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WHAT OTHERS THINK OF US. SWITZERLAND AND THE NAZIS.

(*Manchester Guardian*, 24.4.36).

In view of Switzerland's unique linguistic relationship to Germany, Austria, Italy, and France, the state of mind of the Swiss to-day is worth examining. The most articulate feelings run counter to the most powerful interests. Switzerland has reacted fairly strongly against the ideas and methods of Nazi Germany, but she is absolutely dependent upon importing raw materials from abroad and upon exporting the finished manufactured goods, and it is with Germany that she is most deeply involved both for imports and for exports.

Every Swiss tenet and tradition runs counter to the conceptions of Hitler. To be Swiss is to belong to a political organisation whose essential characteristics are diversity, democracy, and decentralisation. Where race and language have nothing to do with nationality, traditions and constitutional forms appear to supply the cement which binds the society together. The disturbance created by the great German neighbour gone Nazi is naturally most violent in German Switzerland. Here ostensibly both capital and labour are anti-Nazi because in Basle and Zürich it is difficult to ignore the decivilising impulses of Hitlerism. But the dominant party of Liberals in German Switzerland (which has, of course, nearly three times the number of inhabitants as in French and Italian Switzerland put together) represents industries which require a German market, and banking which looks for returns on its big investments in Germany. The possibility, however improbable it appears at the moment, cannot be completely ignored that, in new circumstances, these people might prefer a compromise with Nazi Germany at the expense of their own Left parties to a fight to the death against Hitler.

Academic Contacts.

The well-to-do German Swiss (it should be remembered) nearly all have some relations with Germany and have usually been to German universities. Though Professor Karl Barth has been sent home from Bonn to Basle, many Swiss professors have accepted the Heidelberg invitations. Few expelled German scholars have been taken into the Swiss universities, and Swiss publishers show reluctance to publish books which they will not be able to sell in present-day Germany. Plans for a conscious defence of German intellectual values by Austro-Swiss co-operation have not developed at all, for the German Swiss are predominantly Zwinglian and suspicious of the clericalism of the Schuschnigg regime. In French, as in German, Switzerland, feeling against Soviet Russia, except among Socialists and Communists, is sufficiently strong to give Hitler at least one virtue in the eyes of the Centre and Right.

National Socialism has a special appeal for the young. Nowhere in Switzerland, however, do university students appear to be drawn to Hitler. The authoritarian spirit of the age undoubtedly affects the students, but not in the radical German way. There is also a group of Young Liberals (within the old Liberal party) which advocates certain constitutional reforms, such as more frequent dissolution of the National Council and less frequent referendums. The Young Liberals have not, however, made headway during the last few years. None of the essential characteristics of Fascism obtrudes itself into political life. The press, for instance, is really free, though editors are asked to refrain from the use of certain "emphatic" expressions. The Socialists actually govern big towns like Zürich and Basle and they have been running a "Boycott Italian goods" campaign. Communism is weak, except in French Switzerland. Only in French Switzerland is there a united Socialist-Communist front, and this adds to the intense dislike felt by the Genevan Right for the Socialist Mayor of Geneva, M. Nicole. The Ticino is much torn between democratic principles and Italian sentiment, but here, where the population consists of small peasant proprietors, and is not divided between employers and employed, many people detect the sturdiest democrats of all. Though the Agrarian party is reactionary on the whole, it is also said that the peasants in some of the less-known cantons, Appenzell, for example, will prove the most obstinate champions of democracy if it comes to the test.

German Tourists.

It is clear that Nazi propaganda, while possessed of certain important natural advantages, has a great deal of leeway to make up in Switzerland. There is a large German colony which has been proportionately active. It is characteristic of the dual nature of the German campaign that the murder of the German Nazi leader Gustloff on February 4th came at a moment when the Swiss Government was greatly embarrassed by the tourist dispute with Germany. Before this it had been arranged that German tourists should be allowed money to spend in Switzerland as against Swiss purchases of German coal. This arrangement was of the greatest

importance to the Swiss hotelkeepers, who have lost the custom of travellers from sterling or other devaluated-currency countries. On February 1st Germany had announced that her tourists were spending too much in Switzerland, and they were held up — with a view, perhaps, to deflecting them to Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The Federal Government later succeeded in persuading Germany to release her tourists again, but its anti-Nazi measures were proportionately mild. At present no successor may be appointed to Gustloff in order that the German organisation shall be decentralised. This is clearly an almost meaningless prohibition, and it is observed on the Left that the German Nazis have just brought out a new paper called "Deutschland Heute," which looks exceedingly like the forbidden "Reichsdeutsche."

