Paul Trappe to the *National-Zeitung* of Basel in 1970; it shows that misgivings about M. Ziegler's merits as a scholar were of very long standing.

E.S.

### I

#### SOCIOLOGY IN BERNE: THE HEART OF THE MATTER<sup>1</sup>

The current unrest among the students of sociology at Berne regarding Federal Representative Ziegler has hardly any foundation in fact. The political attitudes of the candidate—however much attention they may and will attract—certainly do not give rise to such well-founded negative judgements as do the real facts of the case. These have to do with the scientific

<sup>1</sup> A letter from Professor Paul Trappe of the University of Basel, published in *National-Zeitung* (Basel), 22 July, 1970. Professor Trappe has been professor of sociology and director of the Sociological Seminar of the University of Basel since 1968. Prior to that he was director of the Soziologische Institut at Kiel. From 1961 to 1967 he was general secretary of the Internationale Vereinigung für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie. Among his publications are: *Situation der Rechtssoziologie* (1962); *Trägergruppen in Nigerien* (1967); *Warum Genossenschaften in Entwicklungsländer?* (1966); and *Development from Below: An Alternative* (1971).

and scholarly qualifications of the candidate. These qualifications cannot be demonstrated by his publications. Rather, the contrary: the publications of *Privatdozent* Jean Ziegler show that his qualifications for appointment in the field which he is trying to enter—sociology with special reference to underdeveloped countries—are not at the level which is customary for such appointments. From all accounts, there are on record the assessments of certain well-known specialists in his field, and they are as unequivocal as the judgements of the various universities to which Ziegler with extraordinary forwardness has applied for appointment.

Perhaps the dissertation which he submitted for habilitation is a major work; unfortunately it has not yet been published, having been withheld from interested colleagues in his field for the past three years. To use the jargon which is now common, we might have here a person who proclaims his belief on banners but who in this case is perhaps a victim of his own tactics of throwing a veil over things. I think that it certainly can be argued that some of the obviously ill-informed student representatives might be allowed to see the assessments to which I have referred. One thing is certain: the arguments used thus far by Ziegler's followers are dramatisations of political trivialities—with the probably quite unconscious intention of throwing a veil of obscurity over the real issue, which is that his scholarly qualifications are regarded as questionable.

We should be courageous enough to call the thing by its right name. The self-overestimation of an individual sociologist does not just do harm to that "sociologist"—it does harm to the whole profession of sociology and it also harms the prospects for employment of the students of sociology. The "case of the sociologist" in Berne is therefore of concern outside Berne itself. Whoever wishes to contribute to the lowering of standards in sociology, even though that will damage the reputation of his profession, should declare his "solidarity" with the students who do not know the facts. . . .

. . . what is good for Herr Ziegler is far from good for sociology. . . .

Paul Trappe

### II

#### PROFESSOR HERSCH'S LETTER<sup>2</sup>

4 December, 1976

Dear Rector,—I am taking the liberty of sending you this letter, which concerns the pending recommendation of the promotion of M. Jean Ziegler to a full professorship of sociology in the faculty of economics and social sciences. This affair, which is agitating Geneva and Switzerland and even university and political circles abroad, is endangering, it seems to me, the honour of our entire University and its right to self-government. The new

<sup>2</sup> Jeanne Hersch has been professor of philosophy at the University of Geneva since 1956. She is the author of *L'illusion philosophique* (1936, reprinted 1964, with an introduction by Karl Jaspers); *L'Etre et la forme* (1946) and *Idéologie et réalité* (1956); she has edited *Le Droit d'être un homme* (1968). She was the collaborator of Karl Jaspers for many years and has translated many of his works into French. She was also head of the division of philosophy at Unesco.

system of university government has not given the professors as a body the opportunity to express themselves on this subject. I think however that it is impossible for me to remain silent any longer.

Never, to my knowledge, has public opinion been so completely deceived. This is how the situation has been represented to the public: a professor who is also a politically committed member of the federal parliament had dared publish abroad a book<sup>3</sup> denouncing abuses and scandals in our country's institutions. The book, having had such an enormous impact internationally, the Conseil d'état of Geneva hesitates, despite the unanimously favourable recommendation of the University—i.e., the faculty of economics and social sciences and the office of the rector—to ratify the promotion of this associate professor to the rank of a full professor, and is even preparing to rid the University altogether of this black sheep. It is acting in this way because of the pressure of reactionary bankers. According to this version, the autonomy of the University, which is favourable to M. Ziegler for purely scholarly reasons, must be defended against the political authorities, who are being manipulated by the rich.

I shall defend the opposite thesis: M. Ziegler owes his entire university career to political pressures—going almost to the point of blackmail. If he becomes a full professor, his promotion will have been the result of political considerations exclusively; his promotion can in no way be justified on scholarly grounds.

The beginnings of M. Ziegler's career are known to me only at second hand—my sources are sound—but I cannot myself guarantee their accuracy.

According to these sources, M. Ziegler has never had any sociological training. He studied law in Berne. In 1958 he received a doctorate in law, *cum laude*. He then presented a further dissertation to the University of Berne in order to qualify for "habilitation" in sociology. This dissertation was turned down by the two expert assessors, Georges Balandier, the eminent French sociologist, and Paul Trappe, then at Kiel and now director of the Institute of Sociology in Basel. In the end, the dissertation was accepted in 1967 by Professor K. B. Mayer of Berne and by a sociologist who had to be sought at Tours and who is a theorist of the "total theatre". I do not know his name.

This mistake or this initial error was the seed of all that followed. The manner in which this "habilitation" was obtained is characteristic of the "method" used by M. Ziegler to achieve his ends, and likewise of a certain irresponsibility on the part of university teachers. If one tries long enough one often ends up by discovering a weak member of the committee before which one has to pass: the aim is to find a person who feels it easier to yield, rather than to go on being bothered by the candidate.

Jean Gabus appointed Jean Ziegler at the University of Neuchâtel as an ethno-sociologist but he soon had to part company with him.

I come now to the period which I know at first hand: namely, M. Ziegler's time in Geneva.

Jean Ziegler was at first, for a short time, an assistant in the faculty of law; then he had a research post and was appointed as a tutor. He soon

<sup>3</sup> Ziegler, Jean, *Une Suisse au-dessus de tout soupçon* (Paris: Editions Seuil, 1976).

let it be known that he was entitled to appointment at professorial level and applied for the professorship in the history of political theory, which was then vacant in the faculty of law. This was in 1964.

I was invited to serve on the appointments committee. After a thorough examination of his file, his publications and his academic background, the committee rejected him and nominated M. Ivo Rens instead.

Later on, in 1972,<sup>4</sup> I learned that M. Ziegler was a candidate for a professorship in sociology in the faculty of economics and social sciences, and that the matter was very controversial. A negative decision was arrived at before the summer vacation. But at the beginning of the academic session in the autumn of that year, we learned that M. Ziegler had been appointed to an associate professorship.

The shift from the decision to reject to the decision to appoint cannot be explained by any new scholarly evidence which appeared during the summer, but only as a result of the exercise of pressure. Four years ago M. Ziegler was already a political figure,<sup>5</sup> and everyone knows how fearful academics are, particularly since 1968, of being accused of political bias. Such timorousness can perfectly well result in an appointment.

This was, to my mind, the second mistake, for which the responsibility belongs to the faculty of economics and social sciences—and I say this with deep regret, out of respect for the memory of my father.<sup>6</sup>

After that, it became impossible to tell the truth about the scholarly and professional inconsequentiality of M. Jean Ziegler without raising doubts about the faculty of economics and social sciences itself.

This is no doubt the reason why the Federal Department of the Interior and the Fonds national de recherche scientifique awarded M. Ziegler the substantial grants which the Federal Council listed in response to a parliamentary question (see *Journal de Genève*, 1 December, 1976): Sfr. 4539 to attend a conference in Brazil in 1976; "some grants" (?) in 1967 and 1971 to attend conferences; Sfr. 42, 744 for the years 1968, 1969 and 1971 for a "study of certain concepts of social organisation in developing countries"—a study which "comes to an end in 1972" and "the final report of which was approved by the Conseil national de la recherche scientifique", although it does not seem to have led to any kind of publication nor any result of general interest.<sup>7</sup>

Such no doubt is also the reason why the faculty of economics and social science has transmitted M. Ziegler's request for promotion to a full professorship with a positive recommendation. How could it contradict its own recommendation of four years earlier without seeming to be responding to a disgraceful political "book-burning" of the candidate's recent publication?

<sup>4</sup> The rejection took place during 1971. The nomination of M. Ziegler occurred in 1972. [Note added by Professor Hersch in the published version of her letter.]

<sup>5</sup> He had become a radical member of the Swiss federal parliament, having been elected as a candidate of the Swiss Socialist Party, of which Professor Hersch is also a member. [Editor.]

<sup>6</sup> Liebmann Hersch was a distinguished professor in this faculty. [Editor.]

<sup>7</sup> This subsidy was in fact first given to Professor Mayer of Berne with whom M. Ziegler was a collaborator. [Note added by Professor Hersch in the published version of her letter.]

And this again is undoubtedly the reason why the rector's office confirmed the faculty's positive recommendation and transmitted it to the Conseil d'état; how could the rector's office disavow the faculty involved without seeming to participate by this same political "book-burning"?

Thus a situation has come about which is extremely damaging to our institutions, to our University and to the fundamental principles of our state, which include the autonomy of the university and freedom of expression for all. The Conseil d'état, which is a political authority, is being subjected to very strong political pressures to resist the University's positive recommendation, which is ostensibly based on strictly scholarly grounds. This is the worst of confrontations because it is all based on lies.

It is the duty of the Conseil d'état to protect the intellectual autonomy of the University against all pressures. But it has this duty only if the University will acknowledge its mistake: its positive recommendation was imposed on it, little by little, by political pressures, by the political fear of appearing to act in accordance with political considerations. There were no grounds at all for its recommendation as far as standards of academic scholarship are concerned.

This would be an extremely difficult step to take, but the only one which can bring us back to the truth.

My contribution to this effort is the present letter, to which I append a brief critical assessment of *La Sociologie de l'Afrique nouvelle*, which is the most "scholarly" work produced by Jean Ziegler and the one which is closest to the field he is supposed to teach. Anyone can check my remarks by examining the book. It will not take much more than an hour's perusal.

Jean Ziegler has a talent for journalism but he is interested neither in accuracy nor in truth. *He is not of professorial calibre.*

I explicitly deny his scholarly merit as a "sociologist".

As to his merit as a teacher, one need refer only to the text published by those of his students who have come to his support. They weighed their words, and one must respect their scrupulous honesty. "We, having attended his course, affirm", they write, "that Jean Ziegler is a capable teacher who has been able to arouse the attention of his students by *the liveliness of his teaching* and by the *personal interest* he shows in his work." No one has ever questioned either M. Ziegler's "liveliness" or his "personal interest" in everything he does.

We are told nevertheless that in the files there are letters attesting to Jean Ziegler's competence as a sociologist and even one, it seems, from the same Georges Balandier who once rejected the dissertation which M. Ziegler submitted for his habilitation. But everyone, I think, knows of the courtesies which are obligatory among colleagues in the same discipline.

Some say: why complicate the situation? Let us appoint him and get it over with. In any case he frequently does not teach his courses. When he is named full professor he will teach even fewer of them. And who knows, with luck, and helped by the success of the "book-burning", perhaps he will prefer to leave. . . .

But to think in this way is to be unfaithful to the high standard of seriousness which is still attributed to a Swiss university professorship almost

everywhere in the world and particularly in the "third world". No one should be able to degrade this standard with impunity.

In conclusion: it seems hardly possible to undo what has been done. But nothing obliges us to go on further in the same direction. *Diabolicum perseverare*. Some university teachers remain associate professors all their lives, for one reason or another. I myself was one for six years. With regard to M. Ziegler, all that need be done is to leave things as they are. Otherwise, from now on, the effective technique for forcing open the doors of the University will be, first, to create a great political fuss and then, in case of rejection, to intimidate the authorities by declaring: "You are rejecting me for political reasons."

Yours,

Jeanne Hersch

#### A SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON *La Sociologie de l'Afrique nouvelle*<sup>8</sup>

Jeanne Hersch

In his introduction, the author announces that his book falls into two parts: first, a theoretical study of alienation in society—an analysis of the inherent contradictions within African societies which "cannot be undertaken without a clear definition of concepts"; and second, three case studies of the Congo, Ghana and Egypt.

