

1st of August : Swiss National Anniversary (1291-1940)

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SWISS NATIONAL ANNIVERSARY (1291-1940)

Not since Switzerland has been restored in its old traditional shape and form after the fall of Napoleon have the Swiss people had more occasion to gratefully acknowledge the protective hand of destiny than on this 1st. of August. It seems like a miracle that this small country of ours today is yet standing intact in the wake of the most ferocious tornado of war, which ever has blown over the European continent. And although only the first chapter as yet has been written of this gigantic war, we have a right to feel somewhat relieved. The fate of Switzerland, after the first chapter of this war has been closed, is no longer a question of war operations. It is now purely and simply a question of morals. This reflection alone is convincing, and we refuse to believe that any power on earth would lend itself to destruction for the sake of destruction, especially for the destruction of a country, which is synonymous with peace among the nations. But nothing would be more out of place on this first of August than noisy cheer, not only because the time is not ripe yet for such a behaviour, but also because such an attitude would be utterly selfish and inconsiderate with regard to those who have been sacrificed. When the flags once more are rising to celebrate our National Anniversary on this 1st. of August, we shall behold the sight of them with a love which has been matured by the dreadful anxiety of the past crucial months and by gratitude.

HINGABE.

Ich hab' in Nacht und Sturmeswehn
mein Herz zu Gott erhoben:
Herr, lass mein Land in Ehren stehn!
Sein Banner, schoen gewoben
Aus Abendgluehn und Firnenschein,
Herr, lass es leuchten, stolz und rein!
Des soll mein Mund dich loben.

Der Vaeter Erbe, schmal und recht,
Ist unser heilig Eigen.
Es waechst ein karg und zaeh Geschlecht
Hier in der Berge Schweigen.
Der Ahnen Trotz, der Ahnen Treu
Mach, Herr, in unsern Herzen neu,
Dass wir den Sinn nicht beugen!

Bleib jung, du alter Schweizerbund,
 Aus Drang und Kampf erstanden!
 Steig auf, du Kraft aus Grat und Grund
 Und mach die Not zu schanden.
 Rot, wie die Alpenrosen bluehn,
 So moeg' der Stern der Eintracht gluehn
 Hoch ueber allen Landen!

Alfred Huggenberger

Aus "Erntedank", Gedichte von Alfred Huggenberger.

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THE RECENT SWISS FEDERAL ELECTIONS (October 1939)

The Swiss elections held recently have not only shown impressively the stability of our political life at home, but have proved anew how unanimously the Swiss adhere to their traditional neutrality. In the following article we shall consider the elections for Parliament and for the Federal Council.

Stability in Swiss Politics.

The federal elections after the outbreak of the war have proved afresh how firmly political conditions are stabilised in Switzerland. In the December session the united assembly of the two chambers confirmed the previous composition of the Federal Council. By that we can clearly see how completely the activities of the Federal Government during the last few years have enjoyed the approval of Parliament, both in the political and in the economic sphere. In addition, the line of action for its future policy indicated by the socialistic opposition is comprehensively in accord with the slogan: Co-operation with the other parties. From this we can form an appreciation of the policy of the Federal Council and of the "bourgeois" parties backing it.

It must not be overlooked that the re-election of the Federal Council took place shortly after Parliament itself was chosen anew after a general election. No one can therefore make the objection that if the former members of the Federal Council were re-elected unopposed this was due only to courtesy, to party routine in Parliament or to traditional custom.

The stability of Swiss politics had shown itself similarly in the results of the General Election for the National Council which was held on the last Sunday of October 1939. The Swiss citizen is, whatever his politics, of a strongly conservative nature. That is seen right through Swiss history in a dislike for political experiments. Now and then, indeed, the effects of foreign events and revolutions have been adopted only after a Swiss character had been given to them. For more than 100 years the solid democratic foundation stands based on the cantons, with the corner posts of sovereignty of the people, equality of all citizens in the State, the rights of man and of the citizen, and the self-government of the communes. In 1848 the constitution was built on these democratic principles. "The decades following have extended this construction, seldom remodelled it and never demolished it." Here is seen the character of Swiss politics.

Professor Max Huber said nothing new to the people of Switzerland, but merely gave a precise formula to a fact universally recognised, when he wrote: From a historical consideration of the State we get the view that the State is nothing belonging to the individuals existing in it today, but a thing belonging to generations that succeed one another. The present generation does not possess the State, to do with it as it wills, but is the trustee of past and future generations. It is for the moment