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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. P. BOEHRINGER.

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HOME NEWS



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FEDERAL.

DISASTER AT ST. MARGRETHEN.

A serious disaster has plunged the town of St. Margrethen (Rheintal) into deep mourning. — Adjoining the slaughter-house at St. Margrethen is situated a building belonging to the Kühlaus Handels A.G. in Buchs, where a large quantity of animal food is stored in the garret, underneath of which are work rooms which are occupied by 60-70 workhands.

Last Thursday the woodwork of the roof suddenly collapsed burying between 40-50 people underneath. The fire brigade was at once summoned and after many hours of strenuous work they managed to extract about 40 workhands more or less seriously injured, unfortunately five female and four male workhands lost their lives, and it is feared that the death roll will be still further increased. The authorities have at once ordered a thorough investigation concerning the cause of the disaster.

M. MOTTA'S BROADCAST MESSAGE TO AMERICA.

M. Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation, has broadcasted a message to the United States of America. He has sent cordial greetings to the numerous Swiss living in our sister republic across the sea. The President has pointed out the difference in ethics and customs of the two countries, which often seem to contradict each other, and yet are a valuable asset in promoting international goodwill and fellowship. Switzerland, he said, is one of the pioneers of liberty, and without liberty the United States of America would lose their raison d'être. He expressed the wish that America would take an active part in international affairs thus helping to solve the many economic problems which can only successfully be tackled by international collaboration.

DIPLOMATIC CHANGES IN BERNE.

It is rumoured that M. de Marcilly, French Ambassador in Berne will shortly exchange his post for that of Vienna; as his successor M. de Laboulaye, directeur adjoint des affaires politiques at the Quai d'Orsay, is mentioned.

SWISS PROFESSOR'S INVENTION.

Professor Kurt Weissinger, Professor of Locomotion Construction at the Swiss Federal Polytechnic at Zurich, has just given a demonstration of an ultra rapid train on which he has been working for a number of years. He claims it can reach a speed of 150 to 300 m.p.h.

The invention consists of a new application of the propeller system — a kind of aeroplane on rails — with an anti-derailing device.

A committee has been set up at Zurich to further the execution of the professor's plans. The Federal railway authorities have undertaken to provide a line three miles long for tests with a half-size model.

NEW KEEPER OF THE FEDERAL ARCHIVES.

The Federal Council has nominated Prof. Dr. Léon Kern from Fribourg, to be the new keeper of the Federal Archives, in succession to Professor Türlér, who is relinquishing his post by the end of this year.

SWISS BANKS' POSITION.

The quarterly statement of the position of the leading Swiss commercial banks, numbering nine, shows a balance-sheet total of 6,747,516,000 francs. Current accounts amount to Frs. 2,480,359,000. The Swiss Bank Corporation of Basle is the largest of the banks included, with a balance-sheet total of Frs. 1,388,482,000, which is slightly in excess of that of the Credic Suisse of Zurich. The other banks included in the statement are the Banque Populaire Suisse, Len et Cie., Banque Fédérale, Union de Banques Suisses, the Banque Commercial de Basle and the Banque D'Escompte Suisse.

SWISS REPRISALS.

It is reported that by way of reprisal the Swiss Government has placed embargoes on all Post Office accounts above 50 francs held in Switzerland by Austrians resident in Austria. It is explained that Swiss importers failed to comply with the law to pay into the Swiss National Bank amounts owing by them to Austrians for goods imported into Switzerland.

SWISS IMPORT PROHIBITION.

The Swiss Government has, as a temporary measure, forbidden the import of rayon. From October 12th onwards an import licence is required to send rayon into Switzerland.

This measure is chiefly directed against Italy, with whom Switzerland is now negotiating regarding tariff changes on rayon. But meanwhile it applies to all countries.

ELECTRIC COOKING IN SWITZERLAND.

Among the papers read at the recent congress in Paris of the International Union of Producers and Distributors of Electricity was one by M. A. Burri on the progress of electric cooking in Switzerland, in the course of which he stated that the number of electric cookers and boiling plates in that country had increased from 93,000 in 1926 to 172,590 in 1931, and the corresponding load from 167,000 to 468,355 kW. The bulk of the users were employees and artisans, these representing 56 per cent. of the total. So far as hotel and large electric cooking installations were concerned, only relatively small progress had been made in Switzerland, there being only 636 such installations out of about 30,000 in the country.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

M. Georg Stroh-Richter, former proprietor of the Hotel des Balances in Basle, has died in Zurich at the age of 69.

* * *

The deficit in the cantonal accounts for 1933 will reach nearly 9 million francs.

