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# HOME NEWS

## KISSINGER AND GROMYKO MEET IN GENEVA

American Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made a two-day stop-over in Geneva on his way to carry out his most recent peace mission in the Middle East. In Calvin's City, he met Mr. Andrei Gromyko, his Soviet counterpart, for talks on the limitation of strategic arms and on the Middle East.

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) have been stalled in Geneva for several months and efforts are under way at a higher level to reach an agreement by the time of President Nixon's planned visit to Moscow in June. The two great powers would like to sign a second SALT Agreement (the first was signed during President Nixon's 1972 visit to Moscow) which would include multiple and retargetable warheads (MIRV) now under development by the Russians. The 1972 SALT agreement related to the number of strategic missiles deployed by both camps, while the second-stage SALT agreement under consideration should bear on actual nuclear strike capacity, i.e. the volume equivalent of TNT which both sides are able to lob on the other.

Although these issues appear basically simple, the Russians were unsatisfied with Mr. Kissinger's proposals when he visited Moscow last March. The Secretary of State then met Mr. Gromyko in New York in early April. The two men studied the counterproposals submitted by the Russians to Mr. Kissinger in Moscow. When he came to Geneva, Mr. Kissinger brought the preliminary answer to Russian counterproposals. An American spokesman in Geneva said that the latest talks between the two men had been very constructive and that hopes for the signing of a SALT agreement this summer were very real.

The Nuclear Disarmament Conference opened its thirteenth annual session in Geneva early in April. The atmosphere there is of unmitigated gloom. For ten years delegates from nearly all the important UN powers with the exception of France and China have been trying to work out an agreement that would ban all underground nuclear testing. They are also working on a ban of some chemical weapons. The standard differences concerning the means of control were again underlined by the inaugural addresses of the heads of the American and Russian delegations. The former stressed that an international system of supervision was necessary to prevent violations of the agreement, while the latter said that this would serve as a cover for espionage. Several delegates, in particular the Mexican representative, said that the future of the Conference depended on the results of the present session.

## SWISS JOURNALIST TORTURED IN CHILE

Pierre Etienne Rieben, the former correspondent of the Lausanne daily *Vingt-Quatre Heures* in Chile, was arrested and detained for six days by the military police of that country. Accused of subversive activities, he was beaten up and tortured with electrodes placed on his sexual parts. His captors, who claimed Rieben was working for some subversive left-wing organisation, also resorted to psychological torture by recording a mock-torture of his girlfriend. Rieben was saved from further tribulation by the determined action of the Swiss ambassador in Santiago, Mr. Masset.

Pierre Rieben was one of the few European journalists left in Santiago. Most of the others had been expelled so that Rieben remained one of their vital sources of information. Military police found in his flat a freshly-written article describing the tortures carried out by the régime.

## SPORTS

Fritz Chervet, the Swiss European fly-weight boxing champion, was beaten on points in a world title fight at the Zurich Hallenstadion by the Thai world champion Chartchai Chionoi. This victory was announced amid booes from the crowd because the Swiss challenger had


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dominated most of the fight. The verdict by the Thai judge was thoroughly disputed by the Swiss journalists who covered the match. Some claimed that the outcome was "fixed" by the World Boxing Association. The *Tribune de Genève* headed its report with a catching "Frit Chervet beaten by the boxing Mafia". A huge crowd had thronged the Hallenstadion and thousands of Bernese had come to Zurich by special trains to support Chervet, who lives and trains in Berne. Some Swiss papers quoted a member of Chionoi's training team as stating that Chervet had deserved the title.

There was better news in the World Drivers' Championship in which Clay Regazzoni has topped the table since the beginning of the season. At the time of writing, with the Brazilian, Argentinian, South African and Spanish Grand Prix's already waged, he hadn't scored a victory but had been consistently placed second or third.

**Red Cross official killed in freak accident**

Mr. Pierre Boissier, Director of the Henry Dunant Institute in Geneva and member of the International Committee of the Red Cross, was killed at the end of April in a freak accident while carrying out a civil defence exercise near Geneva. Mr. Boissier, who was 53, was standing with a group of men outside a derelict and roofless farm-house used for exercises in fire-fighting and rescue operations when the top of a wall crashed on him and two other men. The three were sped off to hospital in a helicopter, but Mr. Boissier died of his injuries. The other two were not seriously injured. The accident was completely unexpected because precautions had been taken to prevent the walls from collapsing. This fatal exercise had been organised by the municipality and not by the Army. Mr. Boissier had been involved in training men, in organising rescue operations and in looking after refugees.

