

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1940)
Heft: 979

Artikel: Repatriation of Swiss
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-694503>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 02.04.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

historic spot, which is the symbol of our independence, to let you know my thoughts and to talk to you as soldier to soldier. The preservation of Switzerland is at stake. Soldiers of 1940, in this very place let us vow not to forget the teaching and the spirit of our history while trying to grasp the significance of the present and endeavouring to visualise the future of our country! If there is one place where we can hear the voice of the Past, it is surely here, and if we try to look into the future with a clear eye, we should be able to overcome the difficulties of to-day as we overcame the trials and obstacles of bygone days. Difficulty is not new to us; the authors of the Charter of the Confederation of 1291 had similar trials in mind when they spoke of the craftiness of their times."

At the same time the General read the following Ordre de Jour to his Officers, which was to be given to the Army on August 1st:

"On August 29th, 1939, the Federal Council called the troops to arms, and a few days later ordered general mobilisation. As the same time the Government handed over to the Army the task of protecting the long-established independence of Switzerland. This independence has been respected by our neighbours up till now and we shall see to it that this is the case to the very end of this war.

. . . . As long as millions of armed men fight each other in Europe and as long as huge forces may at any moment attack Switzerland, the Army has to remain at its post. Whatever may come the fortifications you have built will constitute a measure of defence, and our sacrifices will not have been in vain because we still keep our fate in our hands.

. . . . Do not lend your ear to those who, out of sheer ignorance or vile intention, publish defeatist reports and try to sow the seeds of doubt. Do not lose faith in our right to live our own life, in our own way. Do not lose confidence in our strength to resist, should this become necessary.

. . . . Soldiers! On this 1st of August, 1940, remember that the positions which have been allotted to you are those where your arms and your courage may best be used to the advantage of our country."

REPATRIATION OF SWISS.

Unfortunately a last-minute hitch prevented the departure of this "convoy" last Tuesday. It is still hoped — and all possible efforts are being made — to overcome the difficulty so that the party may leave by the end of this week.

Swiss news in the English press is this week mainly occupied with the regrettable incidents caused by the indiscretions of British aircraft.

An article in the "*Economist*," August 17th, presents a somewhat gloomy picture. We have not received any papers since the French collapse so that we cannot say whether the supposed "muzzling" of the Swiss press is apparent.

After the Franco-German armistice, the President of the Swiss Confederation broadcast a message which appeared to foreshadow the establishment of something approaching an authoritarian regime, as the only means of dealing with the new situation. So far, however, no great changes have taken place, except that the Press, in compliance with the wishes of Berlin, no longer criticises the Nazi regime, but expresses admiration for Germany and contempt for Britain. The publication of news of British origin, even when official, is cut down to almost nothing. The only drastic economic measure has been the passing of an Act providing for a capital levy ranging from 1½ to 4½ per cent.

The anxiety which was felt about the food supply at first has been diminished by the maintenance of Italy's friendly attitude. Imports through Genoa are, however, impeded by lack of rolling stock. Imports through France, after an interval of several weeks, are being slowly resumed. Meanwhile stocks are said to be sufficient for a year and food rationing has so far only been applied to edible oils.

The fuel situation is a much greater cause for anxiety. The petrol ration has been reduced by two-thirds and the price is double that of a year ago. Domestic coal rationing is extremely drastic and the use of hot water is only allowed once a week. By this means industrial supplies are fairly well maintained.

There was at first a tendency to hoard bank notes, and a consequent rise in money rates, but an appeal to the public has met with a very satisfactory response and large sums have been returned to the banks.

The older men, representing about one-fifth of the army, who have already been demobilised, have for the most part been absorbed into industry, but it is feared that, as demobilisation proceeds, a severe economic crisis may arise. Export trade is at a very low level, since Switzerland is cut off from most of her markets. Italy has concluded a trade agreement with Switzerland, and negotiations are being opened with Germany, with a view to readjusting the system of payments, transfers and commercial exchanges. These are likely to be accompanied by German demands for the delivery to the Reich of goods imported into Switzerland and for an artificial rate of exchange. The Swiss, however, are confident that they have certain bargaining advantages which they intend to press home to the full. The Germans, on the other hand, who are watching the difficulties of the Swiss with interest, feel that it is only a matter of time before Switzerland will so far lose her economic dependence that she will be compelled to "join the new European

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"
at every meal—for Health!

system." The next few months will probably decide this issue.

