

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK  
**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom  
**Band:** - (1973)  
**Heft:** 1671

**Artikel:** Switzerland from day to day  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-690998>

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# Switzerland from day to day

7th/8th April

The Swiss consumer price index has risen by 0.8% since the end of February and by 8.2% since March 1972.

11th April

Near the Solothurn Commune of Hochwald, a four-engine piston aircraft (Vanguard) belonging to a British company, crashed on its flight from Bristol to Basle. The machine had 139 passengers and seven crew on board.

Professor J. Geiss, Director of the Institute of Physics at Berne University received the "Medal for extraordinary scientific achievements" from the American space authorities NASA. Prof. Geiss is the head of a research group which developed and expounded the sonar/solar tests on the moon.

16th April

The three-nation swimming championships in Bordeaux ended in a victory for Switzerland who was placed first with 257 points in front of France B (232) and Bulgaria (199).

18th April

Professor Werner Kaegi explained his considered opinion on the various aspects regarding the problem of deleting the denominational Articles of Exemption in the Federal Constitution. In his opinion, the constitutional Articles 51 and 52 are in contradiction to the principles of the Swiss Idea and its clear conception of justice. Such constitutional paragraphs must be corrected and, better still, deleted in the interest of law and justice.

24th April

In the Cup Final at the Wankdorf Stadium in Berne, FC Zurich beat FC Basle 2-0 after extra time. There were 45,000 spectators.

1st May

At the fourth meeting for the World Fencing Cup at Heidenheim, four Swiss were placed amongst the first 32, out of 268 participants.

6th May

Marijka Moser achieved a new Swiss record in 3,000 m. With 9.33 minutes she improved on Margret Hess's former record by 10 seconds.

Another Swiss record in Aarau: the ladies' relay team of LC Basle ran the 4 x 400 m in 3 minutes 52.3 seconds. The previous record was held by LC Zurich with 3 minutes 55.8 seconds.

7th May

Federal Councillor Pierre Graber left the Egyptian capital Cairo after a



week's stay. He spoke in favour of stronger relations between Egypt and Switzerland. He had had discussions about the state in the Near East with his Egyptian colleagues.

9th May

The Federal Council accepted the Message and draft for a federal law concerning the military exemption duty for Swiss abroad. The matter was put before Parliament. The draft proposes to reduce the period of residence abroad from eight years (*Auszug*) and five years (*Landwehr*) to three years for both groups.

12th-13th May

The Rotary World Congress was opened in Lausanne. With 20,000 participants this was the biggest meeting ever held in Switzerland.

17th May

The Swiss doctors and sickness insurance companies presented a draft in answer to the Socialist Initiative (compulsory insurance) and the federal draft (big risks insurance). This was in connection with the insurance laws in case of sickness and accident.

The Swiss European flyweight boxing champion lost his fight in Bangkok. Fritz Chervet was beaten by Chartchai Chionoi in the world championships. The contest had to be halted due to Chervet being injured.

21st May

In a federal plebiscite, the Swiss people voted for the deletion of the Constitutional Articles regarding the Jesuits and monasteries. 790,799 voted for and 648,999 against. Voting participation was 39.7%.

23rd May

The Federal Court of Justice rejected the complaint lodged by eight co-operatives, (Co-op, Migros, Denner, etc.) who had been refused permission

last year to sell effervescent Vitamin C tablets.

26th/27th May

The state agreement on mutual legal aid in penal matters was signed in Berne between USA and the Swiss Confederation.

28th May

The film "Invitation" by Claude Goretta received one of the prizes at the Film Festival in Cannes. It was the first time since 1946 that Switzerland was awarded a prize.

1st June

Meta Antenen (Schaffhausen) beat her own Swiss record in 100 m hurdles at Kuesnacht. She ran the distance in 13.2 seconds.

14th June

The Ticinese poet Francesco Chiesa died in Lugano at the age of 102.



Meta Antenen.



*Federal Counsellor Pierre Graber with his Egyptian counterpart, Mr. Hassan El Zayyat.*

#### 25th June

Switzerland was hit by heavy floods. In the Jura, numerous villages were flooded and road and rail traffic was affected badly.

#### 27th June

The National Council accepted the report by the Federal Council on the Initiative Muenchenstein regarding the creation of a civilian service. Voting was 119:34.

#### 5th July

The Swiss producer Alain Tanner received the second prize by the "Office catholique international du cinéma" and the international film judges' board of the Evangelical Church, Interfilm, for his film, "Retour d'Afrique" at the film festival in West Berlin.

#### 6th July

The Federal Political Department published draft proposals for a federal law aiming at giving Swiss resident abroad the chance of carrying out political rights.

#### 26th July

Hotel keepers in Switzerland complained about the weather: there was snow in the mountains, and it rained in the low regions and was so cold that many people had to put on the heating.

