

What other people think of us

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WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK OF US.

Swiss Unity Challenged by Three Ideologies.

By DEMAREE BESS,
Staff Correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor.

The Federal Republic of Switzerland recently has been submitted to one of the severest tests in its history. The results of the test are of importance not only to the people of Switzerland, but to all people anywhere who are concerned in the present world-wide conflict among various political conceptions. Through the forces of circumstances, Switzerland has become a laboratory in which the relative strength and value of certain political ideas and movements are being tested.

Here is the situation: The little country of Switzerland, with only four million inhabitants, is completely encircled by three powerful neighbouring countries, with a combined population of 160 millions. The people of Switzerland have no language of their own; they speak the three languages of their neighbours. Almost three fourths of them speak German; of the rest, two thirds speak French and the other one third Italian. The Swiss have racial and cultural as well as linguistic ties with the three neighbouring countries.

Switzerland's three neighbours recently have developed powerful political movements based upon ideas which conflict sharply with the traditional conceptions underlying the Swiss Confederation, and which challenge Swiss unity. National Socialism in Germany, Fascism in Italy, and Marxian Socialism in France all exert pressure, in one form or another, threatening to break up or transform the Swiss Confederation, which has been developed during centuries upon a basis of federalism, complete local autonomy, sturdily independent democracy.

Subjected to Strong Pressure.

German National Socialism, designed to unite all men and women of German race, tries to pull into its orbit the Swiss of German origin, who compose 71 per cent. of the population. Italian Fascism, somewhat less aggressively, seeks to draw toward itself Swiss of Italian origin living along Italo-Swiss borders. Marxian Socialism, which has become a powerful influence in France, invites Swiss "proletarians" to unite in a "class struggle" against "capitalist oppressors."

So here is Switzerland, squeezed in among these three powerful neighbours, subjected to severe pressure from three expansive political movements. What is happening to the Swiss? Are those who are German in language and race attracted to National Socialism? Are the Italian Swiss drawn to Fascism? Are Swiss "proletarians" and intellectuals abandoning their traditional free democratic ideas for Marxian Socialism?

Seeking an answer to these questions, we began here, in Bern, the Capital of the Swiss Confederation, a tour of investigation. We had set out from Geneva, Switzerland's "international city," planning to visit in turn cities and country districts in which German, French and Italian are predominant languages.

Bern Preserves Its Past.

We had arranged to meet and talk with many Swiss citizens in each of the places to be visited, as well as with foreign residents whose long stay in the Country qualified them as competent observers. We intended at the same time to absorb that "atmosphere" which all experienced journalists have learned is sometimes more important in reaching judgments than official interviews or formal conversations.

It was our good fortune to arrive in Bern for our first visit to the Swiss Capital at twilight, after it was too late to make calls. So we received our first impressions of the city by a walk through the streets after the day's work was done. Those who have visited all the cities of Europe declare that Bern is unique in the extent to which it has preserved its own past. We had a curious sensation, as we walked through its streets or the first time at twilight, of having slipped back through the centuries into a past which was not German nor French or Italian, but must be peculiarly Swiss.

Strict Control of Building.

A German-speaking Swiss professor told us the next day that the newest building in many of Bern's streets dates from the eighteenth century, while many go back to the sixteenth. The municipal regulations provide that no new building may be erected in these streets unless it has been approved by the municipal architect and conforms with the architectural style of the older buildings already there.

The Swiss professor added: "We Swiss have a sense of kinship with our past. Our own Swiss traditions are very important to us. We have

tried to preserve them carefully, just as we do our old buildings here in Bern."

We mentioned the professor's comparison to an American friend who has lived in Bern for several years. He nodded, and said: "Yes, and your professor might have added that they don't readily accept new ideas unless they conform with the older ones. My residence in Switzerland has convinced me that common traditions — in this case, traditions of tolerance, mutual forbearance and democracy — are far more important than a common language in holding a people together."

"The Swiss, in my opinion, have an even stronger sense of nationhood than our people in the United States, even though they do speak various languages and possess diversified cultures which different languages imply. It probably requires centuries to fuse such diversified human elements as exist in Switzerland; but Switzerland fortunately, has had centuries in which to accomplish the task, and the result gives one a sense of solid unity and permanence which is especially agreeable just now, in the midst of our restless, disturbing modern world."

FOOTBALL SEASON 1937-1938.

WESTERN GROUP TABLE.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
Chaux-de-Fonds	22	16	2	4	78	31	34
Vevey	22	13	4	5	57	34	30
Aarau	22	12	1	9	55	46	25
Cantonal	22	10	5	7	36	32	25
Urania	22	10	5	7	43	46	25
Concordia (Yverdon)	22	8	8	6	24	30	24
Montreux	22	9	3	10	37	41	21
Forward (Morges)	22	8	4	10	25	33	20
Solothurn	22	6	6	10	33	42	18
Monthey	22	7	4	11	33	56	18
Pruntrut	22	5	7	10	34	40	17
Derendingen	22	1	5	16	30	54	7

F. C. Pruntrut and Derendingen are relegated to League II.

EASTERN GROUP TABLE.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Gall	22	12	5	5	51	34	29
Concordia (Basel)	22	11	6	5	39	33	28
Brühl (St. Gall)	22	10	7	5	43	26	27
Zurich	22	10	6	6	50	36	26
Blue Stars	22	9	6	7	48	37	24
Juventus	22	9	5	8	38	40	23
Winterthur	22	6	7	9	58	54	19
Bellinzona	22	7	5	10	30	37	19
Locarno	22	5	9	8	33	43	19
Chiasso	22	5	7	10	23	42	17
Kickers (Luzern)	22	6	5	11	43	57	17
Schaffhausen	22	6	4	12	23	40	16

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday, August 3rd — at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting — at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

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Dimanche 31 juillet 1938.

11h. — Culte spécial à l'occasion de la Fête
National — M. M. Pradervand.

Les cultes du soir sont supprimés jusqu'à fin
août.

Lundi 1er août. Course à Reigate. Rendez-vous
à 10h.15 à Charing Cross Stn. (Southern
Rly.). Invitation à chacun.

SERVICE FUNEBRE.

Le 29 juillet, John BALMER, de Mühleberg
(Berne), mort accidentellement le 24 juillet,
à l'âge de 16 ans.

Pour l'instruction religieuse et les actes
pastoraux, prière de s'adresser au pasteur,
M. Marcel Pradervand, 65, Mount View
Road, N.4 (Téléphone Mountview 5003).
Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de
11 — 12h.30.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den Juli 31. 1938.

Predigt: Pfarrer Rud. Kägi aus Rothrist.
Während der Monate Juli und August finden
keine Abendgottesdienste statt.

Anfragen wegen Amtshandlungen und Besuchen
sind zu richten — an Herrn Pfarrer Rud.
Kägi, c/o Foyer Suisse, 12, Upper Bedford
Way, Russell Square, W.C.1. — Tel.:
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