

"Niet" to Novosti

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'Niet' to Novosti

NEUTRAL Switzerland has joined other western states in taking tough action against undercover Soviet activities, stirring up a political controversy at home in doing so.

Switzerland has been ordering Soviets out of the country for years, mostly with the minimum of fuss. But the recent decision to close the Berne office of the Novosti news-agency and expel bureau chief Alexei Dumov was in contrast accompanied by a full blast of publicity.

A 500 word communiqué from the Justice Ministry accused the agency of manipulating part of the Swiss Peace Movement, helping organise Left-wing demonstrations and acts of subversion, political agitation and disinformation.

The Ministry has been headed since the beginning of the year by Rudolf Friedrich, a Right-wing politician who frequently raised security matters in parliament before he joined the coalition cabinet.

Police chief Peter Huber denied that this had anything to do with the decision, but one of the Swiss journalists' unions has accused the government of resorting to "the vocabulary of totalitarian states."

The journalists' union said it was even considering taking the case to the European Court of Human Rights.

One reason why the union protested was that the Justice Ministry claimed that two Swiss journalists employed at Novosti's Berne office acted as frontmen for the subversive activities.

The two journalists themselves complained they were being slandered for engaging in political activities which were the right of any Swiss citizen. No legal charges have been laid against them, and police say the whole affair was a purely political decision.

Both belong to the "Party of Work", a pro-Moscow Communist party which has had minimal visible impact on Swiss political life so far.

Swiss Peace Movement leaders protested that the move against Novosti was really aimed at blackening the movement's image in the eyes of the public. Whilst denying this, the Justice Ministry alleges the Soviet agency had a hand in organising a peace demonstration attended by 40,000 people in Berne in late 1981.

Behind all the accusations lies a fear that the affair signals a more authoritarian

Switzerland's action against Novosti coincided with Swedish allegations of Soviet submarine violation of its territorial waters. (Courtesy **24 heures**)

political stance by the government as a result of a gradual swing to the right over the past 18 months.

Conservative parties have gained ground in recent cantonal elections, while the Socialist Party has slumped due to an internal split between moderates and militants. A dissident youth movement which rioted frequently in major cities in 1980 and 1981 has crumbled in the face of official opposition and a swing in public opinion against it.

The youth movement too was implicated in the Novosti affair by the Justice Ministry, which said leaflets written in the agency's office had appeared at one violent demonstration.

Although police say investigations against Novosti were completed at the end of last year, it is still not clear why the government chose to single it out for such decisive action just now. There have been at least four espionage incidents involving Soviet diplomats or Aeroflot employees over the past 15 months, all of which have been handled more discreetly.

The Kremlin seems as uncertain as anyone else what to make of it. The only

Soviet response so far has been a brief comment by its Berne embassy describing the allegations as groundless and protesting against Dumov's expulsion.

Moscow may be reluctant to let the affair develop into a full-scale quarrel at a time when it is wooing public opinion in western Europe against deployment of new American missiles in Europe, diplomats say.

Another reason could be that the Russians sell much of their gold through Zurich, and are believed to use Swiss traders in Lausanne for purchases of grain on the world market.

Western governments have taken action against at least 70 Soviet diplomats and officials since the beginning of this year, 47 of them in neighbouring France.

And the Swiss action against Novosti coincided with strong protests by another European neutral, Sweden, alleging Soviet submarine violation of its territorial waters for purposes of espionage.

AS this month's issue of the **Swiss Observer** went to press, the two clubs that

have dominated the Swiss soccer season were still locked in a dramatic duel for the coveted Cup and League double.

With only four league matches still to go, Grasshoppers of Zurich and Servette of Geneva were neck and neck at the top of the table. Grasshoppers led only on goal average, and both clubs had been way ahead of their closest rivals for weeks.

Grasshoppers and Servette also met in the traditional Whit Monday cup final - the match ending in a 2-2 extra time draw, with Grasshoppers twice in arrears and equalising only 120 seconds from the final whistle. The replay was scheduled for June 21, by which date the league programme should also have been completed.

Grasshoppers took the league title last year, overhauling months-long leader Servette in the final week of the season. Grasshoppers have also won the cup a record 14 times to Servette's four. Before this season the two teams had met in six finals, each side winning three times. Their last cup final encounter in 1978 also resulted in a 2-2 draw with Servette winning that replay 1-0.

SWISS SOCCER

Football League tables up to and including June 1

'A' Division						'B' Division					
	Pl	W	D	L	Gls Pts		Pl	W	D	L	Gls Pts
Grasshoppers Zurich	26	21	1	4	74 26 43	Ch-de-Fonds	27	20	4	3	71 16 44
Servette Geneva	26	20	3	3	54 18 43	Chiasso	26	16	6	4	54 29 38
St. Gallen	26	16	3	7	57 28 35	Chênois	27	16	6	5	58 36 38
Lausanne	26	13	5	8	44 27 31	Fribourg	27	12	9	6	52 37 33
Xamax	26	12	6	8	50 37 30	Lugano	27	14	4	9	59 44 32
Sion	26	10	10	6	42 30 30	Biel	27	14	4	9	56 44 32
Zürich	26	13	4	9	46 36 30	Nordstern	26	10	10	6	45 35 30
Lucerne	26	12	3	11	54 50 27	Monthey	27	11	7	9	59 43 29
Young Boys Berne	26	9	8	9	28 36 26	Grenchen	27	8	10	9	31 37 26
Wettingen	26	7	8	11	34 39 22	Laufen	27	9	8	10	36 45 26
Basle	26	9	4	13	39 45 22	Mendrisio	26	8	8	10	34 45 24
Bellinzona	26	8	4	14	29 62 20	Baden	27	6	9	12	31 47 21
Vevey	26	8	3	15	37 51 19	Locarno	26	7	6	13	30 47 20
Aarau	26	7	4	15	26 41 18	Berne	27	8	3	16	37 54 19
Bulle	26	4	4	18	25 76 12	Ibach	27	4	4	19	26 69 12
Winterthur	26	1	6	19	22 59 8	Rüti	27	1	2	24	27 78 4

Lines separate championship leader, relegation and promotion zones.