

# Recent events in Switzerland

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## RECENT EVENTS IN SWITZERLAND

Federal Councillor Spuehler, President of the Confederation, stated Switzerland's readiness to help in bringing about a lessening of tension regarding the war in Vietnam, when he spoke at the laying of the foundation stone of the new wing to the Palace of the League of Nations in Geneva early in April.

"Switzerland can no longer remain standing on the balcony of world politics" said Berne's Municipal President, Dr. R. Tschaepaet at one of the first celebrations of the foundation of the Council of Europe in Berne. Europe Day took place on 5th May, anniversary of the Council's creation in 1949. The President of the Confederation reminded the country of its responsibility and duties arising out of this communal body: "The future of Europe is the concern of us all — it depends on all of us". The same day was celebrated as Human Rights Day in Zurich.

On 6th May, Federal Councillor von Moos opened the International Week for Disaster Aid, arranged by the International Organisation for Civil Defence in Geneva. An exhibition was staged for the duration, showing all kinds of rescue kits, and a number of talks and lectures were arranged.

On 7th May, the World Health Organisation in Geneva celebrated its 20th anniversary; Federal Councillor Tschudi addressed the 400 delegates of 129 member States.

A few days later, Federal Councillor Celio spoke at the opening of the Geneva Days of Switzerland's Defence. He said: "We don't wish to make propaganda; what we want is self-examination. Our means of defence are at the same time an instrument of peace". The event was organised to show the taxpayer what happened to his money with regard to the Army. Every citizen and soldier had the right to learn what measures would be taken so that Switzerland could defend herself in case of need to live in freedom.

Some art exhibitions deserve mention: Early this year, there was one in Zurich on the work of the great baroque architect Francesco Borromini, and in March, works by Amiet and Giacometti to 1920 were shown at the Berne Art Gallery, both to mark the 100th anniversary of their births. In April, it was the tenth international exhibition "Bianco e Nero" which opened in Lugano, followed in La Chaux-de-Fonds by a show of the doyen of Swiss artists, André Evard (91). In Basle, there was an exhibition of "Swiss Master Drawings from Five Centuries". At the end of April, Lucerne staged an exhibition "From Toepffer to Hodler", and *Schweizerische Volkskunst* was on show in Basle. Early in May, an exhibition opened in Berne of illuminated mediaeval manuscripts. This was to mark the International Museum Week. "The Beautiful Book in the Twentieth Century" is the name of an exhibition in Winterthur.

Regarding drama, there were performances by the "Living Theatre" group, "Brecht's Antigone" in Berne and "Antigone", "Frankenstein" and "Mysteries" in Zurich. Adolf Muschg's "Rumpelstilz" had its premiere in Zurich, the successful first drama by this young Swiss author. The Municipal Theatre in Basle staged Max Frisch's "Biographie".

Other special events recently include the 88th annual meeting of the "Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Kunstgeschichte", which now has over 9,000 members. 81 school boys and girls took part in the National Competition for

Swiss History, an annual event. The Foundation Council of the "Schweizerisches Jugendschriftenwerk" met in Lausanne; 71 books had been published in 1967, and over one million "SJW-Hefte" were distributed throughout Switzerland. Since its foundation in 1931, the S.J.W. has published 23 million copies. The staff consists mainly of honorary helpers among teachers.

The first International Student Theatre Week took place in Zurich, in which twelve students' dramatic groups from ten countries, including Great Britain, participated. In February, a six-week course of the Swiss Youth Academy began on the Herzberg near Aarau. Twenty-one young people from various parts, of different denominations and with widely differing occupations met to discuss and work together under expert tuition. At the Plenary Meeting of the "Pro Helvetia" Foundation Council, various aspects of its work were reported on, such as exhibitions held abroad in 1967, support given to Swiss drama tours, promotion of art and culture within Switzerland, on which one third out of the 3-million subsidy by the Confederation was spent. The Swiss National UNESCO Commission had a meeting in Bienne early in spring; it was particularly concerned with Human Rights Year and how to inform the Swiss public on human rights in general. 2,700 people from twenty-one countries took part in a congress in Lausanne on "History as seen from the Christian Viewpoint".

The Swiss Rotarians met in Lucerne and their theme was "The Rotary in the service of culture: *dem Geiste dienen*". Early in March was the Day of the Sick, on which Federal Councillor Celio gave a radio message to the country. The German Chamber of Medicine organised a course at Davos, and in Berne, there was a European Symposium on Cosmic Rays, whilst some of the world's doctors gathered in Schaffhausen to discuss the theme "Fear, the problem of modern man". At St. Moritz, there was the congress of the International Society for Traumatology and *Wintersportmedizin*.

The former Austrian Chancellor Dr. K. Schuschnigg gave a lecture at St. Moritz; at the end of April, there was a commemoration service in Zurich of the rising in the Warsaw Ghetto of 1943, and the "Twenty Years Israel" was celebrated in several parts of the country by Jewish communities.

On 8th April, the last (11th) Rhine power station between Basle and the Lake of Constance was opened at Saeckingen, a communal German-Swiss undertaking.

The first Swiss Disc Jockey Festival took place in Zurich, and the Swiss *chefs de cuisine* met at Baden. Finally, an event outside Switzerland, the opening of the international exhibition "Hemisfair 68" in Texas; there was a special opening ceremony at the Swiss Centre, and "Swiss Time" will be present in the Official convention hall throughout the exhibition.

(Compiled from news received mainly by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

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