

Forthcoming events

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two short, factual communiqués issued by the Justice Department in Berne the Soviet Union has been clearly named as the recipient of Jeanmaire's information. This in itself was rather unusual, for in such cases it is customary to speak of either "a potential enemy" or "a country in Eastern Europe", leaving it to the imagination of the public to guess which country may have been meant.

The fact that Switzerland is the object of espionage by the Soviet Union is, according to the Chief of the Swiss General Staff, Corps Commander Vischer, in itself "highly significant". The former Counter-Espionage Chief of Federal Germany, General Gehlen, has put the issue more plainly by saying that in his opinion it is quite possible that the U.S.S.R., in case of an armed conflict, may well have made plans to occupy the whole of Switzerland. According to one widely read Swiss newspaper, the tip-off about Jeanmaire's activities came from Federal Germany before the Swiss Counter Espionage Service — consisting of a staff of some 30 officers — ever thought of suspecting so high a Swiss Army Officer as a (former) Brigadier. A little more than a year ago a document was signed by a good many statesmen from East and West propagating détente and allegedly putting an end to cold-war tactics and suspicion. The case Jeanmaire and other espionage cases — in Federal Germany, for example — seem to make it quite clear that the Conference of Helsinki was nothing but a gigantic camouflage-exercise on the part of the Communists and that their world-revolutionary aims have not been changed by one iota.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, 6th November, Central Hall, Westminster, BAZAAR of the Swiss Churches in London.

LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY, Wednesday, 29th September, monthly meeting followed by auction. Wednesday, 27th October, monthly meeting followed by members' display Letter "E". Wednesday, 24th November, Cup Competition.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY, monthly meeting, Wednesday, 13th October, at 7 p.m. at 34 Fitzroy Square, W.1.

CITY SWISS CLUB, Tuesday, 19th October. Dinner with guest speaker at the Dorchester Hotel.

COME FORWARD

... Friend or foe?

"That depends."

"Depends on what?"

"On whether you regard Arthur Kattendyke Strange David Archibald Gore as a friend or not."

"Who's he?"

"Oh, you probably know me better as the Earl of Arran."

The Earl of Arran is, in all probability, one of the few British people whose name can provoke an instant response from the Swiss — and not always a favourable response at that.

But his Lordship did kindly consent to grant the *Swiss Observer* an interview so that we can take a closer look at this slightly enigmatic man. Not that "Boofy" as he is known by his friends (the name was bestowed on him by his nanny and is reputedly short for beautiful baby!), would regard himself as in any way enigmatic.

He likes to think of himself as a working journalist — which he is. He writes a regular weekly column of the London *Evening News* and it is through this column that Boofy has become known to the Swiss over the years.

Not to put too fine a point to it, he has upset the Swiss more than once through this column. Without elaborating or repeating what he has written, he has accused the Swiss of being unwashed, our President of indulging in ritual cat shoots and our people of eating cats.

Earlier this year he even published a "recipe" for a cat dinner which concluded with the recommendation that moggie should be served with mashed potatoes.

So why does he do it? Because he has an acute, if somewhat bizarre, sense of humour and likes to tease sometimes. And he adds that the Swiss are ideal victims because, in his opinion, they do not have a very highly-developed sense of humour. His earnest hope is that his teasing will make the Swiss laugh at themselves occasionally. "It would do them good" he adds.

So does the Earl of Arran dislike the Swiss? Not a bit of it. He confesses to a special liking for Baslers but claims to have always got on well with Swiss people from all walks of life and places of origin.

The accusation that the Swiss were an unwashed people originated from a tram ride he took in Berne many years ago — during the war in fact. He says that some of his fellow-travellers did "smell a bit" but it was the honest sweat of the Swiss working man.

His connections with Switzerland, if they can thus be called, began during the Second World War. He was a member of the British legation in Berne from 1941 to 1942, working first in the press department and subsequently in the cipher room. He left Berne when he was recalled rather suddenly to London. He is somewhat reluctant to discuss the reasons for his sudden departure (at least for publication) but he does admit that he

did upset quite a few people. One notable quote was that he said publicly that he had picked his wife out of the gutter. In fact she is a noble born lady.

But His Lordship prefers to gloss over this and other incidents which occurred during his sojourn in Berne. He returned to London and was immediately posted to the British Legation in Lisbon where he remained for a year. For the rest of the war he worked in the Ministry of Information in London.

But to return to his sense of humour and, in particular to his onslaughts against the Swiss. He is particularly amused by the fact that following publication in a Swiss newspaper of his article saying the Swiss were unwashed, he was publicly burnt in effigy during Fasnacht celebrations. He has been back to Switzerland only once since — "to lay some ghosts and to look up some old friends" were the reasons he gave.

Although Arran is an Irish peer he is of mixed blood. His mother was half Irish and half Dutch and on his father's side had a Swiss grandmother — a Planta from Kt. Graubünden.

It was Gladstone who elevated his great-grandfather to the House of Lords. He has substantial estates in County Donegal in the Irish Republic but admits that he doesn't return there either. He seems to be running out of places where he can safely go.

Two other events connected with the Swiss and Switzerland still irk him. He says he was particularly surprised when, on his visit to Switzerland after the "unwashed" article he was denied access to Swiss radio and TV (he did not say why he wanted access). He thought this refusal was, to quote him again, "uncharacteristically undemocratic". He also confesses to having been annoyed when, after dining at The Swiss Centre some years ago, he was required to produce his receipt before he was allowed to leave. He has mellowed somewhat since and admits that the man on the door was only doing his duty.

So does he use these rather trivial incidents as an excuse for his rather barbed attacks? Not a bit of it. He insists that he does it only for fun and, having spent a pleasant couple of hours with the man, I believe him.

Perhaps we cannot always agree with the way he goes about teasing but could we deny him the pleasure of his recollection of what happened after his article on the ritual cat shoot appeared in the *Evening News*. He told me that the Swiss Ambassador drove to see the then Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas Home, to register a formal complaint. His Lordship revels in the fact that Sir Alec is reputed to have laughed.

But the Earl still has a more serious side. Early in 1975 he was asked (perhaps surprisingly) to review *Switzerland*, an important book by the English historian Christopher Hughes, for *Die Tat*.

The newspaper was impressed with