The first part takes up 49 out of the 375 pages and fulfils none of its promises. There is no theoretical study of alienation, there is no analysis of the specifically African contradictions, no "clear definition of concepts". It simply reiterates Marxist concepts of "class struggle", "alienation", and "ruling class" without illuminating and enriching them by their application to a new field.

Political considerations dominate the discussion which is overlaid with a "philosophical", "methodological" and "scholarly" veneer; there are superfluous quotations on very well-known themes, for example, note 1 on page 12, which deals with the transformation of quantity into quality. The references to Sartre and Lukàcs (p. 16) or to Marx are nowhere used to deal with the problems of the book. The author declares that he will use "the methods of political sociology" but he does not say what they are and he does not apply them. What we have is simply an alternating sequence of expressions of a political attitude and pseudo-philosophical references. There is no trace of sociology.

Africa is almost entirely absent from the first 36 pages. The constitutions of the African states are classified very summarily. There are long and very general quotations from Marx on the class struggle.

The author reproduces Osende Afana's analysis of social classes in Africa but makes no use of it.

He quotes Lukàcs at length (pp. 41-43) without making any use of the quotations, and he is simply making propaganda when he speaks of "Arab

<sup>8</sup> *Tribune de Genève*, 4 January, 1977.

socialism" as tending towards the payment of a uniform wage calculated on the basis of needs, or when he speaks of the "dialectical unity" of revolution.

From p. 54 onwards there are three "case studies", of the Congo, Ghana and Egypt.

Here, there are historical narratives but no sociology at all. It is the skilful work of an experienced journalist. I cannot pass judgement on the precision of the facts which he presents. There is no analysis. Sometimes, at the beginning and at the end of the major part of the book, there is a sprinkling of references to Sartre which have no relationship to what has been presented in the text. There are long quotations from Lumumba and Nasser—whole pages—without any critical assessment of what they say; there are whole pages of quotations from Maxime Rodinson, from Hassan Riad, from journalists who witnessed the events cited, and from Raymond Aron.

Wherever there is a problem which is slightly philosophical or sociological, the author takes refuge in quotations from Lukàcs, which thus fill quite a number of pages.

There is no real research in this book and no genuine thought on the subject treated. There are political opinions and journalists' stories, decked out with a certain degree of pedantry and philosophical terms and quotations.

### III

#### A PURLOINED DOCUMENT<sup>9</sup>

... Meanwhile, the rector has received a certain number of letters bearing on the proposal to appoint M. Jean Ziegler as full professor. The pressure on the members of the office of the rector and of the committee of rectors and deans has become more intense. Under these circumstances the rector wishes to consult his colleagues. . . .

#### *The Situation of M. Jean Ziegler*

The committee of rectors and deans takes note of the letter which Mlle. Jean Hersch sent to the rector on 4 December, 1976. Members of the office of the rector met with Mlle. Hersch this morning; she was not in a position to supply proof of certain serious charges which she had made in her letter. The rector pointed out to Mlle. Hersch a certain number of points which were annoyingly vague or imprecise in her letter. These are especially regrettable because certain arguments are based on them.<sup>10</sup>

The committee of rectors and deans requested the rector to transmit to

<sup>9</sup> On 16 February, 1977, *Le Nouvel illustré*, an illustrated weekly published in Lausanne, published a photographic reproduction of sections of the text of the confidential minutes of a meeting on 14 December, 1976, of the committee of rectors and deans of the University of Geneva. The reproduced parts of the minutes are reprinted above.

<sup>10</sup> Professor Hersch declares that the minutes of the meeting with the rector are themselves

the Conseil d'état as complete a file as possible of the various letters which have been sent to him.

The committee of rectors and deans instructed the rector to write to the Conseil d'état to confirm its position: both in 1972 and 1976, the proper procedures for academic appointment have been scrupulously respected in the case of M. Jean Ziegler who has fulfilled his obligations as a member of the University. In consequence the committee of rectors and deans insists that its recommendation regarding the appointment of M. Jean Ziegler to a full professorship rests on substantial grounds.

Bernard Ducret  
Secretary-General

### IV

#### GROWING AGITATION ABOUT JEAN ZIEGLER IN GENEVA<sup>11</sup>

The recommendation of the promotion of Jean Ziegler from an assistant professorship to a full professorship at the University of Geneva, which under normal circumstances would be a matter of routine, has become a political issue, which has resulted in splitting Genevans into two camps. At the celebration of the Escalade<sup>12</sup> in circles which are devoted to the observance of traditions, one hears harsh words about Ziegler, above all in the Association of the Vieux Grenadiers, which has traditionally formed the heart of the Radical-Democratic (Freisinnige) Party. On the other side, the left has gathered around the sociologist.

Although hitherto the Genevan trade unions have kept at a distance from Ziegler and his intellectual friends, they are now openly taking his side. For once, the differences within the Socialist Party in its relations to the left have been bridged and it has forgotten that, 10 years ago, Ziegler defeated the trade union leader, Eugène Suter, in the elections to the federal parliament. Even the communists are now zealously beating the drum for Ziegler. A petition with 2,675 signatures has been presented to the Conseil d'état and the Grand Conseil and a section of the Manifeste démocratique has emerged in Geneva, which is attempting by every possible artifice to show a relationship between the Ziegler-affair and the Cincera-issue.

Ziegler himself is in a quite comfortable position since the governmental majority, which is made up of the "middle-class" parties, is itself divided on the matter of the promotion, particularly the Radical-Democratic and the Christian Democratic Parties. Ziegler's promotion has been approved by the university bodies which have jurisdiction in the matter; Vice-Rector Peter Tschopp, who is active in the Radical-Democratic Party, has been in the lead in pressing for the promotion. The administrative director of the University, Dominique Voellini, is the young president of the Christian-Democratic Party. Ziegler's appointment in the University was supported

<sup>11</sup> *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 30 December, 1976.

<sup>12</sup> Annual celebration of the successful resistance of Geneva to a Savoyard invasion on 11 December, 1602. [Editor.]

socialism" as tending towards the payment of a uniform wage calculated on the basis of needs, or when he speaks of the "dialectical unity" of revolution.

From p. 54 onwards there are three "case studies", of the Congo, Ghana and Egypt.

Here, there are historical narratives but no sociology at all. It is the skilful work of an experienced journalist. I cannot pass judgement on the precision of the facts which he presents. There is no analysis. Sometimes, at the beginning and at the end of the major part of the book, there is a sprinkling of references to Sartre which have no relationship to what has been presented in the text. There are long quotations from Lumumba and Nasser—whole pages—without any critical assessment of what they say; there are whole pages of quotations from Maxime Rodinson, from Hassan Riad, from journalists who witnessed the events cited, and from Raymond Aron.

Wherever there is a problem which is slightly philosophical or sociological, the author takes refuge in quotations from Lukàcs, which thus fill quite a number of pages.

There is no real research in this book and no genuine thought on the subject treated. There are political opinions and journalists' stories, decked out with a certain degree of pedantry and philosophical terms and quotations.

### III

#### A PURLOINED DOCUMENT<sup>9</sup>

... Meanwhile, the rector has received a certain number of letters bearing on the proposal to appoint M. Jean Ziegler as full professor. The pressure on the members of the office of the rector and of the committee of rectors and deans has become more intense. Under these circumstances the rector wishes to consult his colleagues. ...

#### *The Situation of M. Jean Ziegler*

The committee of rectors and deans takes note of the letter which Mlle. Jean Hersch sent to the rector on 4 December, 1976. Members of the office of the rector met with Mlle. Hersch this morning; she was not in a position to supply proof of certain serious charges which she had made in her letter. The rector pointed out to Mlle. Hersch a certain number of points which were annoyingly vague or imprecise in her letter. These are especially regrettable because certain arguments are based on them.<sup>10</sup>

The committee of rectors and deans requested the rector to transmit to

<sup>9</sup> On 16 February, 1977, *Le Nouvel illustré*, an illustrated weekly published in Lausanne, published a photographic reproduction of sections of the text of the confidential minutes of a meeting on 14 December, 1976, of the committee of rectors and deans of the University of Geneva. The reproduced parts of the minutes are reprinted above.

<sup>10</sup> Professor Hersch declares that the minutes of the meeting with the rector are themselves inaccurate. [Editor.]

the Conseil d'état as complete a file as possible of the various letters which have been sent to him.

The committee of rectors and deans instructed the rector to write to the Conseil d'état to confirm its position: both in 1972 and 1976, the proper procedures for academic appointment have been scrupulously respected in the case of M. Jean Ziegler who has fulfilled his obligations as a member of the University. In consequence the committee of rectors and deans insists that its recommendation regarding the appointment of M. Jean Ziegler to a full professorship rests on substantial grounds.

Bernard Ducret  
Secretary-General

### IV

#### GROWING AGITATION ABOUT JEAN ZIEGLER IN GENEVA<sup>11</sup>

The recommendation of the promotion of Jean Ziegler from an assistant professorship to a full professorship of sociology at the University of Geneva, which under normal circumstances would be a matter of routine, has become a political issue, which has resulted in splitting Genevans into two camps. At the celebration of the Escalade<sup>12</sup> in circles which are devoted to the observance of traditions, one hears harsh words about Ziegler, above all in the Association of the Vieux Grenadiers, which has traditionally formed the heart of the Radical-Democratic (Freisinnige) Party. On the other side, the left has gathered around the sociologist.

Although hitherto the Genevan trade unions have kept at a distance from Ziegler and his intellectual friends, they are now openly taking his side. For once, the differences within the Socialist Party in its relations to the left have been bridged and it has forgotten that, 10 years ago, Ziegler defeated the trade union leader, Eugène Suter, in the elections to the federal parliament. Even the communists are now zealously beating the drum for Ziegler. A petition with 2,675 signatures has been presented to the Conseil d'état and the Grand Conseil and a section of the Manifeste démocratique has emerged in Geneva, which is attempting by every possible artifice to show a relationship between the Ziegler-affair and the Cincera-issue.

Ziegler himself is in a quite comfortable position since the governmental majority, which is made up of the "middle-class" parties, is itself divided on the matter of the promotion, particularly the Radical-Democratic and the Christian Democratic Parties. Ziegler's promotion has been approved by the university bodies which have jurisdiction in the matter; Vice-Rector Peter Tschopp, who is active in the Radical-Democratic Party, has been in the lead in pressing for the promotion. The administrative director of the University, Dominique Voellini, is the young president of the Christian-Democratic Party. Ziegler's appointment in the University was supported

<sup>11</sup> *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 30 December, 1976.

<sup>12</sup> Annual celebration of the successful resistance of Geneva to a Savoyard invasion on 11 December, 1602. [Editor.]

at the time by another prominent member of the Christian-Democratic Party, namely, Roger Girod, who is professor of sociology at the University of Geneva. The Radical-Democratic Party is in a difficult situation since the judicial disposition of the scandal of dishonest management of the municipal affairs of *Plan-les-Ouates* is yet to be made.

The manoeuvre for the promotion of Ziegler at the present time was initiated by the socialist head of the department of education, André Chavanne, who is a shrewd tactician. He brought the "Ziegler file" up for discussion at a politically explosive moment; the members of the Conseil d'état who are from the middle-class parties have allowed themselves to be drawn along to the point where they are now involved in the discussion. It would have been quite simple to have put the decision on this issue off until 1978, since Ziegler had been reappointed in 1975 for three years as an associate professor. His tenure would have expired only in 1978.

As matters stand now, Chavanne is in a position to make political capital for himself and his party, whatever the outcome, and this just before the elections to the Conseil d'état and the Grand Conseil. If the government refuses to grant Ziegler the promotion, the accusation of "suppression of academic freedom" will be made by the left and, beyond it, by persons of more moderate views and particularly by academics. If the government agrees to the promotion, Chavanne will appear as the successful protagonist of the autonomy of the University. Obviously Chavanne regards such reinforcement as necessary for his re-election next year.

The conseillers d'état from the middle-class parties could have avoided these developments if they had taken up the "Ziegler file" only after the elections of 1977. Now, however, that the question has been raised in public, political polarisation is going ahead and in the press as well. Thus, the *Tribune de Genève* is conducting a campaign against Ziegler and his outlook, indirectly supported by Professor Jacques Freymond, the director of the Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales.

