

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: - (1943)

Heft: 1015

Rubrik: News at random

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: Clerkenwell 2321/2.

Published Monthly at 23, LEONARD STREET, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 25 — No. 1015.

LONDON, AUGUST, 27th, 1943.

PRICE 6d.

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Swiss National Day has been celebrated with the ringing of church bells, festival fires on peaks, and in Berne with the solemn reception of the 20-year old into citizenship. Federal President Celio attended the National Day festivities at Bellinzona where he delivered the official oration, (reproduced in another column). In a patriotic speech at St. Gall, Federal Councillor Dr. Kobelt stated that the immunity of our country was mainly due to the trust of all the belligerents in the soundness of our political constitution and the faultless neutrality attitude of our government ignoring both threats and allurements.

* * *

The Swiss colony in Lisbon celebrated the 1st of August in a singular manner: our compatriots assembled on the Swiss steamer Chasseral which happened to be anchoring in the harbour.

* * *

The American Radio broadcast a special programme on August 1st under the title "Hail Switzerland." Apart from a short retrospect dealing with our independance, a selection of Swiss popular songs was followed by an address by Minister Bruggmann, at whose residence in Washington about 150 compatriots celebrated the occasion.

* * *

On August 3rd, 1943, the Federal decree according to which the Swiss Federal Council has the right to deprive unworthy Swiss living abroad, who have acted against the interests of the Confederation, of their Swiss citizenship has for the first time been put into effect. Major Leonhard from Basle (living in Frankfurt a.M.) and Max Burri, from Lucerne, both previously condemned "*in contumaciam*" for high treason are from August 3rd no longer considered as Swiss citizens. The Swiss Radio adds that they will thus be prevented from shielding their subversive activities behind the cloak of Swiss citizenship.

* * *

The text of the reply to the note about war criminals addressed to the Federal Council has so far

not been published, but in Swiss official circles it is maintained that Switzerland will exercise her right of asylum in conformity with the best interests of the country. The attitude of the Federal Government is strongly supported by the press and here are a few extracts we have so far come across:

"*Der Bund*" — "Considering that no concrete case exists, that only possibilities are now envisaged, the British Note and President Roosevelt's statement assume the nature of a warning and of pressure — a step unusual towards a State with which friendly and peaceful relations are maintained.

"Switzerland is not called upon either now or in the future, to give any judgment on the question of responsibility for the war. It belongs to Switzerland's best traditions that the right of asylum should be interpreted in a generous fashion."

"*Gazette de Lausanne*" — "We should lose one of the most essential privileges of an independant State if we agreed to bow to foreign interference in this sphere."

"*Winterthur Tagblatt*" — "The question of whether the Swiss right of sanctuary ends cannot and must not be influenced by foreign desires. Whatever may be the political creed of strangers knocking at the door, Switzerland will not give or refuse admission at foreign behest."

"*Basler National Zeitung*" — "Since when are the war aims of a combatant party binding upon neutrals?"

"*Volksrecht*" — "Those who acknowledged neither tolerance nor right of sanctuary and who flooded other countries with refugees, perhaps secretly hoping thereby to weaken the internal strength of those countries, cannot simply expect the traditional right of sanctuary to be exercised on their behalf. Each

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu mardi le 7 Septembre à 7h.15 et sera précédée d'un dîner à 6h. précises au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal. Démissions.
Admissions. Divers.

"The English in Switzerland"

sera le sujet d'une Conférence par Mons. Arnold Lunn.

Les Membres sont priés de s'inscrire pour le dîner par écrit au plus tard le 4 Septembre auprès de Mons. P. A. Moehr, Hon. Sec., Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C.2. Prière de s'abstenir de téléphoner.

LE COMITE.

country's individual interests give it the right to treat 'undesirable aliens' as such."

