

# Assembly of the swiss abroad St. Moritz

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1963)**

Heft 1442

PDF erstellt am: **09.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695757>

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mation of 1863 was read and the Centenary Flag was officially handed over. The highlight was the formal rededicating of the world-wide movement to the humanitarian task of its second century. The ceremony at the "Grand Théâtre" was opened with the premiere of "Inter Arma Caritas", a prelude for orchestra by the Swiss composer Frank Martin. It was played by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. Prof. A. von Albertini, President of the Swiss Red Cross and Chairman of the Commemorative Day, welcomed the assembly. The President of the Swiss Confederation, Bundesrat Spuehler and the President of the Geneva Council of State, Monsieur C. Duchemin, addressed the gathering.

The premiere of "Cantata misericordium" for solo, choir and orchestra, by the British composer, Benjamin Britten, was presented.

Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Mr. John A. MacAulay, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies, followed in reading the messages on behalf of their respective organisations.

The Swiss historian and philosopher, Mr. Carl Burckhardt, a former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, delivered the principal address. He stressed the importance of the movement role in the future of humanity.

The Ceremony came to a close with the premiere of "Per Humanitatem ad pacem", a postlude for orchestra, by the Polish composer, Witold Lutoslawski.

The Ceremony was transmitted by closed-circuit television to several halls in Geneva for the benefit of hundreds of Red Cross visitors from different countries.

An exhibition was held in Geneva from 27th August to 18th September during which 100,000 visitors saw the interesting display which included historic development, men and material in the service of humanity and problems of the Red Cross. "Serpentarium" was one of the greatest attractions; 300 dangerous snakes from Bangkok were used to demonstrate how experts extract poison for the production of vaccines.

On 7th and 8th September there was a stamp auction of rare specimens, and a philately exhibition took place for a month from mid-August. The special date stamp was issued on 8th May.

On 6th September the Federal President received heads of delegations at the "Nationalratssaal" in Berne (Houses of Parliament). The guests returned via Grindelwald where they witnessed practical demonstrations. On 9th September a plenary meeting of the Council and delegates took place in Geneva when messages from heads of states were read. The meeting also decided to create a Henry Dunant medal for special merit. The Jubilee Congress came to a close on 10th September. A resolution by Mrs. Limerick (Great Britain) was accepted unanimously in which thanks were expressed to the Swiss Federal Council, the authorities of Geneva and UNO for their collaboration in the excellent organisation of the Congress. The most important issues, however, were that the resolution sanctioning the intervention by the Red Cross in the Cuba Crisis was accepted, and that Hungary, India, Poland, Czechoslovakia and USSR, who had each wanted to make proposals in connection with the part of the Red Cross in maintaining peace, had combined and brought a single resolution without any political reference. After the People's Republic of China had withdrawn their own

resolution in order not to disturb the existing harmony, the communal resolution was unanimously accepted.

Many are the tasks which face the Red Cross in the future. Its role as mediator in the Cuban Crisis has shown that it may be called upon not only to relieve suffering, but also to prevent hostilities.

To end this report, it is fitting to tell of the Centenary gift which Switzerland is making to the Red Cross. With the help of many private donors the Federal Council and Parliament have made it possible to create a Henry Dunant Institute in Geneva. Part of the building is to house the central enquiry service. Its origins go back to the wars of 1866 and 1870 and its archives take up a vast area. New filing installations are urgently needed. In 1962 alone, 15,000 searches were made, 19,000 private messages were sent on, 500 imprisonments confirmed and thousands of letters received and dispatched. A staff of forty look after the work. The Institute shall be a study, research, teaching and documentation centre and thus realise a pressing requirement.

*(Based on reports received from A.T.S. and "Basler Nachrichten".)*

### ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS ABROAD ST. MORITZ, AUGUST 1963

The main theme of the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad this year was "Die Selbstbehauptung der Schweiz in der Welt von heute und morgen" (how Switzerland can hold her own in the world of today and tomorrow). After the main speakers on the subject had informed the assembly in three excellent addresses on the military, economic and spiritual aspect, it was the turn of the Swiss from outside Switzerland. The Colonies had been asked to delegate speakers who would put into short addresses of ten minutes each what there was to criticize and to praise and what the Swiss abroad could contribute.

Amongst the speakers were three from France, one of them a young lieutenant in the Swiss army. He was very eloquent on the difficulties the Swiss abroad of the second generation had to face. One speaker came from Austria, one from Italy and one from Sweden. The speech by a Swiss from Barcelona was read for him. As the representative from Great Britain was the only woman speaker the privilege of opening the round fell to her. Mrs. Mariann Meier, member of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, put into the ten minutes available all the criticism, praise and suggestions which she had received on the subject from various members of the Colony. It was no easy task to present it in a coherent and impressive way, but the applause and comments received afterwards proved that she succeeded. Her speech will be found later in this issue.

The speakers were unanimous that Switzerland still had a place in the world, but that integration into Europe could not be at the cost of her giving up her neutrality and her right of self-determination. Criticism and concern included such things as the pollution of lakes and rivers, a certain materialism and complacency, lack of interest in public polling and shortage of spiritual consciousness in the younger generation. But all the speakers showed unequivocally that any criticism arose from their concern and their love for their homeland and in no way impaired their loyalty. It was obvious that the majority of Swiss abroad tried to live up to the reputation of their homeland, did their best to further understanding in their country of adoption, and they endeavoured to be real Ambassadors of goodwill.