There is also a group of Swiss Nazis who call themselves The Front, but since June 30th, 1934, their membership has certainly dwindled. A much more serious thing is the pro-German, and indeed pro-Nazi, feeling which clearly exists among many Swiss officers; Colonel Wille, who commands the infantry, for instance, is well known to be pro-German. Since, as a result of March 7th, Switzerland has decided to expand her army and armaments with a view to defending herself against Germany, a curious situation has arisen. The political influence of officers should not, however, be exaggerated in a country which so detests the idea of a military caste that it appoints no generals; only when action is required are generals made, and even then they are elected by Parliament!

Hitler's technique is to take the old world by surprise and, maybe, using an excuse like the Gustloff murder, to strike where no one expects it. If Switzerland can withstand Nazi propaganda she cannot long withstand a direct German onslaught. Apart from the possible "Gleichschaltung" of Switzerland herself, expert opinion points to the Swiss route for Germany if once again she wishes to invade France. Popular expectation supposes that the Germans would advance by way of Basle towards the Belfort gap, so that the Swiss could shoot down from the Jura. Technically, however, there is as much to be said for the Zürich route between Jura and Alps, with the capture en route of the machine production factories of Winterthur. Switzerland is one of the racial and economic hinges of Europe, and her and her rulers may be faced with big decisions if the Great Powers are unable to establish a constructive peace.

BRITISH CHILDREN IN THE ALPS. A New Home at Davos.

Under the auspices of The New Helvetic Society a most interesting lecture, illustrated by numerous lantern slides, will be given at Swiss House on Friday next, 15th of May, at eight p.m. on a theme which is of great importance to Switzerland in several respects.

Doctor W. Behrens a prominent medical authority, living and practising at Davos, will speak on the wonderful healing power of the mild alpine climate prevailing at Davos and a few other places in Switzerland as well as on a practical attempt, recently started, at re-establishing a home for British children at Davos.

This enterprise undoubtedly is of considerable interest to our home country, not only from an economic point of view, but especially as a means for strengthening the bonds of friendship and humanitarian sentiment so happily prevailing between Switzerland and England.

Our alpine healing resorts are no doubt eminently suitable for assisting sick people from all over the world to attain or regain health, which they are in many cases unable to find anywhere else, not even in the seaside sanatoriums, however beneficial they may be in other cases. To put those Swiss healing stations at the service of the youngest generation is, of course, a particularly desirable development.

Doctor Behrens and his friends have conceived the alluring plan of establishing at Davos a special home for British children with the assistance of local medical authorities in England. A promising beginning has been made, and it is hoped that before long it may develop on sound foundations into a permanent establishment.

What better return could our country make for the bountiful hospitality that we Swiss are enjoying in these British Isles. It is hoped that numerous members of our colony may attend this interesting lecture.

"OLDE FRIENDS" EVENING

at the
UNION HELVETIA CLUB,
on Friday, May 1st, 1936.

One of the last social events during the spring season of the Colony, took place last Friday at the Union Helvetic Club, 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

I understand that for the last 17 years the "olde" friends of this well-known Club have foregathered annually, in order to spend a few happy hours in congenial company. Judging from the vivacious assembly which met in the prettily decorated Banqueting Hall, the Union Helvetic Club has not only a host of "olde" friends, but quite a number of young ones, and thus the blending was a most excellent one.

A simple, but very nice dinner opened the evening, and I wish to pay a compliment to the stewards of the Club, Mr. and Mrs. Wymann, for the efficient way, in which they looked after the material welfare of the 100 members and guests.

Shortly after 10 o'clock, M. J. Indermaur, who was in the Chair, proposed the toasts to H. M. the King, to Switzerland, and to the "Olde Friends." He welcomed in a very few words the revellers, and I wish some of the Chairmen, presiding at Banquets and Dinners, would follow in Mr. Indermaur's footsteps, with regard to the shortness of their oratorial efforts, it would please everybody, and incidentally save me a lot of work and trouble. M. Indermaur, who is the popular President of the "Landeswaltung" made a few very flattering remarks about some of the guests and friends present, and as everything, which friend Indermaur says, comes straight from the heart, it went straight to those quarters too.

The second speaker was billed on the menu, to be M. P. Lehrian, but as the popular President of the Union Helvetic had not then arrived, the "Swiss Observer" was therefore asked to say a few words to praise the Ladies.

M. A. Wyss, a very old friend of the Union Helvetic, and an instigator of the "Olde Friends" dinner answered the toast to the "Olde Friends" in his usual witty manner.

The Banqueting Hall was then cleared, and dancing started to the music of a very efficient Orchestra.

