

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: - (1938)

Heft: 865

Rubrik: Nouvelle société helvétique

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 10.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

LECTURE BY Dr. G. P. GOOCH

ON

"THE EUROPEAN SITUATION"

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11th at "SWISS HOUSE."

(Continuation).

In conclusion I will say a few words about the West of Europe. I do not wish to speak about Spain, because whatever danger there was of the Spanish struggle, a bloody and cruel struggle, developing into a great European or world war, that danger is now over. All I will say is a few words about England and France. When you look about in Europe there is not one thing that stands out so clearly and dominates the scene like the Eiffel Tower dominates Paris, as the growth of German power, which is so tremendous. Hitler and his friends say that they did it all but the foundations were laid by the Weimar statesmen, but Hitler and his friends accelerated the process of rearmament and recovery of national strength. There is no doubt about that. How big is the German army to-day? Well, I suppose roughly three quarters of a million. How big is the German air force to-day? Certainly not less than 2,500, although many people think 3,000. We old fashioned English people we tell these things: we have 1,500. How do I know? because it was announced by the Government in Parliament that we have 1,500 and we say how many we are going to have in a year's time, 250 more. I know they have a lot more than we have. We also know how many men we have in our army.

With the fortifications going on in the Rhineland it comes to this, Germany's recovery of strength dominates the whole of the European situation, and if you see every week going by without war, it is again due to the Anglo-French consortium, the Anglo-French group. I do not at all feel sure that it is so although we are spending astronomical sums on the army, navy and air force. The Germans are doing the same. The idea that we are going to have an air force as big as Germany's seems to be Utopian. We shall remain far behind, however much we shall spend, so great is the result of Germany's tremendous and dramatic armed strength through the increase of territory and prestige by the absorption of Austria. It is reflected not only in the British rearmament programme but also in the gigantic attempts of France, reflected also in the ever closer relationship between England and France which is closer to-day than in 1925 when we made the first Locarno Pact, which was one-sided. England promised France to help her against a German attack but France made no promise. When Hitler tore up the Locarno Pact in March, 1936, two years ago, a new Locarno Pact was made. The old Locarno Pact consisted of England, France, Belgium, Germany and Italy.

The new Locarno Pact made after the re-occupation of the Rhine left only three of the original Powers. Germany put herself out of it by the march into the Rhineland and Italy had put herself out by the rape of Abyssinia, which left England, France and Belgium. We three made a new pact which was more of a mutual pact than the old Locarno Pact. In the old Pact England promised to go to the help of France but France did not promise to come to the help of England. This new Locarno Pact was different because it gave mutual guarantee of support against unprovoked attack. In the new Locarno Pact Belgium's position was different from the old one because in the new Locarno Pact under which we are a party, leaving England, France and Belgium, England and France are pledged to go to the aid of Belgium against a German attack but Belgium is not pledged to go to the help of England and France, a very strange relationship. But we English and French understand so fully the position of Belgium that we granted this concession ungrudgingly. The logical thing would have been to say, "If you cannot promise to help us, we cannot help you." But we fully understand and do not want Belgium to be drawn into war as long as she will defend herself if attacked.

An Anglo-French alliance is now not only an alliance in the sense of a mutual promise of support but an alliance in the sense that it is accompanied by military, naval and air arrangements between the experts of the two countries. M. Daladier and M. Bonnet came to London less than a month ago and new arrangements were made for mutual defence. Now, if France is suddenly attacked, which nobody expects, we are pledged to go to her aid. What is not clear is what we would do if Hitler attacks Czechoslovakia and France goes to the aid of her ally but in doing so finds herself at war with Ger-

many. Should we come in? The answer is that we are not bound to come in. You know what a lot of debates there have been as to whether or not we ought to promise to come to the aid of France if owing to her treaty with Czechoslovakia she finds herself unwillingly at war with Germany. Many people said "Yes," because if Hitler knows in advance he will not attack Czechoslovakia. Other people, whose views coincide with those of the Government, who after all take the responsibility for the policy in hand because they are the Government, say we cannot do it, to make an automatic commitment which will bring us into war. We will leave the decision in our own hands.