## V

### PROFESSOR LÜTHY'S APPEAL FOR RECONSIDERATION<sup>13</sup>

Dear Dean,—In accordance with the resolution of 2 April, 1968, of the Conseil d'état of the canton of Geneva, the faculty of economics and social sciences of the University of Geneva, the dean of which at that time

<sup>13</sup> On 14 January, 1977, Professor Herbert Lüthy of the University of Basel addressed a letter to the dean of the faculty of economics and social sciences of the University of Geneva in connection with the proposed promotion of Jean Ziegler. Herbert Lüthy has been professor of contemporary history at the University of Basel since 1971. Before that he was professor of history at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich. He is also a member of the executive committee of the International Committee of the Red Cross. His works included: *Michael de Montaigne's Essays*, (1953); *La France à l'heure de son clocher* (English translation: *The State of France*); *La Banque protestante en France: de la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes à la Révolution*, 2 vols. (1959–1961); *Nach dem Untergang des Abendlandes* (1964); and *Le Passé présent: Combat d'idées de Calvin à Rousseau* (1965).

An abridged copy of the letter was published in *Die Weltwoche* on 2 March, 1977.

was Professor Cl. Terrier, conferred on me the honorary degree of doctor of economics. The diploma was presented to me at the ceremony in celebration of the 115th anniversary of the University with the then rector, Professor Denis van Berchem, presiding.

I recall today—and I hope that you too dimly recall—the scandalous course of the "ceremonial assembly" of 6 June, 1968, in the Auditorium Maximum of your university. It happened in that memorable spring of 1968 when no one here heard the call of the "Prague Spring" for help against the overpowering Siberian snowstorm, because ever since the imaginary but vociferous May revolution of the Latin quarter in Paris, the press appeared only irregularly, the mass media joined in the promotion of the phantasies of the pathological student "cultural (pseudo-) revolution", the dominion of brawling, the clamorous ignorance, the social anomie (e.g., "double legality"), and the appearance of the "student estate" . . . spread over all of Western Europe and, as you know, it also came to Geneva and other Swiss university towns.

On that 6 June, 1968, I saw the teaching staff of the University of Geneva compelled, with Rector Denis van Berchem at its head, the deans, the teachers, and the honorary doctors retreat before the uproar of a mob gone berserk, from their Auditorium Maximum, to the rector's chambers which was quickly encircled by guards. There, in that "bunker", the degrees could be bestowed on the candidates with a certain amount of decorum.

Those who were honoured in this way recall bitterly this "ceremonial assembly" which turned into a panic-stricken flight and they ask how much further the retreat will go. And yet, I recall the pleasure with which I received the honorary doctorate of a faculty—as an historian by profession, I was not well acquainted with the teachers of the social sciences—of the University of Geneva and donned the precious doctoral hood of the old academy of John Calvin, founded in 1559.

Remembering that dark day and the honour conferred by your faculty, harassed then as now, I permit myself personally and in strict confidence to turn to you about an internal concern of "your" faculty. I turn to you, while trying to avoid being drawn into an acrimoniously politicised dispute, to call to your attention some professional reflections. . . .

Your have time before the decision, which you have passed on to the Conseil d'état, is made in the coming month to reconsider the whole matter. You have enough time to examine the information which has been presented and to seek the files needed from other universities. While requesting you to maintain the confidentiality to which you are committed by your position as dean, I also declare myself ready, for my own part, to answer any question asked by the university authorities as best I can.

May I put before you my own intentions? If the academic and public authorities of Geneva knowing—or ignoring—the records regarding studies, examinations, habilitation (?) and the university career of the candidate, proceed to a promotion to a full professorship—which cannot be justified from a scholarly point of view—and allow themselves to be forced into making a permanent professorial appointment as a result of political pressure approximating to blackmail—if this scandal really comes about,

I will not hesitate to return to you and your faculty my honorary doctorate with my deepest disrespect.

May your scholarly conscience be alert. In this hope, I remain with high esteem,

Yours sincerely,

Herbert Lüthy

## VI

### JEANNE HERSCH'S TRUTH IN THE ZIEGLER CASE<sup>14</sup>

Peter L. Rothenbühler

In the conflict about the truth, conflict is the only truth, one might say, about the struggle now going on in Geneva regarding the promotion of Jean Ziegler from an associate to a full professorship of sociology at the University of Geneva.

In the most recent round of the conflict, Professor Jeanne Hersch has attacked: in a long letter to the office of the rector of the University, which had been published in the *Tribune de Genève* and in the *Nouvel-liste* (Sion), she denies out of hand the qualifications of her young colleague as a scholar. In particular, she says that Ziegler received his doctorate of law from Berne with the poorest passing mark. His dissertation for habilitation as professor in Berne was rejected by two expert-assessors, Georges Balandier and Paul Trappe, and was then only accepted by another expert-assessor. Even the nomination for the appointment of Ziegler as an associate professor at the University in 1972 was much disputed. His appointment was rejected before the summer vacation. Only as a result of "political pressures" was Ziegler suddenly made an associate professor after the vacation.

As the crown witness for the scholarly condemnation of Ziegler, Jeanne Hersch cites the Africanist Jean-Pierre Chrétien. She adjoins to her letter a severe criticism which this "eminent Africanist"—as Hersch calls him—rendered of Ziegler's book, *Le Pouvoir africain*. Jean Hersch's personal judgement of Ziegler is summarised in the remark: "Jean Ziegler has a talent for journalism. He does not concern himself with scholarly scruples, or with truth. He is no professor."

Jeanne Hersch's letter has made a great stir in all of Switzerland and it has been widely cited and supported. The SVP Press Service has, for example, written: ". . . now Ziegler has met an influential opponent in the greatly esteemed Geneva professor of philosophy and prominent Social Democrat, Jeanne Hersch, whose credibility and integrity are beyond any doubt."

Many persons are raising questions in Geneva today about the truth of what Jeanne Hersch has said. In fact, Ziegler was not given the lowest passing grade for the doctorate, but he was given instead *cum laude* and given the congratulations of the jury. Professors Balandier and Trappe were, indeed, invited to be expert-assessors for his habilitation-

<sup>14</sup> *National-Zeitung* (Basel), 16 January, 1977

dissertation, but they refused the invitation and hence did not reject Ziegler's thesis.

Against other "untruths" in Jeanne Hersch's letter, the educational director of Geneva, André Chavanne, has issued a defence, in the form of a communiqué. He declared that Ziegler was appointed in 1972 fully in accordance with prescribed procedures. Furthermore, this happened before the summer vacation began in June. There was neither a "first negative decision" nor were political pressures exercised. The procedure for his recommendation was based on the judgement of a group of expert-assessors drawn from various countries.

The office of the rector of the University has declared that the "prescribed procedure was strictly adhered to". The "eminent Africanist", Chrétien, turned out in the end to be an assistant at the University of Lille who did not know that Mlle. Hersch had made use of a book review published in 1974 in order to conduct a campaign against Ziegler in Geneva. He has apologised to Ziegler and has refused to be drawn into the discussion in the press. Various organisations may take action against the partially incorrect charges made by Mlle. Hersch: the Association of Employees in the Public Service of Geneva is considering a proposal to expel her from the association. The Geneva branch of the Socialist Party, the executive branch of which will deal on Monday with the "Hersch case", is considering instituting proceedings to expel her from the party. The Socialist Party of Geneva is not pleased that Jeanne Hersch, who, although she resigned in 1969 from the Geneva section of the Socialist Party, is now appearing as a "prominent Social Democrat" against Ziegler. Since her resignation from the Geneva Socialist Party in connection with disagreements about the efforts made by some of the members of the party to move closer to the *Partei der Arbeit*,<sup>15</sup> Jeanne Hersch has belonged to the Socialist Party of the canton of Berne.

Jeanne Hersch's shot across Ziegler's bow is only the latest stage in a concentrated campaign against the author of the best-seller and the aspirant full professor. The origin of the whole thing is the book, *Une Suisse au-dessus de tout soupçon*, which is now published by 10 foreign publishers and is about to appear in the United States.

Already in March 1976, before the appearance of the first—French—version of his polemic, the office of the rector of the University of Geneva had prepared the recommendation of Ziegler's promotion to a full professorship to be transmitted to the Conseil d'état. The first major reactions and pressures only began in October, after the book had appeared in German. In letters to the Conseil d'état and meetings with it, the Geneva bankers, the Geneva Chamber of Commerce and other business enterprisers' associations expressed a desire that Ziegler's connection with the University should cease.

Such interventions were given much publicity by a vigorous, very personal campaign by the editor of the *Tribune de Genève*. The chief editor of this paper, Georges Henri-Martin, argued that a man who attacked our state in the way in which Ziegler did, did not deserve to be distin-

<sup>15</sup> A "leftist" party. [Editor.]

guished by the state by the dignity of a full professorship. The promotion was attacked in the government of Geneva, which referred Ziegler's file back to the University. In order to delay a decision, the government requested that the University supply additional information. It concerned itself, above all, with the question of whether Ziegler had infringed on his obligation of loyalty to the state.

The University authorities remained firm. They repeated that the recommendation for Ziegler's promotion had been made unanimously and that they would not change their attitude. They said that the University alone had jurisdiction on this matter and it alone was in a position to disqualify a professor.

The University also explicitly referred to article 10 of the University law which stipulates that "ideological or other personal grounds should play no part in the appointment of a candidate". Since no one wishes to lay himself open to the charge of having infringed on academic freedom, the critics of Ziegler have shifted the discussion to the question of Ziegler's professional fitness. One of the first to express himself in this matter was Professor Jacques Freymond, of the Institut de hautes études internationales, who declared in the press that Ziegler often absented himself from his classes at the Institut d'études de développement which conducted joint courses with Professor Freymond's institute.

Professor Freymond took care not to have the tables turned on him: he cancelled a seminar which Ziegler had announced in the joint lecture list of the two institutes for the coming year, although it had already been scheduled. As Ziegler and his students learned, the reason given was rather explosive. Professor Freymond's institute was negotiating with the Shah of Iran, who was to provide the Institute with financial support of up to SFr 2,000,000 to organise a programme of cultural exchange between Switzerland and Iran, and to train a few dozen Iranian students. Since Ziegler had been active in the campaigns against torture in Iran and against the presence of the Iranian secret police organisation, SAVAK, in Geneva, his unpalatable name had to be removed from the lecture list of the Institute. The affair with the Shah is at present being investigated by the government of Geneva.

In the political life of Geneva, the agitation about Ziegler is no longer confined to Ziegler, his books, and his qualifications, but rather it now involves fundamental questions of academic freedom and the autonomy of the University. Since elections will take place in October of this year for the Conseil Supérieure and the government, the question of academic freedom will certainly be the main electoral issue.

The Social Democrats and the Communists now appear before the public as defenders of Ziegler and hence of freedom of expression. The middle-class parties are in an uncomfortable dilemma. The Conseil d'état in which they form the majority are blocking Ziegler's promotion. In the office of the rector of the University, three of the leading politicians of the Radical-Democratic Party and the CVP are struggling on behalf of Ziegler's appointment and of the autonomy of the University. Thus far, only the Liberal Party has come out clearly against Ziegler. The other middle-class parties feel themselves obliged to support the campaign

against Ziegler being carried on by the banks and businessmen; on the other side, however, they are under the influence of their fellow party-members in the University. . . .

## VII

A LETTER FROM PROFESSOR PAUL TRAPPE  
TO THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA<sup>15</sup>

Professor Ernst Heer, Rector  
The University of Geneva  
Chemin des Palettes, 21  
1212 Grand-Lancy

Basel  
17 January, 1977

Dear Rector,—Please pardon me for turning to you regarding the affair of Dr. Jean Ziegler. I am emphatically of the opinion that the standing of academic institutions and of the subject of sociology is being placed in a difficult position—and, I think, justly so. The affair has its origins in the quite extraordinary "scholarly" career of M. Ziegler.

Permit me to recall briefly and schematically the sequence of stages which appear to me to be essential:

- (1) Examination for the diploma in law passed in Berne with a below-average mark: *cum laude* or "rite".<sup>16</sup>
- (2) Examination for the doctorate in law passed in Berne, again with a below-average mark: *cum laude* or "rite".
- (3) Habilitation in Berne: The examiners for the dissertation which he submitted for habilitation were two experts who were not in my opinion sufficiently qualified for the task which was assigned to them, which was not to assess whether the candidate should be granted the right to teach sociology, but whether he should be granted the strictly limited right to teach the sociology of underdeveloped countries.
- (4) A failure to obtain an appointment to an associate professorship in Berne in 1970; he was rejected primarily on scholarly grounds. Since then, M. Ziegler has been a *Privatdozent* in Berne.
- (5) Appointment to an associate professorship (for sociology?) at the University of Geneva in 1972, after—according to reports in the press—a careful analysis of his scholarly qualifications.
- (6) Efforts to obtain promotion allegedly on the ground that it was automatically required and that it was unnecessary to examine his scholarly qualifications, despite many misgivings expressed within academic circles and by the larger public.

