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On April 29,1944, a German airplane landed on the airport of Dübendorf. Its crew refused to deliver their machine which was said to be equipped with the most modern instruments. At that time, it seems that the High Command of the German Luftwaffe had worked out a plan to liberate or destroy this machine in a surprise assault on Dübendorf. The German Air Attache in Berne, however, is said to have warned the Germans of the consequences of such an enterprise and so negotiations were opened in which we finally consented to destroy the machine.

In May 1944, between 20 and 30 German divisions were stationed along an area of some 300 kms. on our northern border. These forces were kept ready in case of an invasion of Europe by the Allies, but their presence in that sector always formed a source of danger. The danger of a German invasion of Switzerland gradually began to disappear with the progress the Allies were making in their operations on the continent. There was still the possibility that some German forces might be pushed into Switzerland. The critical moment in this respect was when the Germans stiffened their resistance around the Belfort gap for they had received the order to fight their way back to Germany across Switzerland if they were cut off.

The electrical power plants between Basle and Lake Constance also caused us many worries. The German headquarters had ordered the destruction of those plants, as well as of the bridges across the Rhine if the Germans should be forced to retreat. It can now be revealed that thanks to a confidential understanding which was reached with the Germans working in those power stations and also thanks to the courageous intervention of our frontier guards, the destruction of those works was prevented in time. In the same way, the Germans had been prevented from blowing up the southern end of the Simplon Tunnel. We know today that the Germans had hoped to resist in the Black Forest for six months, but the war was moving too fast for them.

At the beginning of the war, in September 1939, 400,000 men had been called to arms in Switzerland. In the second general mobilization in May 1940, this number was increased to 500,000 men, and after the creation of new staffs and units, after the mobilization of auxiliary forces and local guards, our army finally counted over 850,000 men. A third general mobilization would have almost completely paralyzed our economic life. Therefore, the Federal Council, as well as General Guisan always tried to limit the number of mobilized soldiers to the absolute minimum."

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SWISS - RUSSIAN PROTOCOL REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF RUSSIAN INTERNEES IN SWITZERLAND.

In the July issue of the "Helvetia" we reported on the controversy which arose between Russia and Switzerland in connection with the alleged ill-treatment of Russian internees in Swiss camps, and as this controversy was again given space in the New Zealand Press recently, we wish to quote an article on the negotiations in Switzerland between a Russian Mission and the Swiss Authorities which clarified the position.

The report on the negotiations, which have taken place throughout long weeks between Swiss authorities and a Russian delegation was published in Berne. These negotiations dealt with the treatment of Soviet internees in Switzerland, and their repatriation to the USSR. This matter is deserving of comment.

First of all, it can be pointed out with satisfaction that the two parties, assisted by the Allied delegations, and in particular by the French delegation, the latter having played a first rate role in the talks, were able to agree on a common text. This text shows in itself that an understanding was reached. Had this not been the case each side would have found it necessary to issue its own statement in support of its own report. It must be stated, however, that the Swiss authorities gave proof of much good will. They did not act on considerations inspired by a false conception of prestige. They had only one desire and one aim: that of getting down to objective facts.

The task of the Swiss authorities, it is stated, was not facilitated by the difference of language, nor by the lack of order and discipline shown by the internees. It is admitted, too, that the Russian internees were not subject to special treatment, that they got the same treatment as the other refugees whatever their nationality. Four Russians died, two of them as a result of an inappropriate usage of firearms on the part of the Swiss guards and two others in connection with an incident falling under common law. On the other hand, two Swiss citizens were killed. Both delegations have expressed their regret for these incidents.

Lastly the Russians signed a statement in which they expressed their satisfaction in which they found the camps and the splendid organization of the repatriation works. The work of repatriation went off smoothly and without undue delay.

In the conclusion of the protocol both delegations made it clear that they had negotiated in a spirit of concord and mutual comprehension.

Normally this test should put an end to the misunderstanding that arose between the two countries concerning the treatment of internees in Switzerland. The Swiss government has already expressed its satisfaction on this point, so far the Moscow government has not made its viewpoint known. Very possibly it will not issue any official statement on the matter. This will be more clear, when it can be seen, if the negotiations, by setting aside obstacles, which hedged up our way were really a prelude to earlier contacts between the two countries, contacts, which would come in the natural order of things and which we for our part desire.

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N.Z. SOLDIER OF SWISS ORIGIN WRITES ABOUT HIS VISIT TO SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Consulate has received a letter from a N.Z. soldier of Swiss origin serving with the N.Z. Forces in Italy, whom they assisted to get permission to visit Switzerland. Part of this letter is quoted below and we are sure it will make interesting reading for our members.

"... and believe me it was the greatest experience of my life. The army gave us a week's travelling time each way as transport in Italy is slow owing to the damage to roadways and railroads. We spent 34 days in Switzerland and we had beautiful weather, warm, with brilliant sunshine on all except 4 days. We covered almost the whole of the country. We purchased a railway ticket for 5 weeks which cost us £15 and with the few extra trips (private mountain railways) the fares cost us something like £20. Hotels and meals were dear but were good. Everywhere we went we got a great reception, for many reasons, because we were New Zealanders and soldiers, and because we were able to speak like they themselves. While at Interlaken I met a Gentleman by the name of Alphons Horning who tells me he was in New Zealand in 1939 and wishes to be remembered to you all. He is a chemist and comes from Bern. Almost every where we went, and on every train we got on, there was someone who knew somebody in New Zealand and as a result I have some 50 or 60 letters to write to various families in New Zealand telling them of some of our strange experiences. We spent 5 days in Luzerne from where we went to Stans, Burgenstock, Rigi-Kulm, went up the Jungfraujoch and down through Grindelwald; also stopped at Zermatt and made the Gornergrat trip, over the Furka, and saw the Rhoneglacier, on to Andermatt, Pontresina, Alp Grum, St. Moritz, Davos, Chur, Klosters; of the towns we saw St. Gall, Romanshorn, Schaffhausen, Winterthur, Berne, Zurich, Zug, Solothurn, Lausanne, Geneva, Iverdon, Bienne, and many other interesting and pretty places. The lakes and mountains are really the prettiest I have seen, and the people made me feel prouder than ever than I am of Swiss origin; the great fortifications, the well trained and well equipped soldiers, always ready and determined to defend their country to the last man should Germany have tried to pass through, the kind treatment to the many escaped prisoners and hundreds of homeless children from Holland, Denmark and France, the reception given American and other Allied soldiers is only one way in which the Swiss people showed their appreciation of the Allied Nations sincerity to make this world a better place to live in. I was one of the proudest soldiers that left Switzerland. I was proud to think that my people came from such a beautiful, spotlessly clean and well organised country and I blessed my people everyday for having taught me their native language, because I