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ANGLO - SWISS ITEMS

Swiss television team visits Britain

A team from French-speaking Swiss Television made a film in Britain at the end of August for a programme on "how foreigners see the Swiss". Directed by Claude Smadja, a head of the Foreign Affairs services of this television network, the film was to be shown before the Referendum on the Third Initiative on foreign presence. It was a fitting idea to see how the Swiss, who were being called to have their say on the issue of whether or not to expatriate half a million foreign workers, were seen in other European countries. The programmes will feature similar films from France and Italy, each of them lasting over an hour (which certainly allows time for a complete study of the subject). The film on the British viewpoint was the first of the series. Mr. Smadja came first by himself to London on a reconnaissance trip during which he made contacts with bankers, M.P.s, English ski enthusiasts and other adequate samples obtained with the help of Swiss journalists in London and the Embassy. He came back to London the next week to film and interview these people with a crew of three men.

THE BUSY COMMUNITY LIFE OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING RESIDENTS IN SWITZERLAND

Quite unknown to us, an English-language monthly magazine called "Contact" was started in Switzerland one-and-a-half years ago. It was only quite recently that an English journalist living in Switzerland and contributing to the review, Mr. Colin Farmer, informed me of its existence. I now receive "Contact" every month and, likewise, Mr. Farmer has been put on the Swiss Observer's mailing list. We can therefore compare our writings and, if need be, use them to our mutual advantage.

The last issue of "Contact" to come in our letter box was the August-September edition, the eighteenth number to come out. I must say that "Contact" is rather a remarkable publication considering its apparently restricted market: The English-speaking people of Switzerland. Its objectives are more ambitious than the "Swiss Observer's" inasmuch as the paper actually *looks* like the "Economist" and has in-depth articles on historical or current affairs by outside contributors. The August-September issue had 30 pages, 28 of them with editorial material. There were few adverts by large companies. There are presumably few large British firms in Switzerland on whose support "Contact" can appeal. The magazine's last number had only two full-page spreads shared by a variety of international schools and hotels. The miscellaneous column was filled with a good twenty items ranging from the sale of a car to French tuition. This shows that "Contact" has become an

appreciated advertising platform among the English people of Switzerland.

The magazine has its *Womens' Pages*, a section on music and arts, a few by-lined humorous pieces, sections entitled "From the Capital" and "United Nations News", various cantonal reports and feature stories on Berne and the pioneer gold-digger Johann Augustus Sutter.

One wonders how long the English-speaking people will manage to keep up such a lavish magazine. Looking at the *Coming Events Column*, there is ground enough for optimism. The organised life of the English-speaking people in Switzerland is pretty lively and all embracing.

Thus Basle has a British Circle and Library, an American Women's Club, a British Badminton Club, an Anglo-Swiss Club and a Swiss-British Society.

Fribourg has an English-speaking Women's Club.

Geneva has a Scottish Country Dance Club, a branch of the RAF Association, an English-speaking Club, an International School which acts as a magnet to the cosmopolitan and English-speaking set, and a "Geneva English Language Co-ordinating Service".

Lausanne has an English-speaking Club, an Anglo-Swiss Club, an American Women's Club, Executives International and the United European American Club.

Ticino has an Anglo-Swiss Club in Locarno.

Zurich holds the record with fifteen clubs and societies, including a Comedy Club and a British Businessmen's Luncheon and a Chapter of the Toastmaster International, plus three English-speaking libraries.

To this all must be added the many English-speaking churches or religious organisations. Basle has a Church of England and its Anglo-Saxon community meets for the "English Gospel Hour". Geneva has an English-speaking Jewish community, a Church of Scotland an American Church, a Society of Friends (Quakers), a First Church of Christ Scientist, and an Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The English-speaking churches of Zurich and its vicinity are: St. Andrew's Church (Anglican and American Episcopalian), the International Protestant Church of Zurich, the English-speaking Catholic Mission, the First Church of Christ Scientist, and the Ruschlikon Baptist Church.

Compared to the Swiss of Britain, our British friends in the homeland have far more addresses to go to to find an atmosphere that reminds them of their own motherland.