As a novelty, Monsieur de Courey, a "ingénier Déceptionist" gave a very enjoyable performance, his skill and wit was much appreciated by the company.

The songs rendered by some of the Ladies were also very much applauded.

The very jolly evening came to an end shortly before 2 a.m. and all the "Olde" and Young friends of the Union Helvetic said *au revoir* to each other, after having cemented again old friendships and made new ones.

ST.

EVENING PROGRAMS OF THE SWISS BROADCASTING STATIONS.

MAY 10th — MAY 16th.

BEROMUNSTER. (Principal items).

SUNDAY, May 10th.

(*Greenwich Time*).

7 p.m. Sport Resultate v. Sonntag.
8.5 p.m. Unterhaltungskonzert (Radioorchester).
9.25 p.m. Alte Musik, Dargebracht durch die Vereinigung "La Ménestrelle" Genf.

MONDAY, May 11th.

8.15 p.m. Sieben Lieder im Volkston, v. Harald Barth, gesungen v. Paul Kuen.

9.10 p.m. Gastkonzert René Matthes.

TUESDAY, May 12th.

8 p.m. Uebertragung aus dem Berner Stadttheater "Penthesilea," ein Trauerspiel v. Hr. v. Kleist.

WEDNESDAY, May 13th.

7.30 p.m. Für die Schweiz im Ausland, Wochenausblick v. Dr. H. Büchi.

THURSDAY, May 14th.

8.35 p.m. Zyklus. "Schweizer Lyrik der Gegenwart" Dr. Paul Lang.

9.10 p.m. Konzert des Radio Orchesters Zürich.

FRIDAY, May 15th.

7.45 p.m. Solothurner Lüt, Gäu und Nieder Amt. Plauderei.

9.10 p.m. Hansjöggel im Paradies. Fragmente aus dem Bühnenspiel v. Walter Lesch und Robert Blum.

SATURDAY, May 16th.

7 p.m. Geläute der Zürcher Kirchen.

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7.50 p.m. M. und E. Bernhardsgrüter bereitet eine frohe Stunde.
9.10 p.m. Benno Haller liest lustige Geschichten.

SOTTENS.

SUNDAY, May 10th.
(*Greenwich Time*).

7.40 p.m. Le dimanche sportif.
8 p.m. L'œuvre de Chopin.
9 p.m. Concert par l'Orchestre Radio Suisse Romande.

MONDAY, May 11th.

8.35 p.m. Orchestre de genre.
9.30 p.m. L'œuvre intégrale de J. S. Bach pour orgue.

TUESDAY, May 12th.

8 p.m. Maison, ma petite maison, Féerie Musicale de M. E. Moser.
10 p.m. Les travaux de la S.d.N. par Me. M. W. Suès.

WEDNESDAY, May 13th.

9 p.m. Les Rivaux amis, comédie en 1 acte et en vers par M. Forget.

10 p.m. Les travaux de la S.d.N. par Me. M. W. Suès.

THURSDAY, May 14th.

7.45 p.m. Concert par l'Orchestre Radio Suisse Romande.

8.40 p.m. Concert par l'Harmonie de Sion.

10.15 p.m. Les travaux de la S.d.N. Par Me. M. W. Suès.

FRIDAY, May 15th.

8.10 p.m. Quintette de Mozart, pour clarinette et cordes.

9.15 p.m. Cabaret des Sourires.

10.15 p.m. Les travaux de la S.d.N. Par Me. M. W. Suès.

SATURDAY, May 16th.

8.10 p.m. Concert par l'Orchestre Radio Suisse Romande.

9.40 p.m. Concert, par la Fanfare L'avenir.

MONTE CENERI.**SUNDAY, May 10th.**

(*Greenwich Time*).

8 p.m. Il Bernina e la sua Gente.
9.30 p.m. Concerto di Musica Moderna.

10 p.m. Lo Sport Della Domenica.

MONDAY, May 11th.

8 p.m. Trasmissione dalla Svizzera interna.
TUESDAY, May 12th.

8.30 p.m. Calze di Seta, Un atto di Mario Tiranti.

WEDNESDAY, May 13th.

8.50 p.m. Radio Cronaca.

9.45 p.m. Musica popolare.

THURSDAY, May 14th.

8 p.m. Trasmissione dalla Svizzera interna.

FRIDAY, May 15th.

9 p.m. Fem La Comedia? Due attimi brillanti.

SATURDAY, May 16th.

8 p.m. Operette "Classiche."

9.30 p.m. Serata per gli emigranti.

9.50 p.m. Di che parlano i nostri confederati.

SWISS OPEN-AIR PARLIAMENTS.