In the course of these developments, a work appeared which from a scholarly point of view is very questionable. It is a work which is enjoyable here and there, and perhaps even stimulating for many readers, but it is certainly not a sociological work, as you and I understand sociology.

<sup>15</sup> Letter supplied by Professor Trappe. [Editor.]

<sup>16</sup> Lower division of second class or third class. [Editor.]

It is reprehensible that the career of *Privatdozent* Ziegler was made by utilising every possible political device—thanks to all those deplorable features of bourgeois society, which—with ostensible innocence—he knew how to exploit in his own interest and to an unprecedented degree. In Berne he was the protégé of the Bauer, Gewerbe und Bürger Partei (BGB),<sup>17</sup> later he was the protégé of the Socialist Party—and other political groups.

As far as I myself am concerned I can say that my career has been made without such protection—there was no church supporting me nor were there any political groups which varied with the needs of the moment. That is why I am shocked by this misuse of the freedom which is provided by our universities and which in my experience has never been so exploited before.

It is also reprehensible that *Privatdozent* Ziegler has himself obviously politicised his personal career on a large scale and that his case is discussed in the press nowadays as if his political attitude alone were involved. His case involves academic policy and it should be judged and concluded by academic standards, even if pressures and insinuations, predominantly anonymous—that is to be taken for granted—will be set going, and which are indeed, as you certainly know, already being applied.

I am reluctant to acknowledge *Privatdozent* Ziegler's last publication, *Une Suisse au-dessus de tout soupçon*, as a scholarly achievement. Without objective methods, in fact, without any method at all which one can recognise as such, it follows certain well-trodden paths which have been decorated with some quotations and wills-of-the-wisp which are undoubtedly dear to his heart. If a sociologist undertakes to write a sociological study of Switzerland, which is an extremely difficult thing to do, he must—at least by hints or in the margin—deal with some of those rather subtle and disagreeable processes with which every genuine democracy—at least Switzerland, in my opinion—is always afflicted, such as the various forms of self-protection, forms of “elite-selection” and of the exercise of power, and the danger of the transformation of democracy into rule by secrecy. I cannot, moreover, conceive of *Privatdozent* Ziegler's career without such disagreeable processes having been brought into play.

The University of Geneva would be well advised to review its decision of 1972. Obviously the authorities who were empowered to deal with the matter made a serious mistake. If the decision was arrived at with the full knowledge of the facts, it will be possible in the future to dispense with the scrutiny of scholarly qualifications for academic appointments.

Finally, I should add that according to *Privatdozent* Ziegler's most recent publication, I am a “revolutionary” in his sense of the word. “The first and most elementary task of the revolutionary, that is, the person in dynamic movement, it to keep his sense of the importance of intimidation. His assertions should have only one purpose: namely, to show that what has been hitherto said to be true is false” (German edition, p. 182).

I am a “revolutionary” in the sense that I think that the university should help to demonstrate that the principle enunciated by Ziegler and

<sup>17</sup> The Bauer, Gewerbe und Bürger Partei was an extremist conservative group. It is now called the Schweizerische Volkspartei. [Editor.]

which he says is “true” is not only false but if it were taken seriously would be practically ruinous for a proper university.

I assure you, my dear rector, of my highest regard.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Trappe

P.S.—I have no objection if you bring this letter to the attention of the higher authorities of Geneva.

### VIII

PROFESSOR CUCKOO<sup>18</sup>

Ulrich Kägi

#### 1

*Jean Ziegler is a cuckoo in the University of Geneva; he was hatched in the warm nest of the University of Berne*

The controversy as to whether Jean Ziegler (43), Doctor of Laws and a Social-Democratic member of the federal parliament since 1967 should or should not be promoted from an associate to a full professorship of sociology in the faculty of economics and social sciences of the University of Geneva has split the city into two camps. The appropriate recommendation of the rector of the University, who is a specialist in nuclear physics, supported by the Social-Democratic head of the cantonal department of education, who is likewise a member of the federal parliament, has still not been dealt with by the government. Nonetheless, Ziegler is already being listed as a “full professor” in the lecture lists in Berne and Geneva.

The external difference between an “associate professorship” and a “full professorship” is that the latter has to come up for reappointment after seven years, instead of three. No increase in salary is necessarily involved.

The background is as follows: Ziegler is the author of a provocative book, *Eine Schweiz über jeden Verdacht erhaben*, which has provoked bankers in Geneva to try to drive the author out of the University. One additional element in the background is the cantonal election of next autumn.

Completely unaffected by the pre-history and background, Jeanne Hersch, 66 years of age and professor of philosophy in the University of Geneva, denies Jean Ziegler's scholarly qualifications as a sociologist.

“It is a bad thing that Jeanne Hersch is still a member of the Association of Employees in the Public Services and of the Socialist Party”, complained Jean Ziegler, also a member of the Association of Employees in the Public Services and the Socialist Party, in his interview with *Die Weltwoche*. “We must straighten this out without delay!”

Ziegler wishes to have Jeanne Hersch expelled from both these organisations. “We must by all means prevent her from being granted the status of professor emeritus (*professeur honoraire*) when she retires in March. Otherwise she will be able to make herself heard in the Senate. This must be settled within the University.” The associate professor of sociology with his attorney Christian Grobet is planning to assemble a dossier in order to

<sup>18</sup> *Die Weltwoche*, 26 January, 1977, p. 5.

compel the philosopher to appear in court on a charge of slander. "Sociology is primarily an emancipation-movement", Ziegler explained in an interview published in *La Suisse* following the student agitation in Paris in May 1968.

Professor Hersch has given occasion for this effort to hunt her down by her letter of 4 December, 1976, to the rector of the University; the letter was later published in the *Tribune de Genève* on 4 January, 1977. "With regard to M. Ziegler", she wrote in her concluding recommendation, "all that need be done is to leave things as they are" [*i.e.*, to leave unchanged Ziegler's status as associate professor which in any case runs until 1978. U.K.] Otherwise, from now on, the effective technique for forcing open the doors of the University will be first to create a great political fuss and then, in case of rejection, to intimidate the authorities by declaring: "You are rejecting me for political reasons."

Jeanne Hersch sought by her letter to show that it is the duty of the government, "to protect the intellectual autonomy of the University against all pressures. But it has this duty only if the University acknowledges its mistake [*i.e.*, Ziegler's promotion to a full professorship. U.K.]: its positive recommendation was imposed on it, little by little, by political pressures, by the political fear of appearing to act in accordance with political considerations. There were no grounds at all for its recommendation as far as standards of academic scholarship are concerned." The philosopher explained to the correspondent of *Die Weltwoche*: "I knew that I was getting into a hornet's nest." Now she really is in one, for Ziegler promptly denied her assertion that he had received only the low mark of "rite"<sup>19</sup> in his examination for the doctorate in law at the University of Berne.

Ziegler denied the statement made by the lady who is still a member of his political party, that his dissertation for habilitation—which later formed the basis of his book *Le Pouvoir africain*—was turned down by the expert assessors Georges Balandier of Paris and Paul Trappe who is at present in charge of the Sociological Seminar at the University of Basel. He said, "My habilitation took place without any difficulties".

André Chavanne, the cantonal director of the department of education, reacted with a sharp denial of Professor Hersch's letter. He said that the appointment of Ziegler to an "associate professorship" in 1972, which was renewed in 1975 for three years, proceeded in "an entirely regular manner"; it was wrong, he said, to say that "a negative decision" had been reached before the beginning of the summer vacation."

## 2

Strong forces are being assembled on behalf of Ziegler's promotion. Petitions and resolutions are being prepared to protest against the suppression of academic freedom. Already last autumn, the congress of the Swiss

<sup>19</sup> "Rite" is a barely passing mark; it is the equivalent of "D" in the United States or a "third class" in the United Kingdom. Professor Hersch originally stated that Jean Ziegler received only the mark of "rite". She later corrected this statement. In fact, Ziegler received the mark of "rite" in one part of the examination, and the mark of *cum laude* in the other part. *Cum laude* is the equivalent of "C" in the United States and of a "lower second class" in the United Kingdom. [Editor.]

Socialist Party meeting in Montreux approved of a declaration which condemned "the campaign against Ziegler" as being supported by "part of the world of high finance"; it said the campaign was "a further step towards the defamation and slander of the free expression of opinion and criticism in our country". The Socialist Party of Geneva, for its part, hopes that the elected officials will "observe the law and remain faithful to the fundamental principles which they have proclaimed". In other words, a political party is demanding Ziegler's promotion to a full professorship. *Le Monde* misleadingly entitles its article of 23 January, 1977, "Jean Ziegler is in danger of losing his post at the University of Geneva".

When he was younger, Ziegler swam in different political waters. He is the son of Colonel Hans Ziegler, former director of the Federal Military Insurance Bureau. At school in Thun he was cadet-captain of his house; in Berne he was a member of the student fraternity "Zofingia" and in the "youth parliament" he was a proper bourgeois. Reminiscing today about this remote "pre-history", he said he was "an anti-communist by influence of his environment".

The awakening—"the discovery of the political world"—of the youthful dreamer, who in all life's vicissitudes could count on the life-net of his solid parental fortune, took place in Paris. It occurred in connection with the agitation about Clarté, the group of intellectuals which was ordered to disband by the officials of the Communist Party because it was supporting the Algerian "National Liberation Front" led by the now imprisoned Ben Bella.

Forlorn, Jean returned home to Berne, entered the school for artillery-recruits without the slightest enthusiasm and was mustered out because of tuberculosis of the lungs. For a number of months he was in a sanatorium where he quenched his raging thirst for reading. He was converted to Catholicism, because, "Marxism does not explain everything. I believe in God. Period!"

In May 1958, Ziegler passed the first set of the examinations for the diploma in law with the grade of "rite". On 8 May, he passed his doctoral examinations in law with the grade of *cum laude* (which is the second worst or the third best of grades). One cannot "habilitate" in sociology at any respectable university with a "rite" or a *cum laude* in law unless one has had additional training.

Professor Richard Behrendt, who was at the time in Berne and who went later to Berlin, discouraged such yearnings.

Nonetheless, Jean Ziegler managed. "It has always remained a puzzle" for Professor Paul Trappe, the director of the Sociological Seminar in Basel, "why they went so far in Berne as to recognise his scarcely flattering results in law as qualifying him for habilitation in sociology, without having to submit to supplementary examinations in sociology or being able to point to some incontestable scholarly achievement in this field".

The solution of the puzzle lies in the fact, as the *National-Zeitung* (Basel) reported on 15 January, 1977, that "Professors Balandier and Trappe were invited to serve as expert assessors for Ziegler's dissertation for habilitation", but asked to be excused from the task, *i.e.*, they refused to accept the pamphlet which had been put before them as a habilitation-dissertation.

For this purpose, in addition to Professor Kurt B. Mayer, who shortly thereafter retired prematurely on grounds of health, Professor Jean Duvignaud was located as a reliable substitute assessor. Professor Duvignaud teaches sociology at the University of Tours-Orleans. "I find in this study by Jean Ziegler . . . the same richness as I find in his other works. I add that after the reading of this book, the few reservations which I had on points of marginal significance now seem to me to be baseless." (Jean Duvignaud belonged in his time among the leaders of the Circle des critiques, the communist decoy-organisation for trapping intellectuals; nowadays, like Ziegler, he is a contributor to *Le Nouvel Observateur*.)

So it was brought off. On the basis of the decision of 9 August, 1967, the governmental council of Berne gave him its blessings, not as a fully fledged sociologist but as qualified at least to teach the "sociology of developing countries", and then appointed him to a permanent teaching post. In 1969 he sought to be promoted from the status of *Privatdozent* to that of an associate professor at Berne, but his application, after a long movement to and fro, fell on deaf ears in the faculty which had jurisdiction in the matter.

