

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: - (1941)
Heft: 987

Artikel: Our coal shortage
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687227>

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: 30.03.2025

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

All Switzerland watched with baited breath to see how the Bundesrat would react to this ultimatum of a movement which, however unpopular in Switzerland, might expect the firm support of strong neighbours.

The Federal Council's reply was to forbid it completely and "all movements intended to replace it."

Most of the leaders of the group and other groups like it who were not arrested and imprisoned for subversive activities have fled to Germany, whence they write pamphlets and articles attacking Switzerland.

In the Swiss Nazi movement one can recognize the same tactics that brought the fall of so many countries in Europe. Pretending to be a small persecuted minority, the pro-Nazi bearers of an intolerant revolutionary doctrine wished to destroy all existing social forms and set themselves up as supreme masters.

The same appeal to tribal instincts was made in Switzerland as in other countries. The Jewish question was used as a wedge for German domination. Nazi pamphlets stated that the Jews were not among the "oath comrades" (Eidgenossen) who swore "mutual aid in defense of justice and liberty," on the mountain meadow of Rütli in 1291 and hence should be persecuted.

They forgot, however, that the Rütli oath was a reaction against German domination. The same propaganda against the domination of international finance and "hidden powers" was present.

The Swiss were not to be led from their own traditional path, however. Without sentiment or fear they have defended their national individuality more successfully than any other European nation. Perhaps they are being spared through Nazification and invasion partially because their poverty in natural resources does not make them a worthy booty. However, a good part of their freedom must be attributed to their own unbending character and the strong measures of their government in defense of democracy.

OUR COAL SHORTAGE.

(From the "Economist," April 5th.)

The Swiss winter is not yet ended, and coal for domestic heating is already scarce. Switzerland in normal times needs 350,000 truck loads of coal for her own consumption; 150,000 truck loads are required for heating, 100,000 for industry, and 70,000 for gas production. In normal years, nearly 53 per cent. came from Germany, 16 per cent. from France, 13 per cent. from Holland, 7 per cent. from Britain, 4 per cent. from Belgium, and the remaining 7 per cent. from Poland, U.S.A. and other countries. Since last winter, all sources of coal supplies — except Germany and Jugoslavia — were one after the other cut off, and Switzerland had to rely solely on German imports. These totalled 87,000 truck loads for 1940-41, and the deficit was about 180,000 truck loads, thanks to the stores accumulated during 1939 and the beginning of 1940. Measures were, therefore, taken last winter to cut down private coal consumption so as to enable the normal working of industry. The allowance of coal for heating was reduced to 60 per cent. of normal needs; and home resources were used to the utmost, but electricity, wood and peat could not fill the gap. The result was that new restrictions were made for the present winter, when private houses were only allowed 40 per cent. of normal consumption. December and

January were abnormally cold; and although workshops, offices and schools are closed on Saturdays, although school Christmas holidays were lengthened, and although heating was calculated to maintain a temperature of 60 deg. Fahrenheit at the highest in two rooms, and 45 deg. in the others, stocks dwindled rapidly and the Government made it clear that no further coal rations would be allowed. A small extra allowance was nevertheless made, but at the same time it was announced that heating would everywhere be stopped on March 15th.

According to an agreement concluded last autumn, Germany undertakes to deliver about one million tons of coal to Switzerland at a price higher by nearly 50 per cent. than the current price in Germany. Part of it is to be paid in gold and another part in land products such as cattle, pigs, cheese and other dairy products. The agreement should to some extent ease the situation of cattle breeders, as, owing to the stoppage of fodder imports, the slaughtering of about one-third of the cows and of one-fifth of the pigs had been contemplated. German coal deliveries were fairly regular for some time, but in December they were stopped, and Swiss importers were informed that coal and coke deliveries would provisionally cease for an indefinite period unless the Swiss railways could place all the necessary rolling stock at Germany's disposal. The Swiss had hitherto supplied only a proportion of the necessary trucks and were reluctant to send more to Germany. They apparently complied with Germany's desire and supplied her with more rolling stock. Deliveries have begun again, but on a small scale, and if they cannot be increased there will be a shortage next winter, with the result that further restrictions will be necessary.

Dearth of coal is only one of the hardships the Swiss are suffering. At present, each person is entitled in a month to 24 oz. of flour, maize and semola, 16½ oz. of wheat and barley products, 26½ oz. of fat and oil, 24 oz. of sugar, 16½ oz. of rice, 16½ oz. of macaroni, 8 oz. of dried peas and beans, and 9½ oz. of butter; the sale of meat, fresh milk and cheese remains unrestricted.

A new and great effort is to be made to increase home production and to double the area under cultivation. The present 440,000 acres under cultivation enable the feeding of half the population, and it is estimated that another 300,000 or 400,000 acres may be added. Thanks to the increase in the cultivated area decided in 1939, the yield of agriculture, which was 1,289 million francs in 1939, rose to 1,491 millions in 1940, and it is expected to exceed 2,000 millions in 1941. The main difficulty is the lack of labour. The Government has consequently issued a decree enabling it to make land work compulsory for several classes of persons: the unemployed; persons who have no special activity but are physically fit; and those who have some knowledge of land work.

DO NOT POST S.O. ABROAD.

From complaints received from the Permit Branch of the Ministry of Information it would appear that some subscribers have posted our publication direct to Switzerland. We wish to state again that copies can only be sent abroad from this office under our official permit.