"*La Sentinelle*" (it should be mentioned that this paper has repeatedly been reprimanded by the Army Censor and even temporarily suspended for un-neutral statements) — "It is Britain who is responsible for the tremendous reversal now apparent in the world situation. She has stood fast against all logical hopes, facing the most formidable armed coalition the world has ever seen and taking terrible blows without giving in."

"If Britain had capitulated in 1940 Switzerland to-day would be little more than a geographical expression. It would be unjust and ungrateful to forget this."

"*Berner Tagwacht*" — "The right of granting sanctuary is our own affair. We decide who is worthy and who is not. However, we have refused sanctuary to many worthy people during the war, and before that. Let us hope that no one in Switzerland will be in favour of sanctuary being granted to those having to answer for war crimes. They had courage enough to commit the crime; we hope they will also have the courage to answer for themselves. They should not bring any neutral country which they have often mocked, into difficulties by seeking protection here. This war itself is a crime, the greatest for over a century, and many cruelties and crimes have been committed, largely in the name of a new morality and a new justice, which cynically despised former conceptions."



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Cantonal

The cantonal employment exchange of Lucerne states that on July 10th, for the first time since over fifteen years, not a single unemployed was registered.

Lt. Ludwig Zweifel has been elected to the seat of the late Dr. Gallati in the National Council; the new National Councillor is 55 and a manufacturer at Netstal (Glarus) of which place he has been Gemeindepräsident from 1926 to 1941.

In Solothurn the birth of a little girl has given rise to protracted legal proceedings. When the father registered the newcomer in the name of Marisa the clerk of the registry refused to enter this name on the ground that it was not a proper or recognised appellation. The paterfamilias insisted and the matter occupied the time of the Regierungsrat. Careful enquiries were made which established that the name Marisa actually appeared in some old birth registries. The authorities in Berne were consulted and their considered judgment was to the effect that an abbreviation or diminutive of a current name was not permissible; in addition the present instance constituted a mutilation. The baby's family remained adamant and the only way out of the dilemma was an appeal to the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne. Our highest court upheld the attitude of the father stating that an uncommon name could be refused only if it was likely to prove detrimental to third persons or to the child's future adding that the generally accepted list of christian names did not exclude modern additions.

Dr. Justus Stöcklin died in Basle at the age of 84. For many decades a teacher of arithmetics at Liestal he has published a number of school books on this particular subject which earned him a reputation far beyond the Swiss frontiers.

Zurzach, in the canton Aargau, is supplementing the official pay of its burghers serving in the army and auxiliary forces by a daily bonus of 30 centimes.

The Regierungsrat of Frauenfeld has directed that school teachers and all others employed in the educational and child welfare services are to be examined periodically for indications of tuberculosis.

Eugene Failletaz died in Chexbres at the age of 70. He was closely identified with agricultural and commercial developments in the canton Vaud and a recognised authority in trade matters; for nearly twenty-five years he was without interruption a member of the Grand Conseil. His life interest centred in the creation of the "Comptoir Suisse" in Lausanne.

Anatole Jobin died in Lausanne at the age of 82. A well-known musician and music publisher, he popularised Jaques-Dalcroze whose works were first edited and published by him.

The population of Le Bouvret, in the Canton of Valais, have erected on the place where a British bomber crashed some time ago a huge cross made of a fir tree which was felled by the falling aircraft.

The village of Hauterive, situated between Neuchâtel and St. Blaise, celebrated on August 1st the 800th anniversary; a document from the year 1143 mentions this place for the first time under the name "Altariva."

Army

General Guisan, in an Order of the Day to the Army, said: "The war again threatens to approach our country. We might see ourselves induced to increase our defensive measures from one day to the next. Our efforts of the past four years have not been in vain. With determination, we are looking forward."

* * *

The army command has issued a warning that it is a punishable offence to wear army uniform when not actually on military service; cloth rationing has prompted soldiers and members of the auxiliary services to don military garb in civil life.

