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Salute to the spring in Berne

WITH the awakening of spring in Switzerland each May, the hills and valleys around Berne burst forth with life on one particular weekend.

More than 14,000 marchers, the youngest still in father's backpack, arrive from all over the world to take part in a 20, 30 or 40km hike one Saturday and Sunday.

It's all voluntary, no red-tape or rank, just a souvenir medal at the end to tell the world the hoofer did his or her desired stretch.

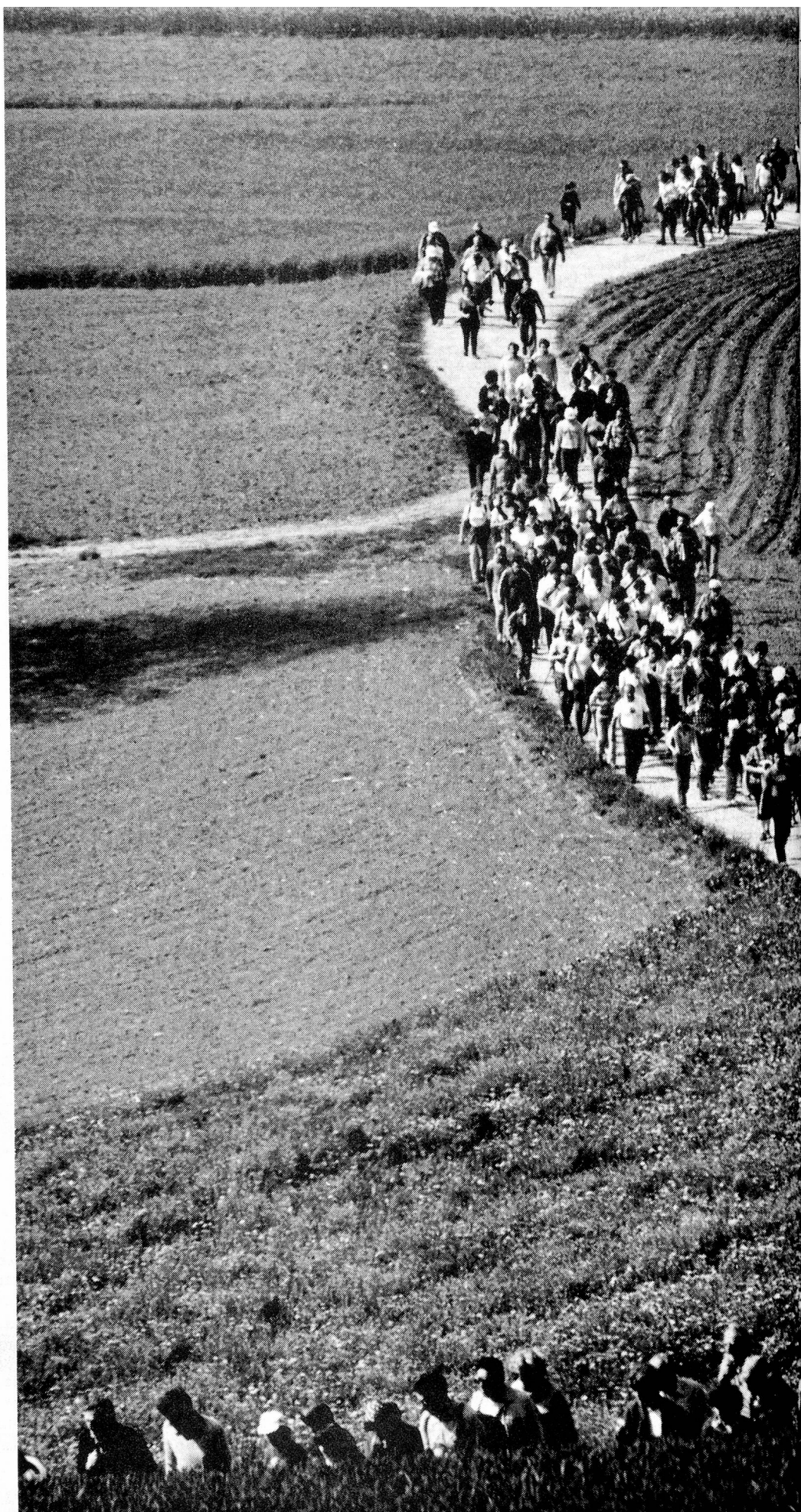
Naturally we're talking about the Swiss Two-Day March, a former military exercise now become a popular sporting event and annual get-together in Berne.