A Minister in the Thurgau refused to preach a sermon as he did not want to provoke the wrath of the Federal Attorney. In a leftish periodical, a statement had appeared appealing to men and women not to use force in wartime. As the text was next to the picture of a tank with a Swiss cross, the Federal Attorney considered this an open challenge to refuse to do military service and thus punishable. The Minister explained to his parishioners that he was unable to preach on the text from Joshua 2, verses 4 and 5, as the Federal Attorney might see in it a hidden appeal not to do military service.

#### 31st July

Switzerland's contributions in favour of developing countries amounted to 1,009 million francs in 1971, but only to 690 m last year, a reduction of 339 million.

#### 1st August

In his speech on the Swiss National Day, Federal President Roger Bonvin pleaded for a democracy in which all take part. He considered it a major danger that the State was developing into a mysterious and puzzling affair beyond the comprehension of many citizens. He appealed to the citizens to take an active part in the Swiss institutions which were bitterly in need of it.

The petition "For a strong Army" launched by a group of officers worried about the future of Swiss national defence, attracted only 245,338 signatures. The initiators consider it a fiasco.

#### 2nd August

Thirty-four Jurassien and Vallooon separatists took over the Belgian Embassy in Berne. At the same time, members of the Jurassien Béliet group occupied the Swiss Embassy in Brussels. This action was supposed to be an act of solidarity of the youth in the two countries where there are ethnical problems.

#### 7th August

It was announced that Switzerland used ten million kilos of honey *per annum*.

#### 8th August

A popular initiative was launched asking for a complete separation between Church and State. The committee putting up this Initiative proposed a new Constitutional Article providing for such a separation and calling for temporary arrangements so that the Cantons could sever all relations between Church and State over a period of two years. The Cantons would no longer be entitled to collect taxes from the Churches.

#### 10th August

The young cyclist, Henri-Daniel Reymond, from Lausanne, produced a real sensation on the first day of the Swiss championships. Only 16 years old, he beat the specialist in pursuit racing Xaver Kurmann and thus became Swiss champion in this event.

The team of Geneva swimmers consisting of Alain Charmey, Gillas Chamoux, Henri de Raemy and Heinz Kern, set up a new record in 4 x 200 m relay in 19 minutes 43.3 seconds. The old record was 10 minutes 11.1 seconds.

## SPORTS – IWAN SCHMID

The responsables in professional cycling fail to understand why the amateurs have taken over the parts of "extras" since their big start; for they are outstanding in their own category. Oskar Plattner who takes care of the amateurs in an exceptional way, refuses to comment on this matter. "This is no doubt a question of organisation". The former world champion is certainly not in a position to criticise his own people, yet



the confusing lack of success goes on. The brothers Zollinger, Koechli, Erwin Thalman, and now Fuchs, Hubschmid and Sutter have given lamentable performances on the road this season. Yet they were the ones who had been put forward, hoping they would perform well. As the best Swiss amateurs saw their colleagues fail, they resigned, by preferring their present position. Therefore one must not be deceived by the notable results which they achieved in the "Tour de l'Avenir". Robert Thalman won one lap, Schmid was fourth in the final placement and Roland Salm second in the mountains.

One may say without hesitation that the Swiss showed the best team results. This admirable common attitude is due to the almost magic powers of Oskar Plattner and to the influence of Iwan Schmid. This 20-year-old man from Solothurn is a picture of health, reliable on the passroads, without fear in the descent and fast as a sprinter. Schmid who finished in second place in last year's "Tour de l'Avenir", is a really versatile cyclist. To his own qualities have to be added his great will to fight, which shows itself above all in the timed races and in the discipline events which he dislikes most. Is he, therefore, the outstanding cyclist which his sport needs so badly? No, for in spite of his comrades' advice he imitates Xaver Kurmann, who at the moment is at the bottom of his form. In addition, he insists on continuing his brilliant career amongst those one calls the "dilettantes".

The Swiss did very well financially out of the "Tour de l'Avenir", and none of them wants to join the professional



groups. Schmid considers that one is so well advised by Plattner that he has no intention of making any changes. It is not because of Schmid's defeat in the Swiss championships (second behind Thalman) that he has changed his mind. His reticence symbolises the present crisis in Swiss cycling. When the responsible man refuses to take the initiative it is futile to wait for others who try to get rid of the present *malaise*.

There is one single cyclist who may possibly be attracted: the 22-year-old Gilbert Bischoff, a decorator from Lausanne, twice champion in time racing at the Great Nation Prize for Amateurs. This excellent cyclist has some difficulties in lap racing due to his big body frame. Nevertheless, he might achieve some honourable results. "I have not yet made any decisions for next year". This statement applies to Swiss cycling and to

Iwan Schmid, leader of a well-organised group, who will be the great hope of the Swiss for the next few years. With a great deal of good will, this top sportsman livens up the scene in Swiss cycling. He might possibly even remind us of the golden times the fifties! For security reasons, however, he has renounced the unknown and adventure, and in these times no other sportsman may reproach him for it.

# COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE SWISS ABROAD

## FIFTY-FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS ABROAD

The 51st Assembly of the Swiss Abroad took place in St. Gall from 16th to 19th August, 1973, under the chairmanship of the President, Councillor of States Louis Guisan.

The first two days were mainly devoted to meetings of commissions which not only provided for an exchange of views on the various activities of the Organisation, but also put down directives for the continued development of its work.

The following meetings took place: Commission on Information (responsible for informing Swiss residents abroad on what happens in Switzerland and on Swiss problems, but also for making the activities and problems of the Swiss communities abroad known in Switzerland), co-ordinating information (where various editors and responsible members of the Swiss communities exchanged views on the now established "review" sent four times a year to all Swiss registered at Swiss Embassies and Consulates, with the help of the Swiss Federal Political Department), Council of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, Council of the Solidarity Fund, Foundation for the Swiss Abroad (administering the funds of the Organisation), exchange of views on Swiss schools abroad, Federation of Friends of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, exchange of views between young *Auslandsschweizer*, annual general meeting of the Solidarity Fund, and most important, the meeting of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, the "Little Parliament" and the highest authority within the whole Organisation.

Much useful work was done and many points were cleared up.

### OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY

The official opening of the Assembly took place at the modern Municipal Theatre of St. Gall, some 500 participants being present. The President of the Organisation, Dr. Louis Guisan, welcomed the guests of honour and his compatriots from all parts of the world. He referred to the Organisation's history

since its foundation in 1916 and to the 50th Assembly in Berne last year.

As representatives of the Canton and of the Municipality of St. Gall, *Landammann* Dr. Geiger and *Stadtammann* Dr. Hummler addressed the meeting. The brass and wind band of St. Gall's youth gave an excellent performance during the opening ceremony and delighted the audience by their enthusiasm and high standard.

### PLENARY SESSIONS

This year's theme of the Assembly was the activities of Swiss societies and institutions abroad. The Central President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Mr. Jean-Claude Nicole opened the Saturday morning session at the Municipal Theatre. He made a fervent appeal to the Swiss at home and abroad not to doubt their own abilities, but to believe in them and to make active use of them, trying to alleviate the difficulties the society of today has to grapple with.

### Activities of Swiss Institutions

These were introduced by various members of the Secretariat in Berne. Much research had gone into the presentation of the manifold activities in all parts of the world. Some of the institutions go back 200 years and more, and much loyal work and patriotic devotion has gone into the running of the many organisations, institutions and societies. Many have been the difficulties compatriots abroad have had to face, and not always have they found the necessary understanding and support at home. Nobody could be in doubt after the St. Gall meeting that much valuable work is carried out in the interest not only of Swiss residents abroad but also of the homeland.

### Welfare Organisations

The Committee of the "Schweizer Hilfskasse" Vorarlberg/Tirol (Mr. Ausderau, President, Miss Goetzis and Consul Schmid) explained how they deal with relief cases in their part of Austria.

Next came a film taken at the Swiss Home for Old People in Marseilles, showing the problems of a widowed Swiss who finally finds a new abode at the Home.

A second film taken at the Home at Issy-les-Moulineaux, Paris, showed extracts from a gymnastic lesson for old people.

### Chambers of Commerce and Economic Institutions

These organisations, so important for the economic life of Switzerland, were represented by Mr. Carlo Steffen, Milan, and Mr. Emil Spahn, Frankfurt.

### Cultural Organisations

Mrs. Mariann Meier addressed the assembly on the history, life and problems of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, the oldest group abroad of the NSH. Next, the Rev. A. Attinger told of the problems of one of the Swiss Churches abroad, that of Sao Paulo. And finally, there was a discussion between the headmaster of the Swiss School at Bogotá, Mr. Karl Schmid and Mr. Juerg Bachmann, formerly of the Swiss School in Milan.

### Youth Clubs

These were represented by Miss Corinne Roth, President of the Swiss Youth Club in Marseilles, and by Mr. Cornelius Kaufmann, President of the Youth Club in Frankfurt.

### Sports Organisations and Folklore

Mr. Alfred Ammann, President of the Swiss Gymnastic Society of Paris, told of the activities of his group, and the morning session was closed with a group of Swiss songs by Mrs. Rosmarie Posnanski-Abt, who had given the same performance at the 1st August celebration 1973 of the Swiss Society at Denver, Colorado.

### Swiss Houses and Swiss Clubs Overseas

After a well-attended ecumenical