Traffic

"Modern Transport," August 14th reports that both the Canton and town of Zurich are studying the possibility of developing the aerodrome at Dubendorf. It is expected that runways 2½km. long will be built for transport planes; the plan of a new airport is also being studied. The Canton of Geneva has considerably extended its airfield at Cointrin. A concrete runway 1km. long by 50 metres wide is being constructed and will ensure the take-off of larger planes. An air station is being built. The Canton and city of Berne are also studying a new airport plan, the future of which they are trying to ensure by reconciling it with the Swiss Federal plan for an inter-continental airport. The town of Lausanne is about to begin work on the building of a new airport at Ecublens; the site chosen is stated to be ideal and the installation will meet the requirements of all kinds of air traffic. The Basle authorities are thinking of building an airport where the Hard Forest now stands. Runways 1½km. in length could be built on this site.

On account of pressure on our space the "News at Random" have had to suffer an unavoidable curtailment.

SPEECH DELIVERED BY FEDERAL PRESIDENT CELIO ON AUGUST 1st, 1943.

(English version issued by the B.B.C.)

The flag of the Confederation and those of the Cantons are already flying in the twilight. From over our hills the church bells will ring out a joyful anthem for us. The mass of our citizens will take part in commemorating the wise and brave men who founded our country 652 years ago. Beyond our frontiers, other banners have been raised. Other bonfires are being lit — but tragically. Other bells are ringing — but mournfully. Elsewhere, crowds gather too, but in fear. Can I express better the emotion which fills us then in these simple and clear words: "Praise be unto You, Kind Providence! Thank you, generous ancestors, for giving us so privileged a Fatherland! More than in the past let it live within us, with our conviction that all the discipline of the Swiss soldier and all our renunciations do not sufficiently pay for the happiness which we enjoy, in comparison with the sacrifices, the discipline and the misfortune of others. Realising this to-day, we repeat our oath."

The war, which has spread from the Russian plains to the African coasts, swings back more and more against our Continent which has been set on fire. Will it accomplish its utter destruction? I do not know. One thing, however, I do know: that we are living in the midst of a giant fortress, free, but surrounded by the burning rings of fighting peoples. It must be understood that the hope of peace, the hope that it is either imminent or at least approaching, is premature despite recent events. The longer this war, the more we must improve our military, political and economic strength of resistance. As to military resistance, we are lucky enough to have a good — I should almost like to say, an excellent — defence organisation, if it were permitted to use superlatives in military matters. As far as our military resistance is concerned, we are prepared for any eventuality. For this I must address a word of recognition, of praise and gratitude, to the general, officers and men of our beloved army. Politically: we may say that we possess the respect of all peoples. This is the reward of a healthy, correct conception and a watchful complete observance of neutrality. I wish to impress upon you the following thought. While the nations at war honour their fatherland by heroic fighting, neutral countries do the same by adhering to an honourable neutrality. The position in the economic field is the same. Modern, improved and revised methods of fighting extend the war to the economic field also. Every day which passes tells on our reserves. But as we refuse to believe that the powers which, even before the outbreak of war, recognised Swiss neutrality might fail to take it into account to-day in the economic field, we do not succumb to pessimism, but maintain our confidence and our hope.

People of Switzerland, remember that the greatest and most secure wealth of your country's economic resistance is based on your reason, on the work of your hands, your respect of the law, your thrift and your hard soil. You understand me and you will act accordingly and avoid destruction.

Confederates, soon the shadows of night will spread over our country. In our homes there will be peace and silence. Tomorrow at dawn, God's resplendent sun will show us that our world has remained intact — our houses, our fields, our schools, hospitals, churches and factories. The whole country is intact (sic). Faced with this vision — sweet for us, but tragic for others — I promise with you to become something better, more human and just. Thus we shall have rightly celebrated the country's anniversary and justified to ourselves and other nations the fact that Switzerland still deserves to survive. Long live the Fatherland!

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