

# Peace message by the Swiss Federal Council

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

Objekttyp: **Preface**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **10 (1944-1945)**

Heft 9

PDF erstellt am: **31.05.2024**

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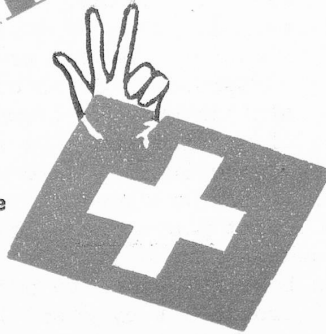
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# HELVETIA

Monthly Publication of the



SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY  
in New Zealand

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Group New Zealand of the N.H.G.

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WELLINGTON  
JUNE, 1945.

VOL. 9, 10th YEAR.

PEACE MESSAGE BY THE SWISS FEDERAL COUNCIL.

The Federal Council broadcast the following message in the three national languages, which was delivered by Mr. de Steiger, President of the Confederation in the German language, by Mr. Petitpierre, head of the Political Department, in French and by Federal Councillor Celio in Italian:

"Ladies and Gentlemen:-

In our country as elsewhere the bells have rung out the news that hostilities have ceased in Europe. The unspeakable suffering of the people who have been carried into the maelstrom of war is approaching its end. We are in communion of mind and spirit with all who after years of bondage and distress have come once again into possession of their liberty. We are grateful to our army which, well aware that the Swiss people stand body and soul united with it, has protected the country's frontiers. We are also grateful to all the Swiss citizens, men and women, who by their untiring efforts and their sense of duty have made it possible for our homeland to hold out in face of all difficulties.

During these years of war, the Swiss people have given proof of a healthy mind. They stood out against the seductions of the New Order which was to be imposed upon them from the outside. Their resolve to defend their independence never faltered, not even when we were isolated, and could not count on anyone but ourselves. We all recognized that we should walk together in weal as in woe, and we drew closer together, stood shoulder to shoulder in order to insure our strength.

After so much effort and trial many of us may feel worn and weary. We must feel that a burden has been rolled off our shoulders though the burden has, of course, been much lighter than that imposed upon the belligerents. In comparison with the latter, fate has indeed been kind to us. This we owe, more to the ever-ruling will of Providence than to ourselves. And this is why we feel constrained to celebrate the event of this great day in a modest way. The events of the past month have shown how much ruin and devastation, violence and lack of scruples can cause to great people. We cannot pass judgement, for our mission is to come to the help of others, to try to the limit of our means to alleviate their suffering. And we shall be true to this calling.

We shall remember too that Swiss democracy is a possession well worth defending. During these years of war no other people of Europe have enjoyed the benefits of liberty to the extent we have. This, despite the restrictions we had to impose upon ourselves.

Now, peace is at hand. But until a normal peacetime regime has been set up we shall have to surmount many difficulties. In the immediate future urgent tasks demand our attention. A system of insurance for the aged, the widows and the orphans must be achieved. Better protection must be given to the Swiss family. Help must be extended to Swiss citizens having returned home from abroad. Farming legislation must be drawn up and voted. In short, many serious financial and social problems must be studied and solved. During this period of transition, the Swiss people will be called upon to give renewed proof of their political mindedness. I say renewed proof, for full proof was given during the past years of conflict. But the achievement of the past must be equalled and surpassed in the future. Should differences of opinion arise regarding the best solutions to our many problems, those differences of opinion must be ironed out by resorting to legal constitutional means, and in a spirit of peace and harmony. The suffering of other peoples will keep us mindful of the fact that we have no right to become impatient.

Fellow countrymen, all our cares, however great they may be, will not deprive us of a full realization that war operations have come to a close. In the midst of a continent whose future is still veiled in uncertainty, Switzerland is duty-bound to show that a small country has a role to play. Amongst these towering Alps lives a democratic nation. Here the most simple man, whatever his language or his religion, may enjoy all the rights and privileges granted by the constitution. Under the protection of her army, Switzerland has practised during the war a policy of neutrality which has proved its worth across the past centuries. Under heaven's blessing she has escaped the threatening horrors of war. Lord, grant Thy help to this our homeland."

#### THE END OF HOSTILITIES IN EUROPE - THROUGH THE EYES OF THE SWISS PRESS.

Now that the war in Europe is over, the Swiss Press, without distinction of party, language or religion, stress the point that the Swiss people, their government, and their army have remained true to themselves in spite of the ever-increasing difficulties of the past six years. In the eyes of the world and of history, Switzerland has withstood the test. The leftist press has taken the opportunity to emphasize that the time has now come to take up with new zeal the manifold problems of social equilibrium and justice, while other papers point out that Europe's recovery will be found in a strengthening of the democratic idea. All articles have as their theme: gratitude, consciousness of responsibility, and duty.

#### GENERAL PRESS REMARKS.

"Gazette de Lausanne" of Lausanne: "The news of Germany's general capitulation has revived hope all over the world. The monstrous plan of domination and violence, to which Hitler's mind gave birth, has ended in complete failure. The day of justice is now dawning. Everywhere the shackles of bondage have been broken and the subjected people rejoice in their freedom. In this solemn hour, our thoughts turn with gratitude to all those people who have given their life-blood for the liberation of the world. Our thoughts also turn to the unknown soldiers who, to a certain extent, fought for us too, and to all the dead who sacrificed themselves so that the world might be sure of a better future. Our sympathy and respect also go to those who have resisted in the oppressed lands, to all those living in terrorized countries, who have given their lives or have suffered atrocious persecution because of their resolve not to submit to the will of the oppressor. Let us never forget these victims whose unsung heroism is an honour to mankind".

#### SWISS PRESS REPORTS OF PEACE-DAY CELEBRATIONS IN SWITZERLAND.

"Neue Zürcher Zeitung" of Zurich: "In Zurich, the day of the laying-down of arms was celebrated calmly. Numerous public and private concerns gave full or half day holidays to their employees. The city was gaily decorated with flags, both Allied and Swiss, and the streets were thronged with people in festive mood. Many small children carried paper flags of Switzerland and the Allied Nations. In the evening the Socialist Workers organised two mass meetings. Among others, the City President, Mr. Lüchinger, and National Councillor Meierhans spoke. These meetings adopted the slogan "We want to win the peace".