Ziegler's works in the field of scholarship have, however, attracted much attention. His *Sociologie de l'Afrique nouvelle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964) as a German colleague, Gerhard Grohs said, "is satisfying neither in its historical analysis nor in its theoretical claims" (*Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 17, 1 [1965] pp. 171-173). Nor did it please the French or Anglo-Saxon Africanists any better. When the German edition appeared, Grohs was moved to ask, "Why any German publisher took the trouble to have the book translated and published."

Immanuel Geiss, who is certainly not a man of the right, thought that "The presentation is at its best a better sort of journalism, nothing more" (*Neue Politische Literatur*, 1969). What Ziegler presents as historical facts about Ghana is:

so lacking in solidity that it almost takes one's breath away. It swarms with elementary mistakes. Whole centuries turn somersaults in the most bizarre chronology. Ziegler's chronology reaches the greatest gap between poetry and truth when he turns to modern African history.

In the socialist *Sentinelle* (21 December, 1964), O. K., who is presumably an African, said, "Jean Ziegler has missed his opportunity; his book cannot be regarded as sociology".

Nonetheless, Ziegler was fitted into the teaching of sociology at the University of Berne. Jean-Pierre Chrétien said that his *Le Pouvoir africain* is a "collection of howlers which exceeds the limits of the tolerable" (*Annales*, 1974). Jan Vansina says, "This book is worthless and one regrets the effort it took to read it and to annotate it. One can only regret that such a superfluous and disappointing book has been taken into such an interesting series" (*Cultures et développement*, 1974).

Thus qualified, Jean Ziegler, after being turned down for appointment to a vacant professorship of sociology at the University of Fribourg, to at least an assistantship at the Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales (IUHEI) in Geneva and to a chair in the history of political theory in the faculty of law at Geneva, succeeded in finding a place in the faculty of economic and social sciences at Geneva. In 1972, the brilliant orator became associate professor of sociology. Jeanne Hersch concedes in a footnote to the publication that, in this particular point, she made a mistake: the faculty reached its negative decision before the summer vacation of 1971—not 1972 as she originally said; but she also says that "Chavanne's denial of her original statement has no bearing at all".

Ziegler "totally" rejects the charge that he did not attend to his duties at the Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales. He asserts, "that is what Freymond says". Freymond, who was the director of the Institut, cancelled Ziegler's seminar at the Institut d'études du développement (IED) from the course-list of his institute; Roy Preiswerk, who became director of the IED after the death of his predecessor, Pierre Bungenes, admitted that "this problem" of Ziegler's neglect of his duties at the IED did exist. As soon as he succeeded to the directorship, Preiswerk wrote a forthright letter about it to Ziegler. "Thereafter Ziegler attended regularly to the duties which had been assigned to him."

Attorney Jean-Flavien Lalive, who was at one time general secretary of the International Commission of Jurists and for whom Ziegler did some work in the early 1960s, said he found him "attractive and pleasant in bearing". But regarding the report on the suppression of freedom in Franco's Spain which Ziegler was to have produced: "Everyone agreed that it was an entirely unusable piece of work. Already at that time, Ziegler showed that he was not equipped to do scholarly work." In Lalive's view, he has "more of the temperament of a pamphleteer".

The pamphleteer did not appear to make a statement to the government of Geneva on 4 January. "I was in Paris to get a committee of support under way. What the bourgeois majority in the government is doing, namely, re-examining the proceedings of 1972, is wholly illegal."

Jeanne Hersch hopes that the University itself will investigate the matter. One might learn from the University archives how Professor Cuckoo was hatched in the warm nest of the University of Berne.

## IX

PLAYING WITH THE MUZZLE<sup>20</sup>

Hans V. Staub

. . . the freedom of the press and the freedom of the expression of opinion . . . [should], according to the intention of the creators of the Swiss

<sup>20</sup> *Die Weltwoche*, 26 January, 1977.

constitution and the federal supreme court, be the highest good of our democratic system.

Should! . . . Certain persons are clearly not of this opinion: politicians or professors, interest groups, and the economically powerful, conceive of these freedoms in a very special sense. They think of them as freedom for themselves, but not for others. They do not admit the right to opinions which are uncomfortable for them and they attempt to suppress them by censorship or by injunctions against publication. I am thinking of "private persons", not of government—of private persons whose desire to use the muzzle is much more dangerous because it occurs behind the scenes and is much less apparent; because it comes into action in particular situations which are difficult to disentangle and which are less visible; and because it is too easily hidden in a labyrinth of legal technicalities.

The history of . . . [the article by Ulrich Kägi] in our present issue presents an especially vile and reprehensible instance of this practice. We wished to throw some light on the present controversy about Jean Ziegler which has created commotion far beyond the boundaries of the University of Geneva . . . we wished to discover just how experts and authorities assessed the scholarly qualifications of the associate professor of sociology since they are essential to his pending promotion to a full professorship. It was a matter of either confirming or refuting the suspicions which have been expressed on many sides about the role of political pressures in Ziegler's academic career.

The question is one which is of concern to all Switzerland. Ziegler is known as a politician, as a member of the federal parliament and the author of a very controversial little book entitled *Eine Schweiz über allen Verdacht erhaben*. As a person who is legally elected, he has the responsibility of "a public figure", who must accept being a subject to public information and criticism. This however was unacceptable to M. Ziegler. Adhering to the rule of journalistic fairness, we sent M. Ziegler the manuscript of the article so that he could check the statements which he made to our correspondent, who had accordingly attributed them to him in the article. M. Ziegler responded by seeking a legal "order", and on pain of fine or imprisonment, *i.e.* by a "provisional decree" in order to prevent certain important passages of the article from being published. It was not only statements attributed to him which he sought to suppress—statements for which he no longer wished to accept the responsibility—but also judgements and comments which had been made about him by other persons. He attempted to do this—and this is a unique occurrence in the recent history of the Swiss press—before the article was set up in type.

Is this an attempt at pre-censorship? It is, quite clearly. This is a very serious matter which is far more important than Jean Ziegler as an individual. The cases in which judges are being solicited to throttle opinions which are uncomfortable by prohibiting publication are becoming more numerous . . .

## X

THE POLITICAL WEEKLY *Die Weltwoche* DISCLOSES THAT ZIEGLER TRIED TO PREVENT THE PUBLICATION OF AN ARTICLE<sup>21</sup>

## 1

Zurich: *Die Weltwoche* is now involved in the conflict. It published an article this week on the controversy about the recommendation of Jean Ziegler to the rank of full professorship at the University of Geneva. The socialist journalist, Ulrich Kägi, went into the whole affair to discover whether "Ziegler possesses the qualifications required for an associate professorship of sociology and to find out whether political pressures influenced his academic career". The journalist took the precaution of sending his manuscript to the persons he interviewed. While all the others gave him their approval, Jean Ziegler replied through his attorney in Zurich—the socialist deputy Franz Schumacher—that he denied the entire article and threatened to institute legal action to have the issue confiscated. The judge dismissed his claim for the suppression of the issue.

Meanwhile, Ulrich Kägi verified "certain crucial points in the article". Most notably, that the document attesting to Ziegler's habilitation in Berne specifies that he is qualified only to teach the sociology of developing countries. "I have a photocopy of the document," said Kägi.

Ulrich Kägi also confirmed that Jean Ziegler actually did pass the first part of his examination with the grade of "rite", and only gained a *cum laude* in the second examination. By going into this "academic kitchen", the journalist wished to demonstrate only one thing, namely that, "*Jean Ziegler has no sociological training.*"

## 2

In his editorial on the front page, Hans Staub, the editor-in-chief of *Die Weltwoche*, expressed his disquiet over the increasingly frequent efforts to restrict the freedom of the press. He likened the legal action attempted by Ziegler against *Die Weltwoche* to the recent reverberations of the "Cincera-affair": the Manifeste démocratique undertook legal action on five occasions against Ernst Cincera's book and the advertisements for it published by his political friends. The latter for their part tried to obtain a prohibition of the sale at news-stands of the *Dossier Cincera* which the Manifeste démocratique had published.

Hans Staub was struck by the fact that this attempted censorship, these efforts to prohibit publication, did not originate with government but with private parties.

## XI

ZIEGLER'S DEMAND FOR CENSORSHIP OF *Die Weltwoche*<sup>22</sup>

The latest issue of *Die Weltwoche* states that Jean Ziegler, member of the federal parliament . . . applied to a magistrate's court for a provisional order

<sup>21</sup> *Tribune de Genève*, 27 January, 1977, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 28 January, 1977, p. 18.

for an injunction against the publication of that issue of the weekly which contained the article of Ulrich Kägi on "Professor Cuckoo" in the form in which it actually appeared. The author of the article had sent a copy of the manuscript to Ziegler so that he could check statements quoted from him or attributed to him; what Ziegler wished to have changed, however, were certain factual accounts and the reproduction of assessments of his scholarly qualifications. According to the latter, on 1 May, 1958, Professor Ziegler passed the first part of the examination for the diploma in law with the grade of "rite" which was the lowest possible passing grade; he obtained a grade of *cum laude*—the second lowest—in his examination for the doctorate in law on 8 May. The magistrate rejected the application.

## XII

HOW JEAN ZIEGLER BECAME AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN AN HOUR<sup>23</sup>

Michael Baettig

Tuesday, 30 May, 1972, 2:15 p.m.: in the office of the rector, nine gentlemen gathered together to consider the recommendation for appointment of Jean Ziegler as associate professor. They included Charles Rouiller, vice-rector, Professors Luigi Solari, Marc Vuagnaz, Bernard Gagnebin, Gabriel Widmer, and Roger Girod; Raymond LeClerc represented the cantonal department of public instruction. There were also two expert-assessors: Jean Duvignaud of Tours and Peter Atteslander of Berne, who arrived late, according to the verbatim text of the meeting. One significant absentee was a third expert-assessor, Jean Cazeneuve of Paris who did, however, send in a written statement.

Professor Girod, the head of the department of sociology at the University of Geneva, emphasised that Ziegler's works:

show undeniable qualities of imagination and style . . . M. Ziegler will be expected to teach general sociology and certain branches of descriptive (concrete) sociology. He will have to give evidence of his capacity in this field, the first three years being regarded as a probationary period.

Professor Duvignaud found Ziegler's methodology original: "His participation in discussions shows that he is capable." Moreover, "his pedagogical qualities are remarkable". The statement sent in by M. Cazeneuve is very favourable to Jean Ziegler. The discussion goes on. Professor Atteslander comes into the office of the rector. He agrees that Ziegler has had much success as a teacher. He goes further in regretting that the report does not refer to:

the very great advantage which is involved in the fact that Ziegler has the triple qualification of having German as his mother tongue, having a perfect mastery of French, and furthermore, being acquainted with Anglo-Saxon methods as a result of having been at Columbia University.

After having heard the expert-assessors and Professor Girod, the committee came to a unanimous decision in favour of the appointment of Jean Ziegler as associate professor. The meeting lasted an hour.

<sup>23</sup> *La Suisse*, 6 February, 1977.

## XIII

THE ZIEGLER AFFAIR GOES ON:  
CRUCIAL ELEMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION<sup>24</sup>

Michael Baettig

The Conseil d'état of Geneva had been dragging a ball and chain since last summer: the Ziegler affair. Much has been written on this subject. It is interesting, however, to know the evidence on which the government is going to make its decision. First of all, there is the file concerning the appointment of Jean Ziegler as an associate professor. Then there are the documents submitted by the University together with Jean Ziegler's request for the recommendation of his promotion to a full professorship. These are the official documents.

But the Conseil d'état also has many letters and documents coming from very different sources. Although the official documents are favourable to the recommendation of the appointment of Ziegler, the unofficial documents are overwhelmingly negative. Some, however, are also positive.

We present herewith certain official documents which should have a great influence on the decision.

Theoretically, the appointment of Jean Ziegler to a full professorship is, as far as the University is concerned, only a routine matter, like any other recommendation for promotion. The socialist member of the federal parliament is to be treated just like any other teacher. That has indeed been done. Once appointed to an associate professorship, every teacher may be considered for promotion to a full professorship . . . if the evidence is sufficient. The University thinks that Jean Ziegler has demonstrated in his work at Geneva the scholarly competence and the qualities as a teacher which are sufficient for him to be appointed to a full professorship.

The opponents of his appointment criticise M. Ziegler for not having shown any scholarly merit, for having made serious mistakes, for not teaching regularly and for being a danger to Swiss institutions. (These are among the points which are made by some of the "unofficial" documents.) The University file contains replies to each of these accusations.

