

Recent events in Switzerland

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1967)**

Heft 1519

PDF erstellt am: **17.09.2024**

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SWITZERLAND AND RHODESIA

At the end of December, the Secretary-General of UNO requested the Swiss Government to state their position with regard to sanctions against Rhodesia decided on by the Security Council. On 13th February, the Federal Council declared that Switzerland was unable to take part in the sanctions on the grounds that as a neutral state it was a question of principle. On the other hand, the Government would see to it that there would be no possibilities on Swiss territory to circumvent the measures taken by the Security Council. Swiss imports from Rhodesia already needed a special permit, and these measures would now be strengthened. Swiss trade relations with Rhodesia were negligible (imports only 1%, exports to Rhodesia only 0.7%). The Federal Council undertook not to allow increases over and above the present level. In any case, there was no export of war material to Rhodesia.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Switzerland by no means disregards UNO interests. As an example, she has again granted a sum (860,000 francs) towards the UNO action on Cyprus. She has so far contributed nearly 2.2m. francs. Switzerland is interested in helping to keep the peace. [A.T.S.]

ANGLO-SWISS NEWS

Early in February, a new exhibition was opened at the Art Gallery in Berne. The works of five young English artists were shown under the patronage of the British Council. It is the show which was at the Venice "Biennale" in 1966. The artists exhibiting were Bernard and Harold Cohen, Robyn Denny, Richard Smith and Antony Caro. On 25th February, it was followed by another exhibition by British artists, this time sculptors.

A delegation of the management of Basle Airport came to London to try and convince British United Air Ferries not to stop the service to Switzerland. The Swiss were not successful and had to accept the reasons which were that in order to make the service pay, rates would have to be quadrupled.

In 1966, 22,580 British cars were sold in Switzerland for nearly 124 million francs. In 1965, the number had been 27,369 and the value had amounted to Fr.139,717,000.—.

It was announced on 9th February that the Royal Astronomical Society had elected Prof. Wilhelm Becker, head of the Astronomical Meteorological Institute of Basle University, an Associate. This is one of the three awards which the R.A.S. makes to outstanding foreign scholars every year.

On 9th February, the head of the Federal Political Department in Berne, Federal Councillor Spuehler, and the British Ambassador to Switzerland, Sir Robert Isaacson, signed the ratification documents of the Treaty for Conciliation, Judicial Settlement and Arbitration between the U.K. of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Swiss Confederation.

In some of the wintersports holiday places where the British have been the main contingents for years, their numbers have dropped from about 40 to 25% due to travel allowance restrictions. Fortunately, the number of visitors from other countries has gone up, and due to lack of snow in the lower regions of the country, more Swiss than usual have gone to holiday places, especially during the "sports weeks" in February.

On Sunday, 12th February, two British Alpinists, Douglas Haston and Mike Burke, reached the Matterhorn summit by way of the North Wall. [A.T.S.]

RECENT EVENTS IN SWITZERLAND

The Jewish community and various Swiss/Israeli organisations honoured the two 1966 Nobel Prize Winners for Literature, Nelly Sachs and Samuel Joseph Agnon, at a gathering in Zurich on 20th January.

A few days later, the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Ursen in Solothurn was the scene of a celebration, when Dr. Franziskus von Streng completed thirty years of being a Bishop.

At the end of January, the by now well-established "Mimosa Campaign" of the Basle Churches took place in aid of the poor. Two tons of the yellow flowers were sold by 600 voluntary helpers. In 1965, 30,000 francs could be distributed. Similar campaigns also run in other Swiss towns.

At the extraordinary delegates' meeting of the Swiss Hotelkeepers' Association at Engelberg, a historic event was recorded, viz. the move of headquarters to Berne. They had been in Basle ever since the foundation in 1882, but the office opened in Berne six years ago has developed so much that it was deemed of advantage to merge it with headquarters and have the main office in Berne.

For the first time in Europe, a one-week seminar was held in Zurich early in February, organised by Nuclear Service International Ltd; twenty-five representatives from eight countries took part, and questions of uranium requirements and other matters of importance to energy producers were discussed.

450 delegates took part in a conference arranged at Caux by the Moral Rearmament Movement; the subject was "Human and social aspects of the present change in the European economic structure".

The Presidents of the nine countries, including Switzerland, belonging to the Organisation of European Tobacco Retailers met in Basle early in February, and the Swiss national UNESCO Commission held their annual meeting in Schaffhausen. The President, *Regierungsrat* Dr. Ernst Boerlin, Liestal, welcomed prominent French and Swiss personalities and commented on the marked growth of interest in Switzerland. The Swiss "UNESCO Courier" has shown a record circulation of over 15,000 copies in the German language edition. Together with the French issue, Switzerland shows the largest distribution per head of the population. Minister E. Thalmann, head of the Section for International Organisations in the Federal Political Department, spoke on Swiss relations with foreign countries in the field of science and technology.

The Swiss Public Relations Society arranged a study session at the University of Economic and Social Sciences in St. Gall. The meeting was attended by over 130 representatives, and the theme was "Scientific knowledge as condition for effective public relations."

The largest *Jaegertreffen* of Switzerland took place at Thun on 16th February. 1,500 visitors attended. A record number of skins (1,412) was displayed, and at the same time, there was a show of trophies and of weapons and shooting utensils. [A.T.S.]

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