* * *

The "British Weekly" reproduces an exchange of greetings between the two churches on the occasion of our National Day:—

A group of British Christians recently telegraphed the following message to Switzerland:—

On eve of Swiss National Day British Christians send fraternal greetings to fellow Christians of Switzerland; the liberties of both nations date from the thirteenth century, the British from Magna Charta, the Swiss from the founding of the Confederation. British churches remember gratefully many links of fellowship since Reformation times. The two voices mentioned in Wordsworth's poem, one of the mountains, one of the sea, are still sounding the claims of Christian liberty of thought and conscience.

The message was given wide circulation by the Swiss Evangelical Church Union, and Professor Keller has telegraphed in reply:—

Swiss Protestants express their warmest thanks for the fraternal message of British Protestants on August 1st, when the origin of our liberties was celebrated by the whole people, conscious more than ever of this unique treasure of our history. Faithful to these historical traditions, Swiss Protestants feel indissolubly bound together with their fellow Christians in Great Britain and wherever followers of Christ stand and work for His kingdom of liberty and justice.

* * *

Another discovery is reported in "The Times," August 17th. Though it seems in the first instance to benefit humanity we have a strong suspicion that the war gods will soon adapt it to their own nefarious purposes:—

After patient researches and experiments, several of them on himself, Dr. Gerard C. Savoy, of Lausanne, has produced a preparation which is the most efficient known antidote to yperite (mustard gas). It is already being produced in great quantities for public use and is easy to employ.

It is simply applied on the affected part. Fifty per cent. of the yperite present in the wound is destroyed after one hour and 100 per cent. after 10 hours. In a few hours, it is claimed, all that can be seen on the skin is some spots, which quickly heal.

* * *

Here are a few lines from "The Star," August 15th, about an old friend of our mountains who recently celebrated his 80th anniversary:—

But for the war, Sir William Ellis, G.B.E., D.Eng., of "Weetwood," Sheffield, would now have been in Switzerland preparing to mark his 80th birthday, which he will celebrate on August 20th, by climbing 13,800 feet to the top of the Jungfrau, as he did on his 75th birthday.

He still hopes, however, to spend the day indulging in his favourite pastime of mountaineering,

for when our reporter called to offer congratulations on the approaching attainment of this notable anniversary, Sir William was on the point of departure for the Lake District, with its charming facilities for this inspiring sport.

Yet at this anxious time for both countries he will be in the thoughts of many friends in Switzerland — fellow members of the Swiss Alpine Club and of the community of guides who have known him for 40 years.

Recently, as a mark of appreciation of the help and comradeship he has had from guides during expeditions, often of danger, he gave £4,000 to endow a Fund for the benefit of old or injured guides or their widows.

A VISIT TO THE ZOO.

Being tired of endless discussions and arguments about the war I thought that a visit to the Zoo would make a pleasant change. As George Elliot said: "Animals are such agreeable friends, they ask no questions and pass no criticism."

True enough, the visit turned out to be most interesting and proved an agreeable diversion and entertainment, despite the fact that our old friends the elephants had been evacuated to Whipsnade and that the Aquarium had been closed down for the duration.

Otherwise "Business as usual" seems to be the motto of the Zoo. The great attractions are still the lions, which applies to the king of beasts as well as to the sea lions; the tigers, panthers and leopards — being the spitfires of the Zoo —, the monkey family, the bears, both the diving and climbing variety, the beasts of burden, the beasts of prey and last but not least the winged creatures of wonderful variety, from the bird of paradise displaying his finery to the pelican with his "how the hell he can."

And after spending hours in examination and contemplation I realised what a lot there is to see and wondered how much I had missed. I had been advised not to follow the maddening crowd but to make an exploration of my own and to observe and study the less spectacular but none the less interesting inmates, such as the busy ants, the creepy crawlers, the beautiful wart hog and the nimble tortoise.

As a Swiss, I naturally paid a visit to the graceful and surefooted chamoix, some of which surveyed the scene from the lofty pinnacles of the Zoo Alps, and I wondered whether they, like myself, were yearning for the real thing in all its vastness and grandeur.

Needless to say, I did not neglect the horned creatures, such as the buffaloes and bisons, nor could I possibly miss the long-necked giraffe. As usual, I was thankful that the neck of my inquisitive neighbour the notorious Mrs. X., was of normal size, otherwise I would have to add a good many more inches to my garden wall.

Incidentally, there are quite a number of nosy Parkers and "Cooper's snoopers" at the Zoo, such as the waddling and shuffling Penguins, full of insatiable