BERNE.

The Federal Council has accepted the resignation of M. Fritz Rösch, Kreispostdirektor, for reasons of health. The government has conveyed its thanks to M. Rösch for the services he has rendered.

BERNE.

F. Schürch, for many years head of the cantonal military tax administration in Berne, has surrendered to the police after various irregularities had been detected in his accounts. So far as can be ascertained the defalcation amount to \$0,000.

BERNE.

Jacob Wilhelm, the former cashier of the Swiss Bank Clerks Association, who has helped himself to the funds of this institution to the tune of 92,000fr., has been sentenced to 2½ years imprisonment.

BERNE.

The budget for 1933 of the canton of Berne estimates a deficit of 2,018,545fr. or 369,468fr. more than last year. The authorities propose a reduc-

tion in wages to all cantonal employees of 8 per cent.

* * *

Maria Waser, the author of the book "Land unter Sternen" has been honoured by her native town Herzogenbuchsee. On the occasion of a meeting of the "Gemeinderat," the authoress was made an honorary citizen of the town. M. Moser, President of the municipality handed her the document eulogizing her great merits.

* * *

In an inn at Boujean near Biel, a young man started to distribute 20fr. notes to whoever entered the Restaurant. He was invited to visit the police station where an amount of altogether 4,000 notes were found on him, which sum he had withdrawn from the Bank that day. It was found that he was previously an inmate of a lunatic asylum, and the authorities have made arrangements to have him interned again.

BASLE-COUNTY.

M. Emilio Müller from Sissach, a well-known painter has died at the early age of 35.

FRIBOURG.

Four of the ringleaders of the riots which took place at Fribourg recently were condemned to between 4 and 8 months imprisonment.

GENEVA.

Professor Louis Duparc, Professor of mineralogy at the University of Geneva has died at Geneva at the age of 66.

* * *

The organisers of the annual Swiss Motor Show in Geneva have fixed March 10th to 19th as the dates for the 1933 Exhibition.

APPENZELL.

M. Julius Bachtold, embroidery manufacturer of Herisau has died aged 87. He entered the embroidery industry with Alder and Meyer of Herisau in the early sixties and in 1869 came to London in the interests of Steiger & Co. In 1881 he rejoined his original firm as partner, and in 1884 became sole proprietor.

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

Dr. Heinrich Pletscher, will resign from his post as town President of Schaffhausen, at the end of this year; he has occupied this position since 1919.

VALAIS.

Mme. Veuve Favre-Choupin of Martigny has celebrated her 100th birthday; she has received on that occasion the congratulations of the town and cantonal authorities.

VAUD.

Burglars entered the offices of the Compagnie Générale de Navigation at Ouchy where they took away an amount of 500 Swiss francs, a considerable sum of French francs were left untouched.

TICINO.

The police has arrested one Swiss and two Italian subjects, they will be charged with espionage.

* * *

Lechini, who was condemned to 10 years penal servitude for having murdered his wife was conveyed to the prison at Lugano. When one of the warders was entering his cell he found the prisoner had hanged himself with a sheet.

FOOTBALL.

October 23rd, 1932.

Austria 3 Switzerland 1
in Vienna.

Let us acknowledge right away that this result can be written down as of credit to our National Eleven and as a proof of the advance made by them in the art of football, since our disastrous defeat in Basel by 8:1 last November. The 60,000 spectators expected something better, very much better, from their "wonder team" and fickle as the public ever is, in all parts of the world, gave expression to their feelings by a perfect pandemonium of booing and whistling against their erstwhile favourites.

