

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: - (1961)

Heft: 1396

Nachruf: Walter Meier

Autor: Stauffer, A.

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WALTER MEIER

*They shall not grow old, as we
that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor
the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun, and
in the morning,
We will remember them.*

At the dawn of the morning of 11th October, Mr. Walter Meier peacefully passed away in his sleep, at the age of 53.

By his untimely death his family have lost a devoted husband and a loving father, and the Swiss Colony one of its prominent members.

Almost from his first arrival in this country, the deceased had taken an active part in the doings of the London Swiss Colony. Imbued with a high spirit of patriotism and fair play, he had incessantly and untiringly worked in the interests of the Swiss community in particular, and our country in general, and the loss now sustained will be deeply felt.

The Colony can ill afford to lose men of such sterling character, and, by his leaving us, a great gap will remain. In all his undertakings — and there were many, as will be seen presently — he was greatly aided by his wife, and their names will henceforth occupy an honoured place in the annals of the Colony.

His work in the Colony was devoted primarily to the Swiss Mercantile Society (London section of the Schweiz. Kaufmännischer Verein), in which he played a conspicuous role, and where his long services received the appreciation he so richly deserved. But, many other Swiss Societies and Institutions enjoyed his collaboration as well.

Walter Meier was born on 12th January 1908, in St. Gall, the second son of Robert and Helena Meier-Merkli. He received his schooling at the Primary and Secondary Schools at Glattfelden (Ct. Zurich), from which place he originates, and afterwards spent four years at the "Kantonale Handelsschule", Zurich, where he took the final diploma with top marks. After a short stay with an import and export firm in Zurich, he came to London in 1928, not yet twenty years of age, and became a pupil at Pitman's College. The same year he obtained a post as foreign correspondent with an important metal merchants' firm in the City of London, where he became in time manager, and two years ago a director.

He joined the Swiss Mercantile Society in 1928, and at once took a keen interest in their work. Three years later (1931), he was elected a member of the Education Committee, and in 1935 became its Chairman. At the Annual General Meeting of the Society in 1947, he was elected president, a post which he held for eleven years. On his retirement from the presidency, he was elected an Honorary Member of the London section, and also an Honorary Member of the "Schweiz. Kaufmännischen Verein" in recognition of his outstanding services to the Society and the College for over twenty-five years. From 1935 until his death he was a member of the Council of



the Swiss Mercantile Society, and from 1947 until 1957 its Chairman. In September 1939, at the outbreak of the last war, he was called up and returned to Switzerland where he served with the Mitrailleur Bat. 66, and later on, having been granted an early leave, he returned to London.

On the occasion of the Banquet of the City Swiss Club in 1932, he met Miss Mariann Gysin, from Liestal, whom he married three years later (1935). The result of this very happy marriage has been four children, three girls and one boy, the son is at present a student at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich.

Mr. Meier joined the City Swiss Club in 1933; he was also a member of the Swiss Economic Council, Nouvelle Société Helvétique, "Schweizerbund" (Swiss Club), Anglo-Swiss Society, and the Swiss Benevolent Society. He sat on the committees of the Fête Suisse, Swiss Sports and 1st of August. He was a member of the Council of Management of the Swiss Hostel for Girls, and was closely connected with the Swiss church. He was at one time Chairman of the Presidents' Assembly.

The deceased was a keen sportsman, especially interested in athletics; he was a regular competitor at the Swiss Sports meetings, where he won many prizes. For many years he was a member of the Polytechnic Harriers, being fond of walking and also of rowing.

All his many activities were unfortunately much restricted when, four years ago, he had to undergo an operation for cancer, from which he recovered surprisingly well until three months ago, when this cruel illness reappeared. Fortunately, he was spared much suffering during the last few months, but death came to him as a merciful release. Surrounded by members of his family, he passed over to a richer life.

Walter Meier rests now in the soil of his country which he loved so dearly, and for which he worked so ardently. We, who are left behind, send him, beyond the grave, grateful thanks for all he has done. He was a lovable man, and his memory will remain in our hearts as a man who has been faithful to his principles and ideals to the very end of his all too short earthly pilgrimage.

To his wife and family we extend our heartfelt sympathy in their sad bereavement.

A. STAUFFER, President, 1917/18,
Swiss Mercantile Society.