

The Swiss little red book

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Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1970)**

Heft 1603

PDF erstellt am: **01.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691559>

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THE SWISS LITTLE RED BOOK the views of a reader

Back in London after a three week holiday in Switzerland, I have read the "Défense Civile" booklet given to me by someone who didn't care much for it! As a Swiss who loves the mother country and served in the frontier occupation in 1914-15, and also took part in heavy fighting at Arras and in Flanders with the British Expeditionary Forces for the noble cause of liberty and freedom, I hold a lasting admiration for the Swiss army.

The whole cause of history reveals that the leaders of men have emerged on account of their own outstanding qualities, nobility of character, resourcefulness of mind, and an inborn

desire to serve one's fellow men. The Swiss army has such leaders.

There is a theory that the interests of the individual should be sub-ordinated to the interests of the State. This theory is still in operation as far as our public men are concerned, and especially it is the case when defining the State we think also of the citizens of that State. For the present at any rate, and in spite of huge sums of money spent on armaments, the soldier is a necessity. It is a call to duty, and a rendering of service vital to the life of a nation. The Swiss soldier will act with loyalty to his country, with fidelity to the cause he is serving, and with humanity to those arrayed against him.

The narrative on civil defence gives a plausible account of Switzer-

land's preparedness in time of war, and how well-intentioned its authors might have been, the book lays open to strong criticism. It begins by glorifying the past in a chauvinistic tirade and ends with the country invaded and occupied by a ruthless enemy. What an irresponsible and thoughtless prediction!

The writer of these lines, with six years experience as an Incident Officer and Instructor in civil defence in one of the worst hit boroughs of London during the last war, cannot agree and is strongly against the compulsory storing of food for two months in every household in time of peace, nor at any time; this, to my mind is an unpatriotic and disastrous act of panic-mongering heading to defeatism. To my own and humble judgement, with the exception

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of a few useful pages of instruction on rescue work and first-aid, this book is worthless.

The notion of military discipline is of paramount importance in war time and it should be imbued to the nation's conscience as well. There is no security without a severe discipline, the prime duty of very citizen.

The responsibility for the conduct of war rests with the country's statesmen and heads of ministries, the leaders and chiefs of the armed forces and civil defence services, whose heavy task will be enlightened by the nation's whole-hearted support and confidence.

Pierre Savoie

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

please see page 9

DEATHS

Mr. George Ronus, managing director of the Dorchester, died on October 8th of cancer. He was 62. This shattering news for the Swiss colony in London was reported in the national press, including popular dailies like the "Mirror". The "Times" honoured his memory with a two column obituary. We shall do likewise in our next issue.

Hardly a month after having lost Mr. Alfonso Pianca, the Ticinesi of London grieve the loss of Mrs. Augusta Virginia Berti, who died at the age of 80. We shall be printing her obituary in the next issue too, but would like, in the meanwhile, to express our most sincere sympathies to Mr. Virgil Berti and his family.

CORRECTION

Contrary to our report two issues ago, Mr. F. A. De Maria, President of the Unione Ticinese, has not been named headmaster of the Cardinal Vaughan School, but of the Cardinal Manning Secondary School. We should like to mention another academic success among the Ticinese: a cousin of Mr. De Maria, Emilo De Maria, son of Giovanni, has recently been awarded a London University degree—M.Sc. in Economics—this in addition to a previous degree in Mathematics awarded some years ago.

PERSONAL

We have great pleasure in reporting good news from the family of our former Editor, Mrs. Mariann Meier. Firstly, a daughter Barbara Mariann, was born to her second daughter Erika, now Mrs. Max Bucher, in Bienne. This means that Mrs. Meier is now a grandmother! Next, her father, Mr. Ernst Gysin, now great-grandfather for the fourth time, celebrated his 80th birthday on 9th June. We understand that he is in excellent health and spirit and still a thorough reader of the S.O. Finally, Mrs. Meier's son, Peter, a graduate of the ETH in Zurich, has just been awarded a doctorate of science at Amherst University, Mass., USA. He has now taken up a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Karlsruhe in Germany. We extend our best wishes and congratulations to all.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

We send congratulations and best wishes to those of our readers who will be celebrating their birthdays during the next few weeks, as well as to Dr. and Mrs. H. W. Egli whose 34th wedding anniversary will take place on 6th November.

Mr. H. N. Leuzinger will be 73 on 31st October. Mrs. Hartmann will be 82 on 2nd November and Mr. C. Gasser 84 on 4th November. Mr. J. Oertli will celebrate his 74th birthday on 10th and Mr. A. Kunzler on 15th November.

Ad multos annos!

THE NEW EMBASSY IS NEARING COMPLETION

The brickwork of the new Embassy building at Brianston Square is now completed. The Swiss Embassy now has to be fitted with all the appertunances of an embassy and taken over by the decorators. A non-formal ceremony in which builders mingled with Embassy staff marked this welcome event. Monsieur René Keller, our Ambassador pushed a wheelbarrow filled with mortar across the building's roof and, with the help of a spade, stopped its last remaining gaps. He then secured a branch on the high mast above the building—saplings being unavailable at this time of the year. Despite many delays, it now seems that our new and gleaming embassy will be ready almost on schedule and perhaps in use before 1971 is out.



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