

Chinese experiences

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Swiss Church (member of the Con-sistoire since 1965 and President of the German-speaking Council since 1967). Despite the much lamented early death of her husband in 1961 Mrs. Meier intensified her work for the Colony and Switzerland when she was appointed editor of the "Swiss Observer" which exacting position she filled with distinction from May 1962 to August 1969, having previously proved her writing talent as author of "The Young Traveller in Switzerland" which was published subsequently in several foreign languages as well as in three English editions. Mrs Meier was soon after elected as Delegate of our Colony to the Commission of the Swiss Abroad in Berne—its only woman-member until last year. 1967 the Commission appointed her member of a study-committee on information. 1968 she spoke in Basle on behalf of all Swiss abroad on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the N.S.H. and since April 1968 she is a member of the Committee of the annual "Bundes-feierspende, a particularly flattering appointment of trust. A member of the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad since its inception, Mrs. Meier succeeded her husband 1962 as Delegate for the U.K. and since 1968 is member of its administrative council. Her retirement from the editorship of the "Swiss Observer" in August 1969 was to become the N.S.H.'s great opportunity to persuade Mrs. Meier to take on its presidency.

(E)

CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE COLNOY

Whoever pretends that the Colony only consists of aging Swiss or ex-Swiss may change his mind when he goes to the Christmas Fête organised for the children of the Colony at St. Mary's Hall, in the Y.M.C.A. Headquarters of Gt. Russell Street.

A good hundred lively children were filling the rows of St. Mary's Hall. The party began with a lesson read out by Pasteur Nicod, this being followed by a prayer, which the children endured bravely, but not without a lot of fidgeting and gaping with eager eyes in every direction.

Then Mr. Arnold Brun spun the tale of the fourth Magi, the one who came too late at the cradle of Bethlehem. A very inspiring story, beautifully illustrated by a running projection of colour-slides, which received the full attention of the young audience.

A conjurer made his boisterous appearance and immediately displayed a remarkable gift for getting the children to participate in his show. In fact, he took more time tattling with them and playing the clown than in performing his tricks. But that was what the children enjoyed and, by the time the

few adults in the hall were starting to stretch themselves, he asked the children whether they wanted another trick. He was answered with an over-riding and resounding cry of "yes"! He ended his performance with something which children always love to see: drawing familiar and funny pictures very quickly on a board.

Tea-time had rung, and the young crowd went to enjoy their cakes, biscuits, orangeade, jelly and other goodies. Then Monsieur Godet appeared, disguised as Father Christmas. He told the story of the descent of Santa Claus, got a gleeful clap from those little hands, and sent the children rushing to their presents.

A very enjoyable fête, as much fun for the adults present as for the kids!

(PMB)

ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE

Having participated to the James Bond happening atop the Swiss Centre (see Christmas number) and knowing that the film would show familiar Swiss sceneries, I gave in to the temptation of going to see "On Her Majesty's Secret Service".

Never have I heard such differing judgements expressed on a film: I heard some say the film was utter trash, and others who thought it terrific. The reasons advanced for hating the film were its silly plot, its namby-pamby main actor (as you know, Sean Connery has retired from the rôle of Bond and has been replaced by a less virile but quite endearing character called George Lazenby), its absolute irrationalism and a general weariness of the James Bond menu. Reasons for loving the film were its beautiful alpine setting, some tremendous technical stunts and the humour (of a caricatural nature) involved in meeting again with James Bond memorabilia.

Therefore, I suspect that those who take life with seriousness, who tend to judge the quality of films on the value or morality of their theme will dislike the film: its defects will loom awfully large. Those less serious and more careless people who agree, like me, that nonsense can be good fun, will probably enjoy it.

From the "touristic" point of view, I was not deceived. In this respect, the film was almost as good as the SNTU shorts shown at the monthly meetings of Swiss societies in London. One recognizes Murren, Lauterbrunnen, Berne and the Schildhorn teleferic, whose summit-station happens to be the hideout of the diabolical Blofeld (this, for Swiss viewers means a hard strain on realism). We get a good view of the Oberland as James Bond climbs to Blofeld's abode in a helicopter.

On the technical side, I will

remember a few swift, percussive and neat punchups, a terrific ski-chase (Bond's pursuers tearing down vertiginous slopes and firing away with their machine-guns at the same time!), a few moments of delightful macabre humour, a shattering car-race on an ice-rink and a closeup of an avalanche.

You most probably won't fall for my vulgar pleasures, but go and see the film all the same, for the sake of the Oberland!

(PMB)

CHINESE EXPERIENCES

On the "Sunday Times" review of 4th January, we read the amazing story of a Manchester resident of Swiss origin, Alfred Bosshardt. His parents were Swiss, but he was born and brought up in Manchester. At the age of 23, receiving the missionary call, he left for China, where he was one of the 1,300 missionaries of the China Inland Mission. During his ministry in that forbidding land, he and his missionary wife were attacked and robbed by bandits many a time, but one day in 1934, it was no usual bandit who stopped and plundered them: Alfred Bosshardt and his wife had unknowingly fallen, in the course of a missionary tour, on the path of the communist army of General Ho Lung. This peasant army, constantly harassed by Nationalist forces, had trekked interminably across the arid wastes of central China. This march received far less publicity than the celebrated "long march" on which Mao Tse Tung lead his beleaguered forces some 6,000 miles from the Kiangsi to Yenan, in the Shensi. In the same way, the communist army of General Ho Lung zigzagged for endless months between the provinces of Hunan and the Yenan. Alfred Bosshardt and his wife spent 560 days, trudging some 2,500 miles, suffering incredible physical hardships. Following an attempted escape, they spent a year in Communist gaols in undescrivable circumstances. Mr. Bosshardt is now 73 years old, lives in a Manchester suburb, and continues to be active as a church worker.

SWISS HOLIDAYS FOR SWISS CHILDREN IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Foundation "Pro Juventute" in Zurich is again organising a holiday for children of 7-15 years, of Swiss parentage who live in the United Kingdom, provided always that there is a sufficient number of participants.

As usual, these holidays will start at the best and most attractive time to enjoy Switzerland, i.e. towards the end of July, and are scheduled to last six weeks according to arrangements made by "Pro Juventute".