The existence of such a vast number of clubs and churches means that English-speaking people seek the company of their own kind. There are two ways of understanding this. It could be a reflection of British insularity and American cultural aloofness fostering a

reluctance to have too many relations with these backwoodsmen, the Swiss. It could also be that the local population, especially in the cities where so many foreign residents are to be found, is surrounded by too many foreigners and is no longer hospitably inclined. More simply, it could just be that the temperament and life style of English-speaking and Swiss people do not match and that efforts to bridge this difference are not seriously undertaken on other sides. Besides, Anglo-Saxons particularly Americans are more gregarious people and are inclined to meet in clubs.

The fact is that the English and Americans of Geneva, for example, live in a world of their own which is almost completely alienated from the Swiss human environment.

The situation may not speak for Swiss hospitality and openness to the outside world, but it also shows that, when they go abroad, the Swiss are remarkably good at adaptation. The fact that the Swiss of Britain increasingly ignore specifically Swiss functions speaks for their assimilation to the host country. In Switzerland, the need to remain together among fellow English-speaking people is strong enough to warrant the creation of an elaborate monthly magazine. In many countries in which "Fifth Switzerland" is represented, it is rather the Federal Government which promotes similar magazines for which support would be difficult to find on the "field". The Government's policy is to keep alive the bonds between the Swiss abroad and their homeland.

There can be no doubt therefore that the Swiss community in Britain and the British-American community in Switzerland are completely different in attitude, age and probably professional status. One appears to be living on the fringe in its own society, the other is well integrated and finds its attachment to the Motherland inexorably weakened by time.

THE STORY OF THE BRITISH MADE ALPHORN

Readers may remember our account last May on the Alphorn, Switzerland's national instrument. It was thanks to Dr. Brigitte Geiser, who had spoken that month at the Nouvelle Société Helvétique open meeting, that we were able to write something on the Alphorn for the first time in the Swiss Observer's history! The Alphorn, despite its notoriety, is a rare and unknown instrument for which details are very hard to find. Most of the bibliography on this high-flown musicological object is in German, and probably hidden away in the university and historical libraries of Switzerland.

Mr. Harry Woodhouse, who runs a small firm in Porthpean, near St. Austell, Cornwall, called "Cornish Musical Crafts", nevertheless manages to list two pages of bibliographical references in the brochure handed out with the Alphorns

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produced in his workshop. This bibliography shows that there are hardly any works in English devoted to the Alhorn, or, more generally, Alpine instruments. Available literature is nearly all of Swiss origin. Mr. Woodhouse's brochure also points to Dr. Geiser's eminence in the world of musicology. Little did we know, when we heard this retiring and unassuming woman academic that the Society's guest speaker for the evening was probably the world's greatest authority on the Alhorn!

But in Britain, Mr. Woodhouse must surely be one of the few people with an in-depth knowledge of this instrument. To the best of our knowledge, he is certainly the only one to manufacture any in this country whereas there are still, according to Dr. Geiser, some twenty Alhorn manufacturers in Switzerland.

Mr. Woodhouse's Alhorns are made in fibreglass. He has tried making Alhorns in wood but found that the importation of suitable trees was not a practical proposition and that the labour costs were extremely high. Consequently, he has made a wooden mould of the authentic shape and produced Alhorns from fibreglass and resin.

His standard instrument is in E and suffers the limitations of valveless instruments in that it will only play notes of the harmonic series (bugle call). However, because of the extreme length of this instrument (12ft. 10in. and 10 inches diameter at the bell end) high harmonics and thus diatonic melodies are possible for players with a good ear. Wooden extension pieces may be provided if required to lower the pitch to E flat, D flat or C. Being cylindrical, instead of tapered, these extensions do not improve either the tone or the appearance, however.

Fibreglass and resin have the advantage over wood of their light weight. Mr. Woodhouse's Alhorns weigh only 7 lb and are easy to lift by hand. In a short leaflet on his instruments, Mr. Woodhouse recognises that, although they are "unusual and attractive in appearance", playing them in a small room "may give rise to domestic problems".

The Alhorns coming out of Mr. Woodhouse's workshop are not mass-produced. Although he did send two to Australia — to be given to the "Swiss" ski lodges there — production has been dormant because of the long time (16 hours) necessary to produce a fibreglass Alhorn for which Mr. Woodhouse quoted a price of about £45 last May, subject to current prices of resin and glass. However, should readers be interested in a British-made Alhorn, they can contact Cornish Musical Crafts (St. Austell 3608) to obtain an instrument in E. Preferably, Mr. Woodhouse would be pleased to hire out the wooden mould if anyone would like to try his hand!

