

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1937)

Heft: 803

Artikel: Swiss self-defence - spiritual and economic

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691885>

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SWISS SELF-DEFENCE — SPIRITUAL AND ECONOMIC.

N.S.H. LECTURE.

A deeply interesting lecture and discussion on the vital problems of Switzerland's self-defence in the spiritual and economic field took place recently at Swiss House under the auspices of the London Group of the New Helvetic Society. This Society's Central President in Switzerland, Dr. H. P. Zschokke, who had previously last year given a most stimulating address to our Colony, once again presented his fellow-members and friends in London an exposition of his views on the most pressing problems our country has to face to-day. The subsequent discussion was introduced by one of the finest speeches we have so far been privileged to hear from the lips of our Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, who gave the audience some reminiscences of the successful way in which our country has on former occasions dealt with difficult situations.

Dr. Zschokke surveyed at the beginning of his discourse the ever growing dangers that encroach upon the full maintenance of the democratic freedom of Switzerland. These dangers lie less in any likelihood of military invasion than in the spiritual field and in the trade barriers against our export trade. The latter difficulty has been considerably eased by the devaluation of our currency which was handled with so much dexterity by the Federal authorities. But the spiritual threat to the survival of all that goes to make Swiss Democracy and all that is dear to our democratic convictions, is a danger far more difficult to combat because it is the result of a variety of subtle dangers against which in the long run only the steadfast loyalty of our people to our institutions and traditions can prevail. Our two totalitarian neighbours, Germany and Italy, represent a contrast to Swiss Democracy in which the other side disposes of an overpowering weight and incomparably superior technical means of propaganda. But it is perhaps just that overpowering accumulation of forceful superiority that helps our small nation to realise the importance of being on our guard. The more subtle influences however present a problem not easily met. The mass of seemingly non-political literature pouring over our frontier, to mention only one example, is a factor to which there is no reply apart from the good sense of our people. The dependence of Swiss authors on the totalitarian markets adds to that difficulty because, consciously or not, their writing has to be adapted to the view of outside forces.

Our spiritual defence is, in the view of the speaker, dependant in the first place on a clear realisation of the necessary elements of our democratic existence: tolerance, impartial justice, freedom of mind and expression, individuality. Swiss national entity is composed of a multitude of elements. Our strength depends on the unreserved recognition of these various elements whose uninpaired survival is indispensable to maintain what is peculiarly Swiss. The recent recognition of Romansch as the fourth National Language is an important case in point. The resistance against over-centralisation of educational and other institutions gains special importance in this light. So does the enlivened interest in the Ticino as well as in the Swiss Abroad.

Minister Paravicini emphasised with especial force the fact that our self-defence rests in every respect on our own efforts and not on others. The maintenance of our neutrality is probably the most telling example of that fact. It is solely our will and our preparedness for neutrality that can save it from danger as it has done in the past. The inherent wisdom of our authorities in insisting on complete recognition of that neutrality even in cases of collective actions of the League of Nations, before Switzerland entered the League, has been demonstrated very clearly in connection with the Abyssinian dispute.

Dr. E.

SWISS CLUB, BIRMINGHAM.

For one reason or another, our sister societies in the provinces make but little use of the official paper of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain; a fact which is all the more to be regretted, as we have on numerous occasions tried to encourage them by asking for reports of their doings.

It is hardly our fault, if many of our London Swiss are quite unaware that there are several Swiss Societies in existence throughout the country. Why all this shyness? Are they afraid that they will get bullied by their bigger Brethren in the Metropolis?

A much appreciated exception is the Swiss Club, Birmingham, an institution which periodically informs us of its activities. We have before us a circular which addresses itself to all Swiss, whether residing in Birmingham, or in the "vicinity."

We need hardly beat the drums for our friends at Birmingham; they are known as a stronghold of Swiss patriotism and solidarity in the provinces, and at the head of this small, but enterprising Society is our friend, M. P. Brun, who is a well-known and popular personality in the Swiss Colony in London.