Switzerland, known the world over as a champion of democracy, has still, in a few of her cantons, an institution dating back to the earlier days of her political evolution. The "Landsgemeinden," or open-air parliaments, have been carried down from the Middle Ages, and to-day exist in Glarus, both Appenzell cantons, Obwalden and Nidwalden.

Once a year, on the last Sunday in April or the first in May, all men of voting age meet together and elect the members of their canton's government. Even the canton's "Landammann," or president, is elected in this outdoor meeting by open vote. At this time, too, the canton's government submits all proposed changes and introductions of law, as well as the annual budget. People come on special trains from all over Switzerland to watch the proceedings.

The earliest written record of the Glarus Landsgemeinde is dated 1387. Yet the first of these meetings was held much earlier, probably at the beginning of the century. Like the old Germanic "Thing" or "Ding," upon which it is based, the Landsgemeinde is also held in an outdoor ring open to the public. On this annual day the town is always rich with an antique, festive atmosphere. People come from the surrounding valleys and mountains, and gather together in the middle of the city. School children throng to their special place in the stand built in the centre of the ring. Each youngster, learning from his elders, begins to realize the inseparability of home, community, and country. Nothing binds the individual so closely to his fatherland as the oath in which he vows loyalty to his native land, and gives cheerfully a small part of his personal freedom for the common welfare.

The Landsgemeinde in Appenzell has naturally been the principal political event in the canton since the heroic time of Switzerland's struggle for independence early in the fifteenth century. Later on, in 1597, Appenzell was divided into two cantons, Appenzell Innerrhoden

and Appenzell Ausserrhoden. Both still hold their Landsgemeinde every year, and the day of the great occasion finds all men of twenty-one and over meeting in the picturesque town square, either in Appenzell, Trogen, or Hundwil. Each man wears a sword, generally an heirloom of the family for generations, or at least his militia bayonet. Rolling drums, shrill piping fifes, clanging church bells, martial music and patriotic songs fill the spring day with festivity. The assemblies are all usually opened with a religious ceremony, everyone finally joining in devout prayer led by a priest. Then there is mass singing of the Landsgemeinde hymn "All Life Comes From Thee." Following this comes the solemn oath of allegiance: "I realize that which is my duty, and I will endeavour to perform it to the best of my ability. In this I hope and pray God will help me." This year, the Landsgemeinde of Appenzell-Ausserrhoden was held in Trogen.

Already in 1309, when they were granted their independence, the towns in the lake of Lucerne district were able to hold the Landsgemeinde as a political institution, and the constitutions provided for a democratic-confederate type of government. In the cantons of Schwyz and Zug the Landsgemeinde existed until 1847, and in Uri until 1928. In the canton of Nidwalden, the Landsgemeinde started in 1398, and to-day meets in the charming town of Wil. Obwalden holds its open-air parliament, existing since 1621, in Sarnen. In Obwalden, old battle horns are sounded, and in Nidwalden, old war banners fluttering over the heads of the crowd, are reminders of the glories of old Helvetia.

Once in the spring of each year, on these days of the Landsgemeinden, the pages of history are turned back, and for a brief moment, the heroic past unites with the present. Everywhere there is a feeling of good will, a deep gratitude for the freedom that is Switzerland's, and a pride in her triumphs—so much greater even in peace than in war.

S.N.T.O.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday, May 13th at 8 p.m.—Swiss Mercantile Society—Monthly Meeting, followed by a lecture by Professor, Dr. G. P. Gooch, on the "European Situation" at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.

Friday, May 15th at 8 o'clock—Nouvelle Société Helvétique—Monthly Meeting with lecture by Doctor med. W. Behrens from Davos-Platz on: The British Children's Home in Davos, with Lantern slides, at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Saturday, May 23rd—Swiss Sports—at Herne Hill.

Saturday, May 23rd—"Schweizerbund" (Swiss Club) Special Gala Dance—at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Tuesday, June 16th, at 7.30 p.m.—City Swiss Club—Réunion d'été—at Brent Bridge Hotel, Hendon. (See Advert.)

Thursday, June 18th—67th "Fête Suisse" at Central Hall, Westminster.

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Ecole du Dimanche 11h. — M. R. Hoffmann de Visme.

7h. — M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme.

8h. — Répétition du Choeur.

Mardi 12 Mai — 3h. — au Foyer-Réunion de Couture.

BAPTEME.

Michel Jean Trembley, né le 16 Mars, 1936, fils de Jean Paul et de Noëlle Gabrielle née East — de Genève — le 2 Mai, 1936.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

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Sonntag, den 10. Mai 1936.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr Chorprobe.

Dienstag, den 5. Mai 1936.

3 Uhr nachm., Nähverein im "Foyer Suisse."

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