*Scientific method:* The University emphasises the special character of the mode of analysis which is to be found in Ziegler's works. In them, the feelings of the author, confronting a situation, are more prominent than the objective features of that situation. But the technique used by Ziegler is actually quite traditional in the sense that it resembles that used in the writing of historical and social essays. (In the professional jargon, he may be described as an essayistic or qualitative type of sociologist.) It is important that this type of sociological approach should be represented in the University.

<sup>24</sup> *La Suisse*, 6 February, 1977.

*Mistakes:* The University does not deny the mistakes made by Jean Ziegler. He works too rapidly and does not check his material sufficiently. (We think that one of the documents even speaks of the author's bias on certain occasions.) Ziegler is attempting to reduce his errors. They are blunders, and are not really faults of an intellectual character which cannot be overcome. They do not negate the scholarly value of his works.

*Attendance at classes:* Jean Ziegler sometimes absents himself from his classes, but he does so neither more nor less than other teachers. He has been replaced when this was found necessary. There are really no problems in this respect.

*Jean Ziegler's commitment:* The statutes of the University forbid that the appointment of a teacher should be in any way made dependent on his private life and on his political opinions. The University renders no judgement on the political commitment of the person in question. On the contrary, his teaching is a critical analysis of our society and it should be a source of gratification that the University of Geneva provides its students with an opportunity to assess the thought of one of the most criticised professors in the country. Jean Ziegler is not alone. It should be emphasised, moreover, that other teachers share in his teaching of the first-year classes. There are two assistants, as well as Professor DeLaubier and even Professor Girod. This permits comparisons to be made.

These are the main lines of the position which the University takes on the most controverted points in the file. The constituted authorities of the University think that Jean Ziegler should be appointed because he has the qualifications. The decision will be made in the Conseil d'état, perhaps on 10 February. It will then be known whether the "official" documents have been taken more seriously than the "unofficial" ones.

#### XIV

##### THE VICISSITUDES OF THE FILE <sup>25</sup>

The University has transmitted to the government of Geneva a history of the entire affair. It begins with 1 September, 1970, with the opening of the competition for the post of associate professor of sociology. The documents explain step-by-step how Jean Ziegler was appointed to the associate professorship on 1 October, 1972. We reproduce herewith verbatim the sequence of events beginning with the request for appointment to a full professorship.

*8 September, 1975: Meeting of the Conseil d'état:* Order for the appointment of M. Ziegler renewing his tenure as associate professor, category II, for the academic sessions 1975-76, 1976-77 and 1977-78.

*15 March, 1976: Meeting of the full and associate professors:* "A request of the department of sociology for the appointment of M. Jean Ziegler had been approved."

<sup>25</sup> *La Suisse*, 6 February, 1977.

*27 April, 1976: Meeting of the committee of rectors and deans:* Acceptance of the committee of rectors and deans of the recommendation of M. Jean Ziegler as full professor, category O.

*12 July, 1976: Letter from M. Chavanne to the rector requesting a more complete report.*

*28 September, 1976: Transmission of a new report of the council of deans on the basis of a document supplied by M. Girod.*

*18 October, 1976: Letter to the rector from M. Chavanne together with a new report.*

*19 October, 1976: Meeting of the committee of rectors and deans:* Declaration by M. Freymond against the recommendation for the promotion of M. Ziegler to a full professorship.

*14 December, 1976: Meeting of the committee of rectors and deans:* "The committee of rectors and deans instructs the rector to write to the Conseil d'état in order to confirm its position: The procedures in matters of appointment have been rigorously followed in 1972 as in 1976 in the case of M. Jean Ziegler, who has performed the duties required of him by the University. In consequence of this, the committee of rectors and deans insists that the opinion which it submitted in support of the recommendation of M. Jean Ziegler to the rank of full professorship rests on solid ground."

#### XV

##### THE OFFICE OF THE RECTOR EXPLAINS THE PROCEDURES OF ACADEMIC APPOINTMENT

On 7 February, the office of the rector of the University of Geneva met the press at a lunch, such as it frequently offers, in order to give its views about matters which are in the forefront of its attention. On the basis of the statements made at the lunch, the correspondent of the *Journal de Genève*, Sylvie Arsever, prepared an article which was published on 8 February, 1977.

On one particular subject the academic authorities of the University of Geneva have a position which has not changed and which will not change: the file of Jean Ziegler which has been transmitted to the Conseil d'état with a preliminary judgement supporting his appointment is, like all other files dealing with staff-members which have been formed with a view to consideration for appointment, strictly confidential. In spite of the infringements which this principle has suffered in various ways during the "affair" in question, the office of the rector holds fast to its decision and refuses to discuss in public the grounds and the conclusions of its decision. It is, paradoxically, alone in being silent on an affair which is of such significance to it.

It has, however, undertaken to clarify a number of points regarding the status of different types of professors and the procedures for appointment. It is of the view that the ideas which are held by the public at present about this matter are not wholly correct.

The university law which was enacted by the Grand conseil in 1973 has considerably reduced the difference which formerly separated the status of the full professor, appointed on permanent tenure and the incumbent of a chair, from that of the associate professor who is often appointed for a specified period and who plays a much less important role. This difference has been further reduced by the growing importance of teamwork and by the introduction of the status of assistant professor, which is strictly limited in its tenure and which is conceived as a stepping-off place in which a teacher has the opportunity to develop and to give evidence of his capacities. The difference between the two ranks is defined precisely by the law and the regulations for its application—in force since last October—and it lies primarily in the tenure of appointment. It is seven years for the full professor, three years for the associate professor. There is also a difference in the conditions of termination. Very precise conditions are laid down for the non-renewal of the appointment of a full professor—the grave and persistent failure to perform his functions. Such a condition for non-renewal of the appointment does not exist in the case of an associate professor.

In fact, however, at the end of three or six years, the promotion to a full professorship from an associate professorship is taken up by a committee of professors of the relevant faculty. This committee examines the materials which bear on the qualifications of the candidate and transmits them to the Conseil d'état. A committee of professors, including both the full and associate professors of the faculty, can decide to put off a recommendation for promotion to the full professorship, finding the file inadequate or insufficient. In contrast with this, only once, at least in recent years, has a refusal occurred at the next higher level, which is the committee of rectors and deans or at that of the Conseil d'état. In comparison with this procedure, that which is followed when a professor is being appointed—as a general rule, all professors are first appointed as associate professors—appears to be much longer and more complicated, which is a guarantee of the seriousness with which it is taken.

This procedure involves the following stages: the establishment by a committee formed by professors of the faculty concerned of a detailed list of the functions entailed in the post, and the adoption of the latter by the committee of the professors of the faculty, the committee of rectors and deans and the cantonal department of public instruction. An advertisement is then published in Swiss and foreign periodicals and newspapers. Candidates submit a file which is studied by the committee, which makes a report and a recommendation. The committee of professors then votes on the subject and submits its recommendation to the committee of rectors and deans and to a committee of recommendation constituted by a member of the office of the rector, three deans, a rapporteur of the faculty and three external experts designated by the cantonal department of public instruction. They examine the entire

file. If the committee of rectors and deans and the committee of recommendation take a favourable attitude, the file is then submitted to the Conseil d'état.

On the basic point the office of the rector takes a clearly defined position: political considerations are not allowed to play any part in the decisions on recommendation for appointments.

Of course, some part may be played by a desire to maintain a balance of different fields of interest within a discipline and of different types of scientific approach. If such is the case, the precautions are evident at the beginning of the procedure, as soon as the specification of the requirements for the post are drawn up.

Maximum provision is made to take into account to the fullest extent possible the intrinsic merits of the candidates.

It is nonetheless true that in the human sciences, and particularly when they study the contemporary world, it is difficult to live up to this ideal. These fields deal with subjects which touch on the concerns of nearly everyone and preferences in this area are perhaps more bound up than elsewhere with personal choices which influence general attitudes.

## XVI

### THE FREEDOM OF SCIENCE AND SCHOLARSHIP, THE AUTONOMY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND POLITICAL PRESSURES <sup>26</sup>

The question of the promotion of Jean Ziegler to a full professorship of sociology at the University of Geneva is to be decided by the public authorities of Geneva. Respect for its jurisdiction in this matter is enjoined by our federal constitution as well as by the autonomy of the universities. There are, however, situations in which such decisions become of national importance and a concern for all universities. Furthermore, the past 60 years of European history emphatically remind us that attitudes in such situations—if free universities in a free society are to continue—should not be governed by a prudent aloofness and by ostensible neutrality.

The scholarly qualifications of Jean Ziegler are more than disputed; the judgement of many specialists in his field of work are very negative and in part even plainly condemnatory. In contrast with this stands the great success of some of his political writings and Ziegler and his friends are now attempting to exploit this; they are alleging that the sober and scholarly opposition to his promotion is an opposition based on political considerations. They are attempting to make it appear that instead of being inadequate as a scholar, Ziegler is a martyr and victim of the leading banks and of unjustifiable intrigues.

For some time the animosity of Ziegler and his friends in this controversy has been directly against Jeanne Hersch who is the professor of philosophy at the University of Geneva. A member of the same political

<sup>26</sup> On 9 February, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* published this declaration. It was signed by 70 professors of a variety of disciplines in all the Swiss universities. It is unprecedented in Swiss academic history. [Editor.]

party as Ziegler, she has—out of a sense of responsibility towards scholarly standards and concern for the University—unambiguously and forcefully denied his scholarly qualifications and thereby shown that the effort to make up for his inadequate professional qualifications by political popularity is a danger to the University and its autonomy. It is deeply disquieting that Ziegler—confident of his political popularity and power—has repeatedly and unabashedly expressed his intention to take revenge on Jeanne Hersch, declaring that her expulsion from the Socialist Party and from the Association of Employees in the Public Service, as well as the prevention of her appointment as professor emeritus, are necessary and that they are what he is aiming to bring about.

Jeanne Hersch has many distinguished accomplishments in many spheres, as a divisional director of Unesco in Paris, as a member of the Swiss national commission for Unesco, as a teacher of philosophy and as an author. Her efforts on behalf of the protection and realisation of human rights for several decades are unique.

It is a matter here of safeguarding the foundations of what we value. It is a matter of protecting the freedom of science and scholarship and the autonomy of the universities from political pressures. The responsibility for this is now in the hands of the public authorities of Geneva.

E. Ackerknecht, K. Akert, M. Allgöwer, K. Bauknecht, R. Battegay, H. Bloesch, G. Bombach, E. Bonjour, K. Bucher, P. Brönnimann, E. Brun, H. U. Buff, F. Buri, F. Büsler, F. Clerc, H. Cottier, J.-J. Darbellay, A. Dufour, J. Eckert, O. Fatio, Cl. Favarger, H. Fey, J. G. Fuchs, F. Gasser, B. Gloor, G. Graber, W. Haller, S. Heinimann, M. Hess, K. Huber, W. Isler, H. Jucker, W. Kaegi, W. Kägi, E. Kilgus, W. Killy, H. M. Koelbing, F. Koller, R. Kopp, A. Labhart, E. Läubli, W. Leemann, E. Leisi, H. Löffler, H. J. Lüthi, B. Mäglin, V. Meyer, L. Mojon, E. Morscher, H. Oesch, H. C. Peyer, C. R. Pfaltz, H. Räber, K. L. Rateitschak, J. Rehberg, G. Riva, H. P. Rohr, B. Roos, H. Rupp, E. Rühl, G. Rutishauser, R. Schenk, R. Schuppli, A. Schroeder, M. Sieber, H. Sieber, G. Stalder, H. Stünzi, G. Töndury, H. Walder, H. U. Zollinger.

## XVII

### JEAN ZIEGLER'S APPOINTMENT TO FULL PROFESSORSHIP: "TURN-ABOUT" BY CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRAT MEMBERS OF THE CONSEIL D'ÉTAT<sup>27</sup>

#### I

The Conseil d'état of Geneva on 10 February approved the proposal by the university authorities that Jean Ziegler be promoted to a full professorship. There were four votes in favour, three against. The two Socialist members of the Conseil d'état, André Chavanne and Willy Donzé, who had espoused Ziegler's cause from the very beginning were supported by their two Christian-Democratic colleagues, Jean Babel and

<sup>27</sup> *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 12 February, 1977.

Guy Fontanet, who "turned about" in the last moment and joined up with the left; the Liberal Jacques Vernet and the two radical democratic members of the Conseil d'état voted against the promotion of the controversial sociologist.