The teams lined up: Switzerland:—Sécheraye (Servette); Minelli, Weiler (Grasshoppers); Spiller (Lausanne Sports), Imhof (Biel), Gilardoni (Lugano); v. Känel (Biel), Trello (Grasshoppers); Gobet (Blue Stars), Xam (Grasshoppers), Jaeck (Basel);

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE (London Group) and SWISS INSTITUTE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY

Literary and Musical Evening

ALFRED HUGGENBERGER
der berühmte Schweizer Schriftsteller und Dichter

"aus eigenen Werken"

and

The Swiss Institute Orchestral Society

at CONWAY HALL
Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

Friday, November 4th 1932

at 8.15 p'clock

Tickets 2/- (including tax).

Austria:—Hiden (W.A.C.); Bausch (Austria), Sesta (W.A.C.); Braun (W.A.C.), Hoffmann (Vienna), Luet (Fapid); Zischek (Wacker), Müller (W.A.C.), Sindelar (Austria), Schall (Admira), Horvath (Wacker); Referee, Cejnar (Czecho-Slovakia). Switzerland won the toss and the first few minutes play was of a scrappy nature. Several chances were missed on both sides. After 15 minutes Sindelar passes out to Zischek, centre, Weiler endeavours to clear but kicks nicely to Müller's feet who has no trouble at all to score 1:0. Immediately after the restart Séchéhaye saves from Müller. Hiden turns a fine shot from Trello round the post, but the corner kick leads to nothing. Jaech beats his back and then nobody is there to deal with his centre. Play becomes more systematic, perhaps also sterner. Zischek hits a post; several free kicks bring no advantage. Half time 1:0 for Austria.

On restarting the game Austria put on pressure and after 11 minutes Séchéhaye can but fist out Zischek's shot. The ball comes to Schall who shoots towards the empty goal. Spiller appears from nowhere to kick out, but the ball had crossed the line 2:0. Our Reds hit back with all their might, Trello and Jaech press, Xam is everywhere and then Austria scores the best goal of the day. The centrehalf gives the ball to Müller who passes to Zischek. Low centre to Sindelar who is stopped by Weiler. The ball rolls on to the unmarked Schall and the trick is done 3:0. One minute later and Xam heads v. Känel's centre low into Hiden's sanctum 3:1. The 1,000 Swiss spectators prove that their vocal chords are quite equal to those of 59,000 Austrians! That is how it was about 600 years ago, if I remember my school lessons rightly. — Another twenty minutes, when Switzerland has rather more of the game and all is over. On the whole our team gave satisfaction, especially the half-backs. In the Austrian team you will no doubt see several changes for the better when they play England on December 7th at Stamford Bridge. Gschweidl in particular, their star forward, injured at the moment was sadly missed, also the two regular backs, etc.

This leaves now the table for the Europa-Cup thus:

| | Goals | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|---|---|---|----|----|
| Austria | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 19 | 9 |
| Italy | 7 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 13 | 9 |
| Hungary | 8 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 17 | 15 |
| Czecho Slovakia | 7 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 16 | 18 |
| Switzerland | 8 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 16 | 30 |

The remaining match is fixed for the 28th inst., in Prague. Italy would have to win by at least 7:0 to displace Austria, not very likely!

NATIONAL LEAGUE.

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------|---|
| Carouge | 0 | Young Fellows | 2 |
| FIRST LEAGUE. | | | |

| | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------|---|
| Racing | 4 | Olten | 3 |
| Bözingen | 0 | Grenchen | 3 |
| Etoile Ch. de F. | 2 | Solothurn | 1 |
| Bern | 1 | Montreux | 0 |
| St. Gallen | 1 | Oerlikon | 0 |
| Winterthur | 1 | Luzern | 1 |
| Seebach | 2 | Old Boys | 1 |
| Locarno | 1 | Brühl | 2 |

SWISS CUP, FIRST ROUND.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Cantonal | 3 | Stade Lausanne | 0 |
| CHALLENGE NATIONAL. | | | |

| | | | |
|--------|---|--------|---|
| Zurich | 0 | Urania | 3 |
|--------|---|--------|---|

In the National League Carouge and Young Fellows have finished the first half of their fixture list and Carouge with only 1 point from 7 games, goals 9 for, 29 against is all alone at the bottom of the table in Group 1. Young Fellows are second last at respectable distance, with 5 points.