International Festival of Youth Orchestras

Having been staged in Switzerland for the first four years of its existence, the International Festival of Youth Orchestras, which now takes place in Britain every August, can be considered as an Anglo-Swiss event. The inaugural festival took place in 1969 at St. Moritz. It was staged there again in 1970 and moved to Lausanne for the following two years. The hundreds of young participants who came for each festival from all over the world enjoyed the sleeping facilities of the town's empty schools and gave many of their concerts at Beaulieu Palace. Lausanne was very eager to keep the Festival and Mr. André Chevallaz, its former Mayor and now Head of the Federal Finance Department, was one of its main supporters. But the organisers of the Festival were more or less compelled to find a venue in Britain by the demands of their mainly British sponsors. Aberdeen was chosen because of the local authorities enthusiasm and its available university premises. The Lausanne town council was upset at the loss of a highly successful musical event that came at the height of the tourist season, but outside the theatre and concert seasons. For a while, a competing festival was envisaged but the idea was abandoned in view of its high cost. Lausanne would still like to become the permanent home of the International Festival of Youth Orchestras. But for the time being the event is centred on Aberdeen and London. Orchestras also tour a number of Scottish towns and resorts such as Inverness, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Aviemore. According to a Swiss music lover who has travelled all the way from Geneva to Aberdeen to hear the performances of children from twelve countries, some of these provincial concerts attracted audiences that were very much smaller than those that came for these concerts in Switzerland up to 1972. The Speyside Theatre at Aviemore, in which the Canberra Youth Orchestra (Australia) were playing works by Elgar, Sitsky, Bloch and Franck, was one-third full with farmers and their wives from this bleak Highland region.

The Festival, whose "Finale" took place at the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday, 18th August, not only featured orchestral performances, but also performances by youth dance companies and choirs. Switzerland was represented by the Orchestra and Choir of Calvin College, Geneva.

SWISS ABROAD

The Secretariat's Report

The 1973 Annual Report of the Secretariat of the Swiss abroad does not point to any modification of its activities. The main areas remain the same. Capped

by the meetings of the Commission of Swiss abroad, our "Parliament" in Berne, and the Annual Assembly, which last year took place in St. Gall, those activities are grouped under the main traditional headings: Contacts with Swiss societies abroad; information of all kinds to Swiss abroad; film rental service, newspapers (*Echo, die Welt*); book service; social security; youth service (including holiday camps and support to military recruits from abroad); and the Solidarity Fund.

In the Introduction, it is noted that the Swiss population abroad decreased last year for the first time since 1950. There has been a greater number of compatriots returning. The Report puts this down to the unfavourable political and economic conditions prevailing in many countries and expresses surprise that the flow of returning Swiss should not have been much higher and begun earlier.

The Commission for the Swiss abroad was mainly concerned with the draft bill of political rights to Swiss abroad, on the revision of the "Buergerrechtsgesetz" in its application to Swiss abroad, on the 8th Revision of Old Age Insurance and other matters. Several new members from overseas joined the commission. Half came from the United States, others from Senegal, Australia, Thailand, Portugal, Holland and the Philippines.

The Report says that four new societies in Canada, Senegal and France joined the organisation of the Swiss abroad bringing the total to 626. The Secretariat has helped a few societies financially. It gave 5,000 francs to the Swiss of Gex (France) to help them finance their Club Chalet. It paid 1,500 to the Swiss Club in Salisbury (Rhodesia) to help them install a "Boccia-Bahn" and laid out 5,000 francs to the "Sociedade Suica de Beneficencia Helvetia" in Sao Paulo for the purchase of a new home for old people.

In regard to Information, the Report says that *Echo's* financial situation has stabilised and that the many letters from readers indicates that it is still a highly appreciated instrument of Swiss news. The Report mentions efforts to facelift and boost the circulation of the *Swiss American Review* of which 160,000 issues are distributed every week.

SWISS ABROAD HOLD THEIR 52ND ASSEMBLY IN NEUCHÂTEL

Some 500 Swiss took part in the 52nd Assembly of the Swiss abroad held on the weekend of 24–25th August in Neuchâtel. The theme of this year's Assembly touched on "Old Age Insurance and the Swiss Abroad". The principal guest speaker was Mr. Hans Huerlimann, Head of the Department of the Interior, who warmly invited his audience to subscribe to Voluntary Old Age Insurance as a "protection against rainy days and the deep transformations which can at all times emerge in a constantly moving world". Among the other speakers were