#### 2

THE politically important event which led to the reversal of the traditional balance of forces in the government of Geneva was the "conversion" of the two Christian-Democratic members of the Conseil d'état on personal grounds and for reasons of electoral tactics. They are militant members of the Christian-Democratic Party which has never become quite "domesticated" in Geneva and which has recently lost momentum; they also occupy leading positions in the University. Babel sees himself under severe attack by the employers' associations because he introduced the 42-hour-week for public employees and his tax bill was torpedoed in the Grand conseil by the Liberals and the Vigilantes. Fontanet, as the minister responsible for police, is under attack; his policy in matters of censorship and a computer-system which has been highly developed by the police in Geneva have aroused very critical reactions.

#### 3

Does the inclination of the Christian Democrats represent a transition to an alliance with the left? They have already had an agreed list of candidates in the municipal elections in Meyrin; in fiscal as well as in housing policy, they have collaborated closely with the Socialists who in 1975 made a show of voting for the budget presented by Babel. In any case, the ambivalence of the Christian Democrats who officially belong to the bloc of middle-class parties but who are always looking leftward is politically a basic problem in Geneva.

Nothing shows this more clearly than the Ziegler case in which a political decision was involved. The university law stipulates that the promotion of an associate professor to a full professorship should be made without regard for any personal or political considerations and exclusively on the basis of scholarly, scientific and pedagogical qualifications; it also stipulates that the establishment of these qualifications is the responsibility of the appropriate authorities of the university. The Conseil d'état as the superior authority may refuse on political grounds to grant a promotion which has been recommended by the university in cases in which the person recommended for the professorship does not fulfil his duties as a civil servant, does not respect the requirement of loyalty to democratic institutions, and does not meet his professional obligations. The argument brought forward by the leftists about the alleged threat to the freedom of opinion and of the expression of opinion was false; Ziegler made use of this freedom without any restraints when he was an associate professor.

The real loser in this affair is the Conseil d'état of Geneva, the weakness of which has come into the full light of day. It opened the file prematurely, at the beginning of the election year, then it kept on putting off the decision, and then, after long hesitations, accepted the recom-

mendation of the University. Consideration of electoral politics became stronger and stronger, especially among the Christian Democrats but also in the two Socialist members who belong to the older generation while within their party younger persons are pressing upwards and want to have their turn in the executive.

## XVIII

A PYRRHIC VICTORY<sup>28</sup>

Michael Baettig

For Jean Ziegler, his appointment is something of a Pyrrhic victory. He has lost some feathers in the course of the struggle.

First of all, the outcome of the affair shows that he was wrong to make such a caricature of our institutions. To use his own terminology, the pressure exerted by business groups has not prevailed in the decision of the government of Geneva. If he would analyse local political life more closely, he would be able to see that in many instances, economic considerations do not always triumph over political ones here in Geneva. The "ideal" balance has not yet been found, but that should persuade him to temper his criticism of our social system.

What is more he will have to do it. In the course of the whole affair, he has had ample opportunity to see that his errors—which were most often only in matters of form—could be a handicap to the pursuit of his ideals. Certain of his political friends have been embarrassed in defending him, since several of his mistakes put his defenders into a weak position. It is difficult to see him using such tactics in the future, all the more so because the University will certainly tell him that its reputation is at stake.

Jean Ziegler is leaving some troubles behind him but he will have more to come. It will be up to him to prove to his friends and to the University that they did the right thing in defending him.

The majority of the Conseil d'état, in deciding as it did, sought to restore peace. This should have been done earlier. It is to be hoped that both his defenders and his critics will now also move in that direction. The decision was taken on grounds of respect for our democracy. That was by far the essential thing.

## XIX

THE ZIEGLER AFFAIR<sup>29</sup>

... Jean Ziegler has brought a suit against Jeanne Hersch for defamation. Maîtres Christian Grobet and Bernard Ziegler have presented to Maître Dominique Poncet, Jeanne Hersch's attorney, a list of retractions to be made by her. If she does not agree to them, the suit will be pressed. "There is no question of retraction", Jeanne Hersch said to us. "I am convinced of Jean Ziegler's incompetence. There is nothing political about my role in this affair."

<sup>28</sup> *La Suisse*, 11 February, 1977.

<sup>29</sup> *Le Nouvel illustré*, 16 February, 1977.

## XX

THE VIEW OF THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY<sup>30</sup>Roger Girod<sup>31</sup>

It has been a long battle. . . . Its outcome frees the University of Geneva, which is certainly among the most liberal of universities, from the danger of paradoxically appearing to be intolerant.

In order to reach this outcome, it has been necessary at every stage of the process of decision to make a distinction between Jean Ziegler, the combative politician who often goes to extremes, and Jean Ziegler, the intellectual and the scholar.

The public sees mainly the former. I am obviously well placed to know him in the latter capacity. It was that role which I had to bear in mind when, at the appropriate time, I had to formulate the recommendation for his promotion to a full professorship. He is an intellectual of high quality. I refer, to take only one example, to his book *Les Vivants et les morts* (Paris: Seuil, 1975). It is true that the pamphleteer is never wholly absent, so that even in a work of this quality, the most penetrating analyses are marked by polemical partisanship. Since he writes rapidly, Jean Ziegler does not eliminate his factual errors. This does not prevent his sense of the deep problems of our time from being acute, nor does it prevent us from recognising his ability to treat those problems forcefully and originally. As for his teaching duties, despite rumours, he does what he is required to do in our department correctly and with regularity.

Our department is a place where confrontations take place. The half-dozen professors and the assistants belong to several schools of thought. They do not differ from each other only in their fundamental orientations. Their techniques of research vary from the use of mathematical models to intuition. The students are thus offered a fair sample of the various types of sociology, which is a heterogeneous subject. Each student as an adult has to work out his own standpoint.

I should add that in this pluralistic department, the teachers cooperate with each other in a friendly way and Jean Ziegler plays his role perfectly.

The recommendation to appoint him to a full professorship has stirred up some commotion. In view of the agitational political activity of the candidate, this was inevitable. The governing bodies of the University and the Conseil d'état have studied the file carefully. The decision was arrived at by a procedure in which the rules of our democratic university system have been scrupulously observed. This is the essential thing.

## XXI

AFTER JEAN ZIEGLER'S APPOINTMENT:  
AN EXPLANATION BY MESSRS. BABEL AND FONTANET

In its issue of 17 February, the weekly of the Christian-Democratic Party of Geneva, *Communauté*, published a declaration by Messrs. Jean Babel and Guy

<sup>30</sup> *Communauté* (Geneva), 17 February, 1977.

<sup>31</sup> Professor Girod is the head of the department of sociology at the University of Geneva. [Editor.]

Fontanet, members of the Conseil d'état, regarding the appointment of Jean Ziegler to a full professorship at the University of Geneva. The text of their declaration follows:

We know that members of our party have been surprised or disappointed by our decision in what has become "the Ziegler affair". That is why we have decided to explain clearly what has happened.

We do so, emphasising from the beginning that we disagree categorically with a number of M. Ziegler's political views, and in particular, his strange conception of "double legality". We condemn his vehement attacks on Swiss industry, the Swiss economic system and the Swiss banks. These broad and all encompassing attacks are unjust and we are convinced that they do harm to the reputation of Switzerland.

But is this sufficient under our system of the rule of law, to prevent an associate professor, who has held his post for four and a half years, from being appointed to a full professorship on the explicit proposal which was renewed in a binding form by the University acting in accordance with its responsibilities?

We declare that we have never been of any other opinion; our "prejudice" up until the last moment was entirely unfavourable to M. Ziegler. However, on a final and careful reading of the file, and above all, after hearing M. Ziegler on 10 February, 1977, our objective assessment of the situation was as follows:

M. Ziegler was appointed to an assistant professorship of sociology at the University in full and regular compliance with the demanding and delicate requirements.

His capacities as a research worker and teacher, and his performance as a teacher, were certainly questioned by persons, especially by persons outside the University, but their competence in sociology was not evident.

In contradiction to these denials, the faculty of economic and social sciences, the committee of rectors and deans, and the office of the rector were always unanimous in affirming an opposite opinion. As for the intrinsic value of his scholarly works, it was clearly set forth by a large majority of his sociological peers.

In the face of these differing points of views, it would have been arbitrary for us to dissociate ourselves from the formal assessment of the University of Geneva.

Article 10 of the constitution of the University asserts: "No consideration of an ideological or political character and no reference to private conduct can justify, directly or indirectly, the elimination of a candidate who is being considered for an appointment or a reappointment."

In these circumstances, we have reviewed with the utmost stringency the sharpest criticisms of M. Ziegler in public, in order to determine whether they involved the right of freedom of expression.

We must not deny that we too criticised him for his statements on Swiss and foreign radio and television programmes; the things he said were often intolerable. M. Ziegler in his polemical writings has been in error, to say the least. He has piled up mistakes; he has on several occasions retracted what he said.

Among his numerous detractors, Mlle. Hersch, professor of philosophy,

who is a member of the same political movement as M. Ziegler, has written an open letter against her colleague with the intention of finishing him off. We have seen the proof that her letter contained serious errors.

Having weighed and analysed the evidence, we concluded on 10 February that the charges which were made against M. Ziegler, even if they were important, dealt with his political and ideological views and his private affairs and that they came under the prohibition contained in article 10 of the constitution of the University.

The proof of this is that the appointment of M. Ziegler would have been approved without any discussion if it had been presented before the appearance of his polemical book *La Suisse au-dessus de tout soupçon*.

It is unthinkable that M. Ziegler should have been dismissed. No one even proposed this seriously. To have refused to act on the proposal of the University until the completion of his second term as an associate professor on 31 August, 1978, would have settled nothing.

On the contrary, to have postponed the decision would only have intensified an unwholesome agitation with great harm to the University and to the political life of Geneva.

That is why, with the intention of calming the situation, hoping to make our political judgements accord with our fundamental political beliefs, affirming our respect for the right of the freedom of expression even for those who abuse that right, and convinced that in our democracy it is for the citizens to judge abuses and not for the political authorities to punish them, we have approved the University's proposal.

We have shown our confidence in the University.

We wish to emphasise that the committee of rectors and deans is made up of reasonable and competent persons. We know that several of them are openly members of different political parties: liberals, radicals, socialists and Christian-Democrats. They have convinced us of the correctness of their assertions, on the basis of respect for the right of the freedom of expression, and not—nor have they ever suggested that—on the basis of Professor Ziegler's political views which we ourselves oppose.

We conclude this declaration with the observation that the difficult decision which we have been led to take—and which each member of the Conseil d'état has taken—in accordance with the dictates of conscience, attests to the good functioning of our democratic institution for the benefit even of those who, like Professor Ziegler, criticise them violently. We hope that he himself will draw from that the conclusions which are called for.

## XXII

### DECLARATION BY THE LIBERAL PARTY OF GENEVA <sup>32</sup>

The central committee of the Liberal Party regretted the decision of the Conseil d'état on 10 February, 1977, regarding Jean Ziegler and declared that such a decision could not have been arrived at unless the two

<sup>32</sup> *Tribune de Genève*, 19 February, 1977.

Christian-Democratic members of the Conseil d'état had not supported the socialist proposal. . . .

## XXIII

A PROTEST BY THE OFFICE OF THE RECTOR<sup>33</sup>

The office of the rector of the University of Geneva has issued the following statement.

Taking pains to respect the autonomy of the University and hoping that its decision would restore calm, the Conseil d'état has appointed M. Jean Ziegler to a full professorship. The office of the rector, taking cognisance of this decision, earnestly expressed the hope that the proponents and opponents of this appointment will try to maintain the atmosphere of calm at the University of Geneva which is required for it to meet its responsibilities.

The office of the rector can only deplore the agitation which certain persons, impelled by scarcely academic motives, continue to carry on about this appointment.

The office of the rector protests strongly against the publication of confidential university documents and against the use which has been made of them.

## XXIV

JEAN ZIEGLER ON FRENCH TELEVISION<sup>34</sup>

J.M.L.

*"Capitalism must be destroyed"*

Jean Ziegler was the guest on Sunday evening (15 February) on the French television programme "The Man in the News". It was a programme "on Jean Ziegler, Switzerland and how the French view the Swiss".

First of all, the balance of the programme was rather uneven since Jean Ziegler was surrounded by four friends of whom three were Parisians, and only Jacques-Simon Eggly, the political commentator of the *Journal de Genève*, could say a contradictory word, which took courage and exactitude.