In the First League "West" Grenchen maintained their record of full points in all their six games. Berne and Racing remain second and third respectively, 10 points each. At the tail we have Montreux, Bözingen and Solothurn with one win = 2 points each to their credit. In Group "East" Brühl did the unexpected by defeating the unbeaten Locarno in the Ticino by 2:1. Quite an achievement, that! Even so, Locarno still heads the table with 9 points followed by Bellinzona and Brühl, 8 points each, St. Gallen 7, Luzern and Winterthur 6 each, Seebach 5, Old Boys 3 and Oerlikon last with 2 points.

The curtain has gone up in the Challenge National where Zürich suffered defeat at the hands (or should it be feet?) of Urania-Genève. M.G.

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BOTTLED IN SWITZERLAND.

Prices for 1932:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|------|------|
| Valais, Fendant | - | - | 52/- | 58/- |
| Neuchâtel, White | - | - | 50/- | 56/- |
| Red | - | - | 54/- | - |
| Dezaley | - | - | 56/- | - |
| Johnniesberg | - | - | 54/- | - |
| Dôle, Red Valais de Sion | - | - | 58/- | - |

Specialty:

REAL BRASSAGOS "POLUS" ... 30/- per 100

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ALL ORDERS EXECUTED IMMEDIATELY

THE SPIES IN SWITZERLAND.

BY EDWIN T. WOODHALL.

In the "Yorkshire Herald."

Immediately after the outbreak of war the Swiss Government, rightly appraising the importance of their country to the belligerents, took strong legislative action to try and prevent the abuse of their neutrality by the Secret Services of all the warring nations.

Naturally the task was impossible. German and French Intelligence were absolutely entrenched in every important city of Switzerland, as in every other neutral country — with England holding the strongest position in Holland. And in the Swiss spy-land of war the craft of espionage reached its zenith.

Switzerland was the foremost battle ground of the spies. Surrounded by great Powers involved in a death struggle, little Switzerland had about as much chance of escaping unsmirched as has a small boy who plays in a coal-house.

Switzerland is the cross-roads of Europe, a natural base for all sorts of operations. All the nations of Europe sent their spies there. Suave and smiling diplomats, Army officers masquerading in civilian clothes, beautiful women decoys, all began operations.

Whispering Gallery.

The Alps had become a "whispering gallery" for Europe, and an "underworld" of espionage in Switzerland grew up and flourished almost in one night as the Allied spies began their big drive to get into Germany to secure information.

Closed motor cars sought out hidden by roads near the frontier. Motor boats slipped across Lake Constance under cover of darkness, and strong swimmers plunged into the icy water in the endeavour to land unseen on the German shore. Airplanes dived overhead at night, dropping Sidney Reilly and other daring Allied spies by parachute on to German territory.

All the Allied spies worked as a closely-knit team — the magnificent British Secret Service, the stealthy Italian agents, the clever and numerous Frenchmen, and later the enthusiastic American amateur spies.

Grimly the German Secret Service settled down to grapple with this new menace.

Machine Guns.

From the German side of the lake the utmost precaution was taken. All the most vulnerable spots which left gaps in the natural chain of mountain barriers between Germany and Switzerland were guarded by houses of pseudo-military police, armed with machine guns, and along the coasts of this great inland sea powerful-engined motor boats patrolled by day and night.

To approach the German side of Lake Constance by water was found to be almost an impossible feat — and right through the war, I know of no attempt ever being successful with the exception of the one I am about to relate — which ended, even in this case, with the death of one of the bravest British Secret Service men the department ever held.

About the time this story opens, the German School of Aerial Invention was giving France and England great cause for anxiety.

London and Paris had been bombed! Allied spies found out through certain information given by an Alsatian engineer in the airship sheds on the Constance shore side, that Germany had a super-class airship in the course of preparation which would absolutely revolutionise the whole course of aerial warfare — and possibly be the means of eventual defeat of the Allies.

Intrepid Men.

Orders were given to Lieutenant "A" and Sergeant "B" — both known to me — two of the most intrepid men in the British Intelligence that they were wanted for work of a "special nature."

I passed the two men through the control barrier at Le Havre. I had strict instructions to see that they were given every facility to reach Paris.

After leaving Paris they both separated, to meet again for the last time in Geneva, Switzerland, when one was to pass into Germany the other to remain behind until he received certain information from his colleague.

