

WHAT GOES ON IN GENEVA

Julius Caesar wrote about Geneva. John Calvin lived and preached there. Between the two World Wars, it became famous as the seat of the League of Nations and, in a sense, the capital of the world. It is natural to wonder what traffic crosses Caesar's bridge today, who worships in Calvin's cathedral, what use is made of the League's marble Palace of Nations — in fact, what goes on in this charming Swiss city by the shores of Lac Léman.

The Genevese go on living there, of course. Not many of them frequent the Palais des Nations, but they cross the bridges on their bicycles, go occasionally to the churches, make watches and precision instruments, eat *fondue*, and, with quite un-Calvinistic enthusiasm, drink wine or coffee at sidewalk cafes, watch lively shows at a dozen night clubs, enjoy sumptuous meals in the restaurants and flock to the theatres and concerts and to the casino. All the same, when the international colony packed up during the war the Genevese wondered who would fill the empty apartments and international office buildings, who would provide custom for the shops and business enterprises that had been expanded to meet the needs of League of Nations officials and delegates.

By the end of the War, when the United Nations established its headquarters in New York and every other city in the world was suffering from a housing-shortage, hundreds of apartments could be had for the asking in Geneva by anyone who shared the tax-burden. But this condition was short-lived. A housing crisis duly arrived. During recent years, miles of new buildings have had to be erected in Geneva and the city now has a serious accommodation shortage.

Although the United Nations established itself in New York, the Palais des Nations, which had housed the League, became the European office of the United Nations. One wing is a library; another large part is occupied by conference rooms, and what remains is office space for the small secretariat that services conferences and other United Nations work in Europe. Traditions of hospitality and neutrality make Geneva a favourite conference centre, as do its central location in Europe, compact size, agreeable climate and easy living conditions. The Economic and Social Council has often met in Geneva; the Trusteeship Council held one session there; many of the functional commissions of ECOSOC meet in the Palais des Nations; some of the Specialized Agencies regularly hold their conferences in Geneva; and the conference rooms have also been occupied by the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Permanent Central Opium Board and Narcotic Drugs Supervisory Body, the International Civil Service Advisory Board, the Ad Hoc Committee on Prisoners of War, the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, and the Advisory Committee to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to mention only a few of the long list of United Nations bodies.

The Palais des Nations is also the home of the Economic Commission for Europe and the seat of numerous conferences of that organization and its subsidiary bodies. The same building houses the Interim Commission for the International Trade Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Permanent Central Opium Board, the World Health Organization and many United Nations bodies which use Geneva as a temporary headquarters. With so many new inhabitants, the building which served the League of Nations became greatly overcrowded, and eventually a new wing was added to provide office space for the World Health Organization.

Geneva is also the home of the International Labour Organization, which is completing an addition to its fine building; the International Telecommunication Union; and finally, the newest of the Specialized Agencies, the World Meteorological Organization. All these bodies have their officials, their sub-bodies, and their conferences.