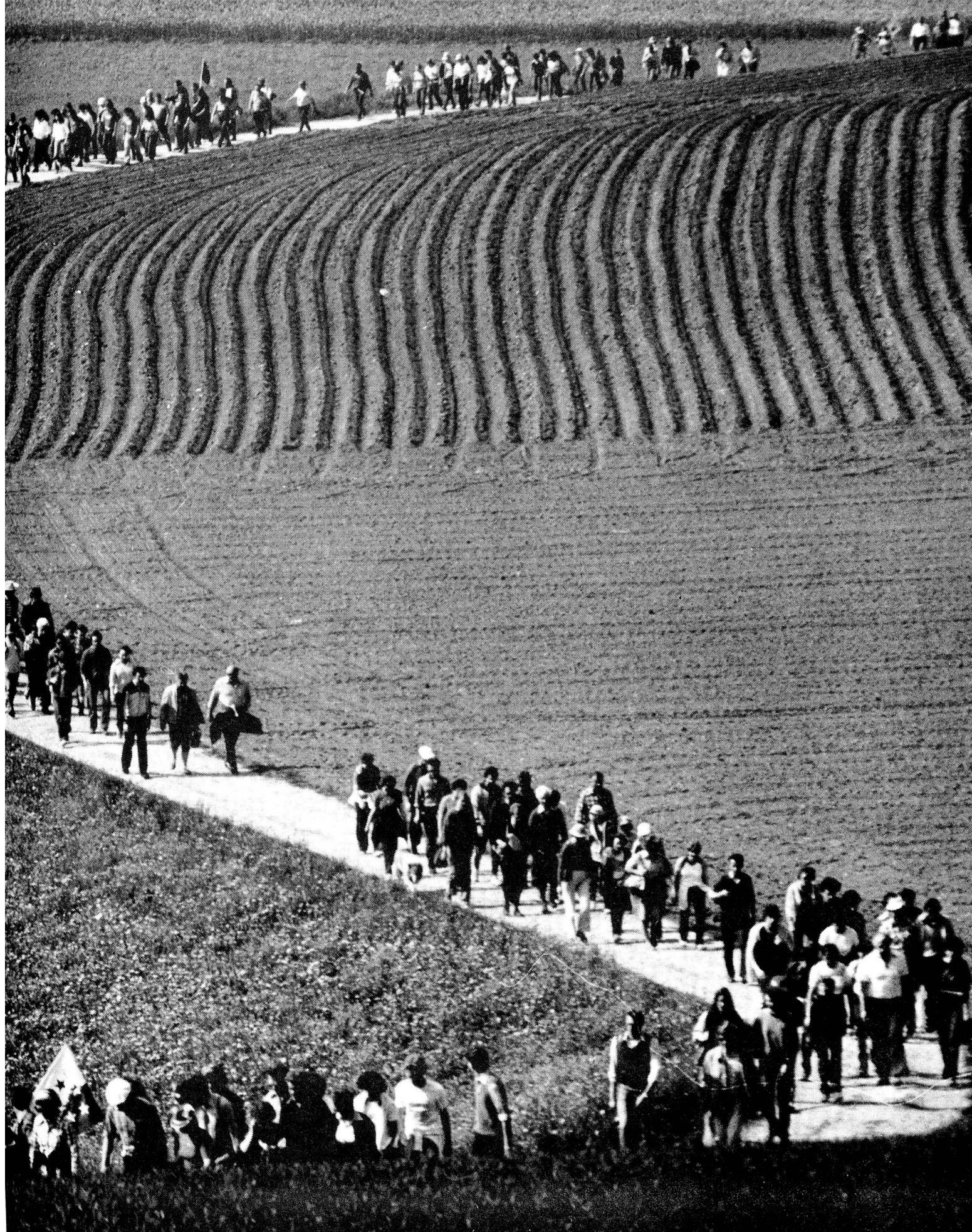
What began as the Bernese "rifle run", a race with carried weapons, is today characterised by just plain people who like to walk ... and talk.

A feeling of meeting a challenge together, and of voluntary accomplishment, leads to the type of comradeship not often found in everyday life.

And that alone is a good reason to make your reservations for Berne on the weekend of May 19-20.

● More pictures on Page 18.







Music sets the pace for the two day event

Photos by Dölf Reist, Interlaken