Many Swiss in London will remember his talk on the lives of Florence Nightingale and Henry Dunant at the Anglo-Swiss Society in May 1970.

## MR. GNAEGI CRITICISED BY CITIZENS OF THE VALAIS

A small group of environmentally concerned citizens of the Valais calling itself "Kritisches Oberwallis" and better known by the initials K.O. has addressed a petition to Mr. Rudolf Gnaegi, Head of the Military Department complaining about the excess of military installations in their Canton. They complain that the Valais, and in particular its higher reaches, have more training grounds and military depots than other cantons and that its inhabitants are continually pestered by jet aircraft in practice. The K.O. group called on the Military Department to freeze all its plans for extending existing facilities in the Valais and asked for compensations in favour of peasants whose production suffers from the activities of the Army.

This was only the most recent case of opposition to the needs of the military for practice land. Although no plans for the Valais have been officially announced, the K.O. group claim to be informed of new programmes which, it asserts, are prejudicial to the canton's economic development and should be inserted as part of a global environmental programme for the country. Most of the complaints against the Army have tended to concentrate in the Jura and especially in one of its loveliest districts, Les Franches Montagnes. There were intermittent demonstrations for years over the Army's acquisition of training and horse-rearing land in the area.

Finding enough empty space to train its militia soldiers to the art of warfare is one of the Military Department's most constant worries. Environmental consciousness and Switzerland's limited open space does not make the task easy.

**A sad way to die**

A young man from Glarus aged 23 died while crossing the icy waters of the Limmar near Zurich following a 100-franc bet with a friend. It is believed that he succumbed to a heart attack in the middle of the river whose temperature was 4° centigrade. A detective from the municipal police managed to pull him out of the water but all efforts to resuscitating him were in vain.

In another incident at Willisau, a 35-year-old Italian worker and father of two died while cleaning a schnaps (apple brandy) vat. He was inside the huge container when he fainted because of the carbonic gas. His companions outside were unaware of this and only realised what had happened when he failed to reappear. Efforts by a doctor at artificial respiration gave no result. The unfortunate victim died during a day off. He had volunteered to clean the vat to help an overworked friend.

**285 million required for Kloten–SBB link**

285 million francs, this is the budgeted cost of linking Kloten Airport to the remainder of the Swiss Federal Railways network. The Federal Railways are prepared to raise 172 million francs. The Confederation has offered to give a further 95 million francs on the condition that the local authorities concerned (Zurich) put up the remaining 18 million francs and assume any excess expenditure due to rising costs. There is little doubt that the cantonal authorities will oblige and allow a railway link with Switzerland's main airport to the satisfaction of thousands of passengers. A recent survey showed that 60 per cent of Switzerland was within Kloten's zone of influence while Geneva and Basle attracted only 30 and 10 per cent of national air passenger traffic. A previous proposal consisting of a shuttle service between Hauptbahnof and Kloten Airport has been abandoned. The solution to be adopted will allow one to take an express train from Berne or Lugano straight to Kloten.

## SWISS PACIFISTS SPEAK OUT

The Swiss Council of peace associations, a movement which had in the past put itself in the public eye by its support to initiatives in favour of conscientious objection to national service, was the spearhead in Switzerland of a world anti-war campaign staged during the last weekend of April.

The President of this Council, Mr. H. Braunschweig, held a press conference in Berne to denounce the philosophy expressed in the Government's latest report on Swiss security. While welcoming certain of the Government's "positive" proposals, Mr. Braunschweig said that everything in the report was expressed in terms of negative concepts. There was no optimism, no hope that one could do away with a costly defence machinery altogether, but provisions in case of invasion and internal subversion. The notion of "enemy" was still at the centre of official defence thinking.

The Council of peace associations believed that "security policy" should give way to an "audacious policy" in which Switzerland would bet on peace and scale down its Army. One speaker present at the press conference noted that with 600,000 soldiers, Switzerland had a hundred soldiers per thousand inhabitants against Israel's 67. He said that such military effectives were hardly necessary to combat subversion at home while the credibility of our Army facing any challenge from abroad was questionable. As a result, the Army should be reduced. It shouldn't be scrapped completely because the Swiss are not psychologically ready for this, but steps should be taken in a pacifist light, with the conviction that it is more productive for the future to break away from the old, pristine schemes of thought hardly likely to pave the way for a better world.

