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A call for solidarity

Greater solidarity between Europe and the countries of the Third World is the aim of this year's Council of Europe campaign. In Switzerland, the National Commission, presided over by former National Councillor Gabrielle Nanchen (Valais), is responsible for various activities until well into June.

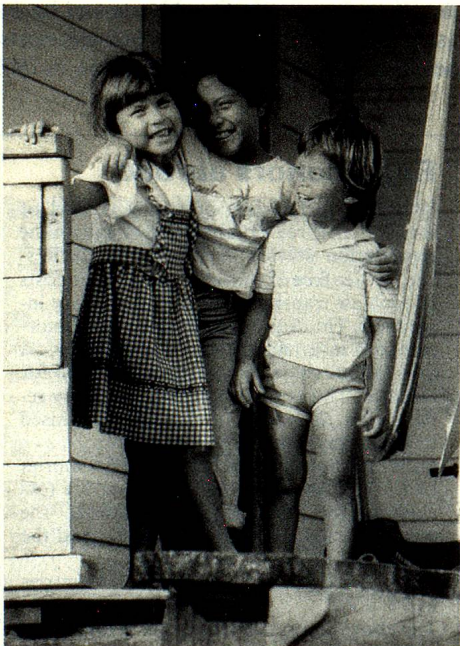
Under the motto «North-South: a future – a common task», the Council of Europe calls for solidarity with the South. The Campaign, which runs from March to June of this year, aims to show the mutual dependence existing between Europe and the countries of the Third World and calls upon peoples and public authorities to grapple more intensively with the problems of the developing countries. For the Council of Europe, a «common European stand, based on solidarity, towards the South is a rational necessity and, moreover, meets a moral precept.» Problems relating to international trade, indebtedness, agriculture, raw materials, the environment, employment, socio-cultural relations and development aid are all up for discussion. A large number of prominent people, among them former Swiss Federal Councillor Kurt Furgler, head the European

Sponsorship Committee which is chaired by King Juan Carlos of Spain. The Campaign is being conducted by special commissions in the various countries. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs charged former Valais National Councillor Gabrielle Nanchen with the presidency of the Swiss commission.

In Switzerland, as elsewhere, activities have been in full swing since March. The very attractive and diversified information spectrum is characterised not only by rational explanatory and instructive features, but also the theatre, acting and music carry the Campaign's message to the people.

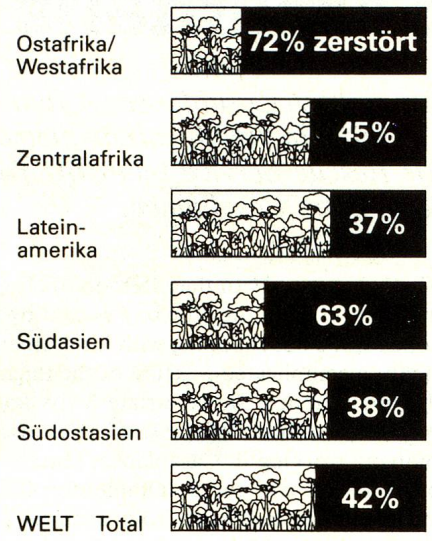
Wide range of features

Besides the Swiss commission's own projects, some notable contributions have been made by the many different kinds of organisations also taking part. Examples are product information broadsheets on the origins of raw materials and consumer goods, a «Diaporama» educational unit on the theme of «mutual dependence», for children, and video films on human rights. A travelling exhibition, in a bus, for trade and technical schools as well as a touring North-South culturemobile of the Pro Helvetia Foundation are on the road in Switzerland. The idea of encounter is certainly made much of: a culture group from Namibia gives performances in several centres in Switzerland; an exchange of trade unions takes place with Senegal; and, under the title «North-South Media Encounter», the creative work of the media of the Third World is being promoted. Swiss radio, too, is one of the organisations participating – with its many contributions. The Maralam theatre group, in which Swiss players and refugees appear together, is on tour in German-speaking Switzerland while a theatre festival in Lugano is devoted to the continent of Africa. The closing stages of the Campaign will be marked by festivities in Biel on 17th June and in St. Gallen on 18th June. JM



Radiant children: symbol for a peaceful world. (Photo: Gérald Baeriswyl)

Ursprüngliche Fläche an tropischem Feucht- und Regenwald = 100%



Quelle: FAO

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Interdependence of industrialised and developing countries is the main theme of the Council of Europe's Campaign. A dramatic example of this mutual dependence is the fate of the tropical humid and rain forests which to some extent form the lungs of our planet. They produce a large proportion of its regenerated oxygen. None the less, destructive lumbering continues, not least because of the fashion-dictated use of tropical luxury timber in the industrialised countries. Every year, some 56,000 square miles of rain forest is destroyed – a deforestation area almost four times as large as Switzerland. (Graphik: Strahm, Warum sie so arm sind. Peter Hammer Verlag.)



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