The Prime Minister did what no other Prime Minister would have done. He read out a long and carefully prepared declaration of British policy, dealing fully with the problem of Czechoslovakia and declared that we should not come in automatically but he gave a broad and definite hint to Berlin that if a war started, anyone in Europe might be drawn in. There was no saying how far it might extend. Now we stand in 1938 very much like in 1914. I expect you all know that nobody then felt sure whether we should come in or not unless Belgium was violated. Many people say, and you can neither prove nor disprove it, that that uncertainty of England was the reason why the War came. People will remember the terrible results from that uncertainty as to what we should have done in 1914 and now draw morals and want us to say in advance what we should do. The Government decided otherwise, and whatever you think of their decision, there are two very strong reasons for it. One what you might call a material reason. The general impression is that the armaments of England are so backward, so incomplete, that we are not fit to come into a great struggle at present. Therefore any help we could render France or Czechoslovakia would be so small that it would not be fair to commit ourselves. That is one reason. It is obvious that we could not send soldiers and it also obvious that we could not send any aeroplanes. We should need them all to defend London and other places. That is the first answer, namely that a promise of support would look alright on paper but would not mean anything in reality.

The second reason is of non-material character, a decision of public opinion not to give a definite pledge of intervention, an opinion which if found very prevalent if you move about in English circles. I meet a lot of people of different parties and ideologies and I find opinion deeply divided, so deeply that the Government beyond all doubt could not reckon on a united people behind it in another terrible life and death struggle. There are a lot of interventionists and a lot of isolationists and still a large number of people who have not made up their minds. The present situation in Europe is that England and France stand more closely together than ever before and there is nothing solid when you get beyond that. You do not know what would happen if France declared war against Germany, as she would have to do, in order to render help to Czechoslovakia and none of us feel sure what England would do if France did go to the help of Czechoslovakia and therefore the outlook is very uncertain. The only certainty is that if France or Belgium is attacked by Germany without provocation, we shall go in. Nobody expects that. If the attack is south and not west, nobody can tell what England would do, and some people are not quite sure what either France or Russia would do as to Czechoslovakia.

This concluded Dr. Gooch's address and a number of questions were asked. In reply to a query as to whether England would recognise the Abyssinian conquest Dr. Gooch said:

We are going to recognise it; it is part of the present Anglo-Italian rapprochement. Let me answer quite frankly and it is to me very regrettable that is a very great humiliation for my country. You know perfectly well Mr. Chamberlain's answer is that it is regrettable but the danger of these two Dictators in combination is so great, or was so great, that we must do everything we can to diminish the hostility at any rate of one, and if you cannot do anything in Berlin, and England cannot do anything there, the only other thing is to blunt the edge of the Rome Berlin axis by bringing to an end the Abyssinian

quarrel between England and Italy. We have done it and like so many things to balance the situation a great sacrifice of principle had to be made. Everybody knows this fact and it is beyond all doubt that the hostility between England and the Duce has for the time being not only diminished but many people think removed. Many would go so far as to say that if we did not make up our feud with Italy, Italy would inevitably be on the German side and it would leave England and France against Germany and Italy. Many people think that as a result of the Anglo-Italian rapprochement Italy would stand out and if that is so, that is very important. It may be so important that it may make all the difference whether Hitler will attack. If he could count on full military assistance he might have the temptation to do it but if he could no longer count on Italy's help, it may make all the difference as to his decision whether he will or will not attack Czechoslovakia.

