

Bulletin #100 - Oct 2016



A free journal published monthly by The Churchill Centre

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Our Man in Zurich

Conference Commemorates 70th Anniversary of Churchill's
Historic "Let Europe Arise!" Speech
Report by WERNER VOGT



Randolph Churchill admires plaque dedicated to his great grandfather

Seventy years after his visit to Switzerland and more than fifty years after his death, Sir Winston Churchill is still vividly remembered in Switzerland. This

year several events were staged in Zurich to remember Churchill's 1946 visit and the famous speech he delivered here at the university. The Faculty of History in cooperation with the university's Europa Institute organised a historical colloquium to commemorate the event.

With the kind help of Allen Packwood, Director of the Churchill Archives Centre, a group of eminent Churchillians gathered in the Aula (the Main Auditorium) of the University of Zurich to discuss the implications of Churchill's visionary address in which he proposed "a kind of United States of Europe" and ended with the injunction, "let Europe arise!" The fact that British voters had just voted to leave the European Union only weeks before the conference, along with the fact that Switzerland has never joined the EU, added extra spice to the discussions.

Professor Michael Hengartner, Rector of the University, welcomed the guests in the Aula, after which Allen Packwood, Dr. Werner Vogt, and Lord Watson of Richmond explained the context of the speech. Under the chairmanship of Professor David Reynolds, Felix Klos and Dr. Andrew Roberts discussed the significance of Churchill's speech at the time that he delivered it.

In a panel chaired by Bridget Kendall, Lord Powel of Bayswater, Dr Andrew Roberts, Laura Sandys, and Lord Watson of Richmond then went on to analyse the importance of Churchill's Zurich speech in today's context. Sir Winston's great grandson, Randolph Churchill, wrapped up the session up with a summary of the importance of Switzerland in his grandfather's life. After the academic sessions, the focus turned political. Swiss President Johann Schneider-Ammann addressed the audience as did Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the EU Commission.

On Friday, 23 September further events took place in Zurich, which were organised by the Circle Zurich Friends of Winston Churchill. Most notably, the Mayor of Zurich, Corine Mauch, and Silvia Steiner, a member of the government of the Canton of Zurich, set the stage for a keynote speech by the former Chancellor of Austria, Alfred Gusenbauer, who proved to be an excellent connoisseur of Sir Winston Churchill's life.

To learn more about the conference and Churchill and Zurich, please [CLICK HERE](#).

***Werner Vogt is the author of Winston Churchill und die Schweiz (2015).
His article about “Churchill and Switzerland” appears in **Finest
Hour #173.*****

Source: http://www.winstonchurchill.org/publications/chartwell-bulletin/bulletin-100-oct-2016/our-man-in-zurich?mc_cid=4b93cb8420&mc_eid=2109c9a43f

Further links :

- Historical colloquium, 19 September 2016 : http://mas-applied-history.ch/wp-content/uploads/Churchill_Zurich_Speech_1946-2016.pdf
- Video stream of the colloquium: <https://cast.switch.ch/vod/clips/2e9meldhxg/streaming.html>
- Video stream of Swiss President Schneider-Ammann's and EU President Jean-Claude Juncker's speeches: <https://cast.switch.ch/vod/clips/1zgg9tre2a/streaming.html>
- Article about commemorative light show: <http://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/let-europe-arise-in-bild-und-ton-foto-light-show-mit-musik-erinnert-an-winston-churchills-besuch-in-zuerich-ld.118543>
- Swiss national TV published a video of 1946: <http://www.srf.ch/news/schweiz/churchill-und-europa-gedenken-an-die-visionaere-zuercher-rede>
- Further links: Zurich speech in English and German translation as well as in a historic recording: <http://www.churchill-in-zurich.ch/en/churchill/en-churchills-zurcher-rede/>
- The background of Churchill's visit to Switzerland in the English translation of an article by Werner Vogt in NZZ: <http://figures-of-speech.com/2016/09/churchill.htm>