The dinner and dance which has been arranged to take place on Saturday, April 10th, at the Midland Hotel in Birmingham, promises to become a most enjoyable event, and we are assured that no pains have been spared in order to make this function a great success.

The term "Swiss Rally" is used in the appeal, and we hope that many of our London Swiss, especially those who are owners of cars, will on Saturday, the 10th, drive down (or is it up?) to Birmingham, to spend a few happy hours with our compatriots in the Midlands; we are convinced that they will not regret it.

To Birmingham on the 10th.

JAQUES-DALCROZE FESTIVAL AT GENEVA.

Geneva will be the scene of an open-air Jaques-Dalcroze Festival from June 19th-July 4th, 1937. The fete, whose very name "Genève chante" (Geneva sings) is promising, will be a de luxe open-air affair in the city's most beautiful park, "La Perle du Lac." It will present a suite of lyric scenes selected from outstanding festivals of the past, from "Feuillu," from the "Fête de Juin 1914," from the sumptuous "Fête de la joie et de la jeunesse," from the "Festival vaudoise" and the "Poème alpestre."

"Genève chante" will do homage to the fair region of lake and mountains in which Geneva is located, and to Jaques-Dalcroze, the gifted composer, who has immortalized it in his music. There will be eight festival presentations in all, the respective dates being: June 19th, 20th, 23rd, 26th, 27th, 30th and July 3rd and 4th. A group of 350 Jaques-Dalcroze trained rhythmic dancers, several choirs and a large orchestra will make these performances unforgettable artistic entertainment.

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze is one of Switzerland's great men. He is a friend of youth and as such he has ever tried to develop in children, the musicians and melody-makers of to-morrow, a thorough artistic understanding of note values and rhythms. The Jaques-Dalcroze Institute is the pride of Geneva and Dalcroze Eurythmics have become an important factor in the musical world everywhere.

However, Jaques-Dalcroze does not only excel in his teachings of rhythm. He is at the same time a composer of distinguished rank, and his work in this field includes music for the theatre, chamber-music, songs, concertos and especially patriotic movements. Jaques-Dalcroze composed the tone settings for many outstanding fêtes held in French speaking Switzerland since 1896, and he is also the creator of the much admired "Chansons Romandes."

BELLS RING AT SIX.

By FRED DOSSENBACH, JR.

It was late April, and a bright sun hung high in a soft sky. Switzerland's largest city was in a dressed-up mood, and everywhere in Zurich there was a bustling excitement. This afternoon the annual "Sechseläuten" festival was going to be celebrated, and although it was now only noon, many people were already walking around in gay coloured costumes. Youngsters were selling booklets describing various facts about the ancient celebration, and all the stores and shops were closing for the day. Along the wide tree-lined Bahnhofstrasse, brilliant banners fluttered from the upper stories of buildings, and even the snub-nosed trams seemed more polished and shiny than usual.

The lake breeze was damp with the smell of clean earth, and it blew freshly cool through the trees lining the Bellevue quai. Blue water of the long lake was like a huge pane of glass cutting into the horizon, and low rolling hills flanking the shores were varied shades of green. In the distance the Glarus Alps hurled snow heads to the sky, and above the peaks great banks of clouds hung white and motionless, like piles of puffed cotton. It was a day that put wings on your feet.

But not on Jan's. We were supposed to meet for dinner at twelve thirty, and though he was ten minutes late, he still crossed the street in that slow, lazy shuffle of his. I knew better than to say anything. Time was to Jan merely something for the discomfort of the rest of the world. He was a good-natured balloon who ate tremendously, drank gallons of beer, and in between times did chemical research work at the University. Though he was American, Jan said that five years in Zurich had practically turned him into a Swiss. Usually his face was rosy and relaxed in a sort of tolerant amusement, but right now he was scowling.



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