Ziegler, who has been appointed to a full professorship at the University of Geneva, intends to continue his campaign from his university chair. His concluding remarks in the programme were unambiguous and straightforward. In reply to the question: "Did you say that Switzerland was the same as Auschwitz?", Ziegler said:

I have been elected by the people of Geneva. I enjoy the confidence of some thousands of citizens who have sent me to parliament and I will exercise the responsibilities which have been delegated to me, in accordance with my convictions. I wish to make a break with capitalism. The system must vanish. We do not want Switzerland to be the Red Cross of capitalism, to run the

<sup>33</sup> *La Suisse*, 19 February, 1977.<sup>34</sup> *Tribune de Genève*, 21 February, 1977.

multinational corporations a bit more efficiently. We want to smash and destroy this system, to open up history to men and to cease living on the blood of others, by means of banking secrets and numbered bank accounts.

## XXV

PROFESSOR HERBERT LÜTHY'S  
LETTER TO THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF  
ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA<sup>35</sup>

Professor Luigi Solari  
Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences  
University of Geneva

Basel  
1 March, 1977

Dear Dean,—In my personal, strictly confidential letter of 14 January, 1977, I assured you that I would return the diploma of the honorary doctorate which I received from your faculty if it persisted in its mistake of recommending the appointment of my once young friend Jean Ziegler to a full professorship in an ill-defined social science, "the sociology of developing countries". . . . It has now done so in a highly politicised situation.

The appointment was confirmed, a fortnight ago, at a very special meeting of the Conseil d'état of Geneva; it was originally to have been held on 4 January, 1977. You will recall what happened on 4 January, when Jean Ziegler did not have time to attend the meeting of the Conseil d'état because he had to be in Paris to launch a "committee of support" and to stir up his friends. . . . The appointment is really something extraordinary, having been forced on the Conseil d'état by an unforeseen manoeuvre of the two Christian-Democratic members, in spite of the increasingly perturbed hesitations of the two Socialist councillors who, however, could not go back on their commitment. The appointment was contrary to all academic norms since it involved an associate professor whose appointment to that rank had already been confirmed in 1975 for three years, *i.e.*, until summer 1978. It took place in an election year when all the parties wished to make use of the "Ziegler affair" for their own purposes.

It is pointless to refer once more to the harm which has been done to Geneva . . . to its University and to your faculty by degrading still further the already sullied name and lowering still further the already very debased reputation of "economics and social sciences" and of "sociology". They are becoming the laughing stock of the learned world, of the human sciences as well as the exact ones. The original mistake was made in 1972 when your faculty appointed to an associate professorship in an ill-defined social science an eloquent member of the federal parliament who had, with much difficulty, obtained a diploma and a doctorate in law at the University of Berne . . . and whose academic career in fields other than law, which he never practised, is lost in an impenetrable fog. His career was, as you know, that of a politician who politicised everything in the spirit of

<sup>35</sup> Abridgement of Professor Lüthy's unpublished letter. [Editor.]

delirium which was common in 1968. Your faculty had an obligation to look into the qualifications and scholarly merits of this already popular socialist member of the federal parliament; he was already a controversial figure and he himself was by then already a professional controversialist.

I made a promise in my letter of 14 January and to my great regret, I have to hold to it. I am therefore returning to your faculty, the honorary degree which was conferred on me in June 1968 and I am doing so—as I wrote then—publicly. . . .

. . . There is nothing personal about this letter. It is not addressed to you personally . . . nor to other members of your faculty as individuals, but to your faculty as a corporate entity. It is above all not addressed to the rector of your university, who is a person of unquestionable probity and a nuclear physicist too little and too poorly informed on the state of affairs within the faculty of economics and social sciences. Nor is it addressed to M. André Chavanne, the member of the Conseil d'état responsible . . . for public education; he was ill-informed about the machinations of Professor Jean Ziegler and his attorney . . . (poor Jean Ziegler no longer communicates except through his attorney as an intermediary), and the attorney . . . is now conducting a campaign against M. Chavanne inside his own political party. M. Chavanne has unfortunately invested his confidence in the scholarly judgement of your faculty with regard to the scholarly qualifications and merits of your candidate for the full professorship. As you have repeatedly emphasised, assessment of scholarly qualifications and merits falls within the jurisdiction of the legally "competent" faculty; in this case it is your faculty and not the Conseil d'état which is a political and not a scientific and scholarly body. The Conseil d'état, by an anomaly which is unknown in the truly autonomous Anglo-American universities, is the final authority on appointments which are proposed by academic faculties. Your faculty has placed the Conseil d'état, and the republic and canton of Geneva, in an impossible situation which could not be allowed to continue in an election year. It is your faculty which has been at fault and not the political authorities.

. . . I have tried with great effort to remain apart from the public contention about the Ziegler affair and to prevent the press and the "media" from drawing my name into their base activities. As you know, the confidential letter which I sent you on 14 January came in the form of a photocopy into the hands of the Parisian "committee of support" for Jean Ziegler, and into the hands of the editor of the *Nouvel Observateur* on the same day that it reached your office, i.e., on 16 January. Fortunately for you and myself the editor had the good professional ethics to get in touch with me immediately and I was thus able to prevent the scandal of the publication of the confidential correspondence of the University of Geneva. . . . May I suggest to you to undertake a serious inquiry into just where the continuous and systematic leakage of documents is occurring in the offices of the University.

In returning to you my honorary doctorate . . . I cannot spare your faculty the gravest reproach which can be made against a scholarly and scientific institution.

. . . whether it be in the natural or in the human sciences, every academic

body has the obligation assumed in the oath of academic appointment, that of fidelity to the pursuit of truth. I reproach your faculty with having failed in its first duty, which is to be informed before coming to a conclusion. I must add to this an even graver reproach which is that your faculty knowingly refused to inform itself, in spite of all the gaping lacunae in the file of the candidate who is henceforth elevated "above all suspicion" . . . ; it systematically disregarded the information which it received, and with an almost diabolical perseverance, it declared itself fully satisfied with the "regularity" of a career and of a procedure in which nothing was regular but which your faculty, with extraordinary obstinacy, refused to review. And yet while refusing to review a decision which was problematic from the start, your faculty has tolerated information given to it in the strictest confidence being repeatedly divulged to the press and television, where it were exploited by experts in systematic misinformation.

With sincere regrets, I remain,

Yours sincerely,  
Herbert Lüthy

## XXVI

### PROFESSOR HERBERT LÜTHY RETURNS HIS HONORARY DOCTORATE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA<sup>36</sup>

Jacques-Simon Eggly

The appointment of Jean Ziegler to a full professorship has not ceased to stir up a backwash. A new item in the dossier has come to light; it is the letter which Professor Herbert Lüthy, the eminent historian of the University of Basel, wrote on 14 January last, to the dean of the faculty of economics and social science of the University of Geneva. Recalling that he had been awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Geneva in 1968—"When the University was unhappily under pressure from extremist students and when the idea of the University itself was endangered"—Professor Lüthy had nonetheless experienced deep satisfaction in being honoured for his scholarly attainments by a university with a long and lofty tradition associated with the name of Calvin.

But, last January, the professor from Basel became worried. Is it possible, he complained, that wittingly or unwittingly this faculty of the University of Geneva could have made an assessment favourable to the appointment to a full professorship of a candidate, without being able to give the necessary assurances about the training of the candidate, on his record in examinations and on his habilitation? Is it possible that a university faculty seriously refuses to examine the academic quality of a candidate, and that it should assume this grave responsibility towards the students since a full professor is a permanent fixture? And all this because it has allowed itself to be influenced by obvious political pressures.

M. Herbert Lüthy . . . deems that an honorary degree granted by such a

<sup>36</sup> *Journal de Genève*, 3 March, 1977.

university would be of no value, if the university which granted it had abandoned its requirement of adherence of exigent academic standards.

One knows what happened. Despite having had the file sent back by the Conseil d'état for supplementary information on several occasions, the University of Geneva maintained its original position and the Conseil d'état, by a clearly politically motivated vote, ratified the appointment by a majority of one vote.

With sadness in his heart, Professor Lüthy has returned his honorary degree, on the basis of his view that Jean Ziegler has never done any serious academic work, that he has never given any evidence of intellectual rigour, and that his appointment was a mockery. At the same time, Professor Lüthy, who had written to the dean of the faculty at Geneva in complete confidentiality, without any expectation that it would be made public, has now released his letter [of 14 January] . . . There were intentional leakages, characteristic of the disordered situation—so alien to academic propriety—which has developed around this affair.

Professor Lüthy's letter is moving because it has been written by a man who wished to avoid embroilment in political contention, and who has such an elevated conception of the university that the appointment of Jean Ziegler appeared to him to be an abdication of responsibility of crushing proportions. This return of the honorary doctorate is the expression of an indignant sadness, of a disheartened spirit into which no element of calculation has entered. It is more sincere than all the commentaries which have been written about this unbelievable appointment. For Herbert Lüthy, the University itself, having been reduced to this, is in danger, as it was in 1968.

## XXVII

### SCHOLARLY CONSCIENCE<sup>37</sup>

Bü

In returning his honorary doctorate to the faculty of economics and social sciences of the University of Geneva, Herbert Lüthy, formerly professor of history at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich, and now professor of his discipline at the University of Basel, has given a courageous expression to the dictates of his conscience. It is the expression of a man of great scholarly authority whose intellectual achievements—for example, his fundamental study of the Banque protestante de France, his book on contemporary France, or his scheme for the solution of the problem of the Jura—are well-known and acknowledged in French-speaking Switzerland as well as in France. Hence his gesture has some chance of having an effect on those to whom it is addressed.

In his letter of mid-January, which has now been published and which he sent to the dean of the above-mentioned faculty in Geneva, he addressed the academic world—those who are responsible above all for the quality of scientific and scholarly work, namely, the professors who supervise,

<sup>37</sup> *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 3 March, 1977.

habilitate and, in the end, recommend the oncoming academic generation, as they did in the case of Ziegler, for full professorships. The crucial point in the controversy about Jean Ziegler's promotion lies in the decisions and recommendations of the authorities responsible for academic appointments. This conflict was not simply caused by his pamphlet against liberal Switzerland and it was not just a political issue. It dates back to almost a decade ago, when Ziegler, who at that time was employed as a teacher, was refused certification as a *Privatdozent*.

One may regard the decision to promote Ziegler which was made recently by the Conseil d'état of Geneva as having miscarried politically. At least, however, it respected the formal autonomy of the university which political authority should not infringe upon except under conditions of emergency. This autonomy is justified and meaningful only when it protects an institution in which scientific and scholarly quality prospers. Professors, individually and in their governing bodies, are accorded jurisdiction in this and it is they who in the first instance are responsible for it. Did they really take this responsibility seriously when they recommended Ziegler's promotion to a full professorship to the government? Did they take it seriously enough at the time when they granted habilitation to Ziegler, despite the doubts of many specialists in his field? Were they sufficiently conscious of this responsibility when they recommended Ziegler to an associate professorship despite the devastating criticisms of his writings?

These are the questions which are raised by the pre-history of the controversy about the appointment in Geneva and of which we are reminded by Herbert Lüthy's thoughtfully chosen gesture. This was the reason why Lüthy in his letter to the dean in Geneva on 14 January advised that the recommendation be reconsidered by the faculty and that it not shunt the responsibility onto the government. And because this appointment of a professor of dubious qualifications degrades the faculty, as it also degrades the honorary doctorates awarded by this faculty, he wrote the following sentence which also is written on behalf of those who are to be educated:

If the academic and public authorities of Geneva knowing—or ignoring—the records regarding studies, examinations, habilitation(?) and the university career of the candidate, proceed to a promotion to a full professorship—which cannot be justified from a scholarly point of view—and allow themselves to be forced into making a permanent professorial appointment as a result of political pressure approximating to blackmail—if this scandal really comes about, I will not hesitate to return to you and your faculty my honorary doctorate with my deepest disrespect.

This appeal to the "vigilance" of the "scholarly conscience" had no effect at the time on the Geneva faculty. But it is possible and it is to be hoped that it will in the future have an effect in Geneva and—where necessary, elsewhere—in calling forth serious reflection on the value and meaning of scholarly standards, to which the universities must be loyal, not only in their daily tasks but also in their decisions regarding appointments, if they are to prevent their claims to respect from being undermined from within the universities.