"A" who went into Germany was not English. He was lieutenant in the French Artillery but had worked with his English colleague on many an occasion before on Allied Intelligence matters, mostly in Holland and Spain. The Englishman spoke fluent French, Bulgarian, Spanish and Dutch; the Frenchman fluent German, Italian, Russian and English.

A Certain Spy.

No sooner was "A" in Germany than he made himself known to the German Intelligence. He told them he was an Alsatian, but that in sympathy he was all for Germany. He also told them he had done a bit of work for the French and English, and was in the position to let them know the identity of a certain spy working in

their midst under the German flag, on the shores of Lake Constance.

The motive of "A" was to get to know the exact spot, the latest improvements or invention of the "Mystery Airship" and what was most important its destination and where it was being constructed.

He took a tremendous risk, for a certain notorious German spymaster was for shooting this man on the spot. But certain other chiefs were not so drastic, they wanted to put the man to the test, before taking any serious steps.

Besides, he was in their hands and could be killed any time, so it was considered best to give him a try out and if the information was correct perhaps he would be suitably rewarded and taken on in their service to work against the Allies.

Startling Secret.

Then came the most startling secret so far. It had not been even surmised by the Allied Secret Service. The "mystery airship" was not being made on the shores of Lake Constance, but at a place about 10 miles outside Berlin, and to this place, under close but unobtrusive watch the "allied suspect" was sent. His job was to point out the spy who was working amongst them.

For about a month he played with the German Intelligence, but the spy was not found. All the time his every movement was watched, and his colleagues still waited for news in neutral Switzerland.

Then in his desperation our agent "A" pointed out the advisability of his return to Switzerland, as no doubt the spy he wanted to point out would be in Geneva.

It was now or never. At all costs he realised the information which he had must reach his colleague and he knew the Germans were waiting to "get him" at any moment.

Lieutenant "A" of the Allied Secret Service, bluffed the German Intelligence into accepting him as one of their paid spies. At his request they sent him to Geneva in search of suspected spies. For the Allied agent, now fully in the rôle of a German soldier engaged on special war work, his position in Switzerland was now one fraught with extreme peril.

The Germans could claim him at any time they wished from the Swiss authorities, even if necessary as a deserter, and once back in German territory he knew his doom was sealed.

Every movement he made was watched by German spies. If he ventured out into the streets of Geneva, he was always acutely conscious of being shadowed.

It was essential that his colleague "B" should get his information of the "mystery airship" at all costs, but to get it through to him only meant the betrayal of "B."

To write, telephone or send any kind of message to the place where "B," the other Allied spy, was hiding would be to play into the enemy hands, so he decided on a very bold and daring course, which he knew was the signing of his own death decree.

About this time, the Swiss Government had, by means of ample evidence supplied by Germany, a great deal of information of the Allied Secret Service. To do Switzerland credit, it had ample evidence about the Central Powers supplied by the Allies, and whenever a chance arose this neutral Power dispensed heavy punishment upon all it could catch violating its sanctuary.

The Messenger.

Lieutenant "A" knew there was a Swiss in the employ of the Allies who was ostensibly engaged in the sale of jewellery and watches, and he also knew that this man was a messenger who often went over the Swiss frontiers of Evian and Pontarlier for Paris, with Secret news for the Allies. Also he knew that the German Secret Service were keenly aware of this fact.

Taking his fate in his hands "A" sought this man out, knowing well that the eyes and ears of the Central Powers would record every movement. He told him everything, also where he could find "B" and having done this part of his duty, returned to the hotel to await his fate.

To appeal to the French or English was useless. He knew that they would deny all knowledge. It was war. He knew the risks he took, and must abide by them. Within an hour of his return, just as he surmised, he was sent for, and without any questions being asked, was told that he was to return that night to Friedrichshafen, on the German side of Lake Constance and there report himself for duty to Count von X. From this moment the gallant "A" was never heard of again, so it can be assumed that the German Secret Service effected some kind of reprisal.

An Arrest.

That same night the Swiss himself was arrested by Swiss police on a charge (laid by the Germans) of espionage. But the damage was done. Sergeant "B" received his message.

That same night "B" was over the Franco-Swiss frontier and at noon next day was in Le Havre, en route for Southampton and the military authorities in London with the priceless information.