## THE SWISS GETTING USED TO SLOW DRIVING

The results of the 100 kmh speed ban are entirely positive. Such are the intermediate conclusions of the federal study group assessing the effects of the regulations enforced since the beginning of last year for an experimental period of three years. These conclusions, which are not particularly surprising, confirm and recap results which had been published last October. The main facts are that the number of road accidents in 1973 had dropped by 9 per cent (or 6,632), the number of injuries by 12 per cent and the number of deaths by 16 per cent (so that 272 lives have been saved in 1973). The report by the federal study group also indicates that three in four Swiss are in favour of speed restrictions, that is, a much higher proportion than before their introduction. Enquiries at the end of

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1972 showed that only 55 per cent of the Swiss viewed new speed limits favourably. The temporary regulations introduced last year made driving above 100 kmh forbidden on all roads with the exception of motorways. Amendments introduced on 16th March last now put a 130 kmh limit on motorway speeds.

## COUNTERFEIT MONEY SEIZED

The Swiss police are after the men behind the forged 500 franc notes that have been circulating in the country. This new banknote is said to be very well imitated and particularly dangerous.

The central office in Berne responsible for stamping out banknote and cheque forgeries had a busy year in 1973. It reported finding forged Swiss notes, 5,939 forged American notes, one forged Canadian note, two forged English notes, 44 forged West German notes, 1,872 forged Italian notes, two forged Turkish notes and one forged French note. Twenty-six persons were interrogated or tried in connection with these forgeries.

### Italian workers lose twenty per cent

Italy enforced exchange control restrictions last March. This has cost the hundreds of thousands of Italian workers residing in Switzerland and visiting their homeland every year up to 20 per cent in exchange losses. They can get 245 lira for a Swiss franc north of Chiasso and only 207 lira on the other side of the border. The Italian law prevent them from coming in the country with more than 20,000 lira (about £15). It is easy enough to ignore this regulation and buy lira in Switzerland, but Italians claim that the bureaux de change on the Swiss side have increased their charges by 5 per cent since the new regulations came into force.

In another development, *La Stampa,* the influential Turin daily and Italy's second most important paper, published a special report on the life of Italian workers in Switzerland. Entitled "The sad Sundays of Italian immigrants in the lush suburbs of Zurich", the report centred on workers living in Dietikon, where there are 4,700 Italian residents. Although some workers interviewed praised the material facilities offered by the host country, most of the others complained about working conditions, housing and the lack of understanding and contact with the local population. The greatest complaint was loneliness, which appears to be the big scourge of the immigrant worker.

## SWISS PEASANTS AWARDED A RISE FOR THEIR PRODUCTS

The Federal Council has decided to allow increases of several essential Swiss agricultural products. Milk bought from the producers will be raised from seven to ten per cent a litre and meat will rise by up to 30 per cent a kilo. This decision, which appeared to many observers as an about-turn with respect to the Government's previous stance towards the peasant unions, should for a time stabilise the situation on that front. There had been growing peasant unrest at the low price of milk, in particular, and demonstrations had been staged both in the capital and in several milk producing and processing centres. First reactions by the Swiss Union of Peasants, which had proved the most militant in the price-raising campaign, were of satisfaction although their demands for an overhaul of the system of milk evaluation had not been met.

Announcing the Government's decision, Mr. Ernst Brugger, Head of the Department of Public Economy, said that it had not been in contradiction with Berne's earlier firmness towards the peasant's unions' demands. It had been taken, he said, following a reassessment of their needs which new information had made possible.

## MAY DAY PARADES

The 1st of May was observed by working people all over Switzerland. Demonstrations were staged in the main cities – 1,000 people in Zurich, 4,000 in Basle, 500 in St. Gall, 2,000 in Schaffhausen, 2,000 in Lausanne, 300 in Sion and similar attendances elsewhere. Mr. Hans Peter Tschudi, Head of the Department of the Interior, spoke at the meeting at Schaffhausen. The 1st May in Switzerland was generally placed under the emblem of "participation".


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