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HISTORIC EVENT

THE POPE VISITS GENEVA

The Pope, a religious leader deeply concerned about the social problems of our world, was invited by the International Labour Organisation in Geneva to address its 50th Anniversary Congress. This was the original aim of the Pope's trip to Calvin's City. The World Council of Churches, which groups some 280 non-Roman Catholic Churches, has also got its headquarters in Geneva, however. As it would have been inconceivable in such ecumenical times as ours, for the Pope not to visit this institution, its visit was added to the programme. The Pope is also a Head of State, and in this quality was to be greeted both by the Confederation and the City of Geneva. To these must naturally be added the Swiss Catholic Episcopate.

Therefore, the Pope's personal visit to the International Labour Organisation became something very official which set the whole City of Geneva astir.

Special stamps were issued; special postcards portraying the Pope, with Geneva's *jet-d'eau* as backdrop, were printed. The police, expecting tens of thousands of visitors from the Catholic Cantons and neighbouring France had prepared parking spaces outside town for 6,000 cars. Special bus services were to link these car parks to the city. The whole Gustave Ador waterfront was sealed off in expectation of 250 coaches. Palisades were built near the world Council of Churches to contain the crowd. 30,000 people were expected to wait in the park opposite the "Palais des Nations" to greet the Pope, and 100,000 people were expected at the papal mass in the "Parc des Granges" on the other side of the lake. To insure law and order, a thousand soldiers doing their repetition course were called, as well as 250 police from neighbouring Cantons and an untold number of civilian inspectors.

Many of these thorough precautions proved unnecessary: the prepared parking lots remained entirely empty; only 50 coaches lined the Quai Gustave Ador, 6,000 people were present to greet the Pope at the Palais des Nations, and 50,000 attended the evening mass at the "Parc des Granges".

Apart from this somewhat disappointing attendance, the Pope's visit went very well, and the whole programme was executed like clockwork.

The Pope arrived at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 10th June, in a Swissair Coronado bearing the Papal Coat of Arms, and was greeted by Mr. Von Moos, President of the Confederation, accompanied by three more Federal Councillors and a host of federal, local, World Council of Churches and International Labour Organisation officials.

After the speeches of welcome and the respective national anthems of Switzerland and the Vatican (which Mr. Paisley, detained in the neighbouring airport building before being sent back to his native Ireland, could perhaps have heard), the procession headed for the Palais des Nations, where the Pope was to address delegates from a hundred and twenty countries.

In his speech, he said that the meaning of work had to be sought. Work should not be the master of man, nor should his achievements dominate him. This could only be possible if, in constructing his world, man kept a thought for God. Otherwise, the story of the Tower of Babel would inevitably be relived.

It was noon when the Pope left the Palais des Nations and headed for the International Labour Bureau, two minutes' motorcade away, where he conversed with Mr. David A. Morse, President of the International Labour Organisation, and other officials, for half an hour. He then made for the "Hôtel de Ville", in the old town. His motorcade crossed the Mont-Blanc bridge, which was lined with a reasonably dense crowd. It didn't have a good glimpse of the Pope, however, because, for security reasons, he passed by quite fast in a closed car.

At the "Hôtel de Ville", the Pope was officially greeted by the Swiss Confederation and the City of Geneva. Speeches were made, presents exchanged and many people presented to him.

After this, the Pope's suite of twelve went to a reception given by Mr. Morse, whereas the Pope went alone to the nearby parish of St. Nicholas de Fluët, where he had a collation, and took an hour's rest. He was then visited by Mr. Bodmer, famous manuscript collector, who presented the Pope with the oldest known copy of St. Peter's Epistle, and by the old Vatican Swiss guards. Finally, he met the Swiss Catholic Episcopate, which had converged on Geneva for his visit and was led by Switzerland's two cardinals.

At half past four, the Pope left for the World Council of Churches, where he was to stay an hour. He was greeted by the Rev. Eugen C. Blake, Secretary-General of the W.C.C. and by Dr. Wissert'Hooft, his predecessor. He took his place on the platform of the main hall of the W.C.C. headquarters, for the first time in history together with Protestant fellow Christians.

After having listened to the Rev. Blake's welcoming address, he made a very moving speech, in which he praised the World Council's achievements and purpose, and stressed the pain which the disunity of the Church

caused him. For this reason, the Roman Catholic Church was highly interested in the W.C.C., but he felt that, in view of the great theological and pastoral differences which still had to be bridged, the time was not yet ripe for an entry of the Catholic Church in the W.C.C. Lessons were read, and the Lord's prayer was recited in every language represented in the audience. The Pope then went to the chapel for short meditation with the Rev. Blake, after which he was presented to the pastors of Geneva.

At a quarter to six, he left for the mass he was to celebrate in the "Parc des Granges". He crossed the harbour by boat, and met a crowd of 50,000 waiting for him on the lawn of the park. He centred his sermon on Christ's word — "Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth". Communion was ministered to the crowd by some 250 priests in attendance.

The Pope's last lap was to meet Emperor Haile Selassie back at the International Labour Bureau. He invited the Emperor to come and visit him in the Vatican.

After this interview, the Pope headed for the airport, where, after a brief farewell address, he took off in the plane that had brought him to Calvin's city, after what was certainly a well-spent day.

P.M.B.

NEWS FROM THE CAPITAL

The Federal Labour Office reported a continuing shortage of labour last month. At the end of April, the total number of totally unemployed reached 134 (178 the month before). The number of vacant posts has also increased during April and is reported to have reached 4,147.

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The Federal Council has appointed Dr. Karl Schmid, Lecturer in German language and literature at the Federal Institute of Technology, as new President of the Swiss Science Council, in succession to the late Prof. Dr. Max Imboden. His appointment will begin on 1st November; the Vice-President, Dr. A. Labhardt, Neuchâtel, will continue to act *ad interim*.

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An agreement on social security has been signed between Switzerland and Turkey, one with Germany on the protection of statements of origin and other geographic declarations, and another one with Germany on traffic accidents.

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Switzerland was represented at the European Conference of PTT Ministers (Post and Telecommunications) in Munich. Federal Councillor Bonvin went to the meeting of European Communications Ministers in Stockholm. Monsieur Olivier Long, Director-General of GATT, has gone to Ottawa

and Washington to have talks on important economic problems. The Federal Political Department announced that the Swiss Ambassador in Peking, Dr. O. Rossetti, would pay a visit to Hanoi.

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During the present Session of Parliament, the National Council accepted

by 88 to 80 votes the proposal by the Government to sign the European Convention on Human Rights, without waiting for the introduction of women's suffrage at federal level. This has caused storms of protest by women's organisations.

(Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Will all Swiss interested in **shooting** get in touch immediately with Mr. P. Neher, c/o Ciba Clayton Ltd., Manchester M11 4AR, with regard to taking part in the 6th Radio World Shoot in conjunction with the "Tir Fédéral" in Switzerland. The shoot will take place at 3 p.m. on 12th July at Mere, Knutsford, Cheshire.



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