

Swiss cathedrals

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SWISS CATHEDRALS

The tendency of its Editor, Mr. Emil Rahm, is combatively to the right. His third "effort" of 1971 has a lengthy article entitled "Wird die Schule auch bei uns zur Verführerin?" of a definitely anti-permissive stand. In this day and age this cost him a fair amount of criticism which he abundantly refutes in his following issue. Besides sex and morals, the themes which this lonely voice dotes on are: Democracy, freedom, religion and student life.

An interesting piece of information appeared in the fourth 1971 issue of "Memopress". Quoting the "Neue Studentenzeitung", Mr. Rahm asserts that there are 69 structured subversive organisations in Switzerland seeking to overthrow the present order. There are 30 Communist and "crypto-Communist" publications in Switzerland with the aim of steering students, teachers and apprentices on a course designed to destroy society. Some of these have details on how to wage urban guerrilla warfare. Subversive elements, many of them students, are encouraged to undertake officer training in the Army. This will put them in a better position to undermine its preparedness and traditional standards.

Communist agitators are well entrenched in the Universities, where they have managed to set up a number of student revolutionary organisations planning to intensify class struggle. Finally, it is claimed that Swiss student leaders (Studentenfunktionäre) are actually being trained in Cuba and East Berlin. Moreover, the "Klein Student-enrat" is allegedly entirely controlled by Communists.

These assertions seem almost farcical. However, they appeared in a well-known student paper and were signed by a philosophy student from the Student Council.

In another part of that particular issue of "Memo Press", a speech at the Thun Officers' Society is quoted as implying that a foreign Communist party is organising subversive cells in the Swiss trade union movement in order to instil a revolutionary spirit in the working population.

The worst fears of the Swiss Little Red Book are coming true.



GENEVA

Saint-Pierre Cathedral

The hill on which rises the old city and crowned by the most important edifice of Geneva, the antique cathedral of Saint-Pierre, gives to the town its characteristic aspect.

On the site of St.-Pierre were erected in succession many religious edifices. The first, consecrated to Apollo, was destroyed by fire in 170 A.D. It was replaced by another, from which subsist a few fragments. This new temple of Apollo was converted into a Christian church at the beginning of the 4th century. When Clovis took possession of the Kingdom of Burgundy, to which Geneva then belonged, he had the church destroyed; but later, Gondebaud had it rebuilt, and Avitus, Bishop of Vienne, consecrated it in 516. Under the reign of Conrad the Pacific, the church of Saint-Pierre was reconstructed on the same spot as a new basilic, which was terminated a long time later, under Conrad the Salic, in about 1035. Since that time, Saint-Pierre has suffered many vicissitudes. Amédée, Count of Genevois, had it set on fire; in 1334, in 1349 and in 1430, new fires caused more damages, and finally, in 1556, one of the towers was

struck by lightning. Those disasters explain why the cathedral of Saint-Pierre has undergone, in the course of time, many modifications, and why the different parts of which it is composed are of varied styles wanting in architectural unity; its porch, of Corinthian order, clashes with the style of structure which is chiefly Gothic and Roman. The interior, however, is remarkable for its beautiful proportions. The cathedral has the form of a Latin cross; it has three naves of a length of 62m. and its transept 37m. Above the latter stand the three towers. The northern tower contains the celebrated bell "la Clémence", given by antipope Clément VII; it weighs 6,500 Kg. The southern tower has been restored in Gothic style at the beginning of the 16th century. Those two towers are 40m. high, between them stands an elegant spire 68m. high, constructed in 1898-99, in the Gothic style of the 15th century; it contains a carillon.

The cloister, which served as residence, was demolished in 1721, the sepulchral stones of Théodore de Bèze and of other celebrated personages were removed to the church of Saint-Pierre where they can still be seen. On the right of the side entrance, one can remark moreover, resting on two lions, a sarcophagus of black marble of the Duke Henri de Rohan, chief of the Protestants under Louis XIII, killed in 1638 at the siege of Rheinfelden. In the chapel of Macchabées were found remains of the tomb of Cardinal de Brogny, president of the Council of Constance; died in 1426.

This chapel, in Gothic style, was built by the cardinal in 1406 and in former times served as auditory to the gymnasium and the faculty of theology; from 1878 to 1888, it was restored and adorned with church windows.

In the interior of the cathedral are beautiful stain glass windows, stalls of sculpted wood, dating from the 15th century, and the so-called pulpit of Calvin.

(Pierre Savoie)

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