When asked about Switzerland's position Dr. Gooch replied, "The general view over here is that the recent *démarche* of Switzerland was inevitable and wise and it is therefore not for us or for anybody to complain. Switzerland is a glorious little country but so small that I do not know of any English person who makes any complaint if Switzerland tries to limit its commitments. There is a terrible possibility of Switzerland being drawn in and I can only speak about my own country. I am afraid I must say rather callously that if Germany attacked Switzerland we should be very horrified but should not be able to do anything. Remember that Switzerland is a long way from the sea and as for sending soldiers if we cannot send them to Czechoslovakia the same difficulty applies to Switzerland. As for sending aeroplanes we want every single aeroplane in and around London and most people say we have not enough for that. We are neither seriously fearing nor expecting Germany to attack Switzerland. I know all about frontier defences. I know about national laws in order to develop frontier defences; I know all about the inevitable great fear present in Switzerland and I know that if there was another war between France and Germany that the Basle frontier might be in danger. I am not going to dismiss this, but believe Switzerland would not be attacked on its own, but that it would be an incident in another Franco-German struggle and that Switzerland would be a victim just as Belgium was in 1914, not through an attack just by Germany against Switzerland but "in fact" just an incident. We agree perfectly that any danger which might at all arise would be by Germany trying to rush through the Basle corner, all the more so as it is my strong impression that if there is another war Germany would leave Belgium alone.

In conclusion Mr. Joss moved a hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Gooch to which the audience responded vociferously.

The End.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE
LECTURE.

A very interesting lecture was given by M. Gottfried Keller, on "The political Situation in Europe," on the occasion of the last monthly meeting of the above mentioned Society. Amongst the large audience were Monsieur Cl. Rezzonico, Counsellor of Legation, and Monsieur de Rham, Secretary of Legation.

Mr. A. F. Suter, President of the N.S.H., introduced the speaker to the audience.

Unfortunately, owing to the lack of space we are unable to publish the lecture in full, but will mention at least a few points of Mr. Keller's very instructive narrative. Referring to the last two agreements made by the Prime Minister, the speaker said:

"There is a Prime Minister here who, I think, has one great ambition: to bring about a new Western Pact and to come to terms with the dictator states. Gifted with a strong sense for realities, he steered clear from the famous policy of collective security and Mr. Eden had to go. Having thus covered the ground, he at once set out to open negotiations with Italy. The result is well known and there is no need to dwell on it. The Rome agreement of April 16th was indeed a landmark in the history of the relations between the two countries, for which the Mediterranean means so much. Though the agreement is not in force yet, the relations between this country and Italy have already considerably improved. Once the formal recognition of the Italian empire in Abyssinia has been given, the Duce is supposed to do everything in his power to bring about the withdrawal of the Italian volunteers from the Spanish battlefield. And, when a satisfactory number of volunteers have been withdrawn, both governments will declare the agreement as being in force.

A few days after the signing of this agreement another one was signed; this time in London. It came rather as a surprise to most political observers that England and Eire should suddenly forget their old differences, but there it was: Mr. de Valera came to London with several of his Ministers to sign a new pact which was greeted as a great success in both countries. Again it was — as Mr. de Valera very frankly stated, when he received the press — Mr. Chamberlain, who brought about this pact and who succeeded in isolating the question of partition which for such a long time proved to be the stumbling block, the new pact, which was thought to involve economic matters only, proved to be far more comprehensive than anybody anticipated. The question on the land annuities was solved, the defence of Eire was given back into her own hands and Mr. De Valera solemnly declared that he and his government would never allow the island to be used as a basis of aggression against Great Britain by anybody. Talking about Mr. De Valera I may perhaps be allowed a personal remark: When we were received at the Piccadilly Hotel, where he usually stays whilst in London, I was very much surprised to find him jovial, I would even say charming. He smiled broadly, made a number of very witty remarks, answered questions with astonishing frankness and was evidently very pleased with the result of the negotiations. I expected to see a kind of dictator, a fanatic, I expected some plain rather categorical talking with the gestures and bravado revolutionaries usually show — and found a suave, kindly, man who reminded me of a parson who is about to bless the community. I think, I was not the only one among the press representatives who had never seen or heard him before, who was completely taken by surprise by his suave mannerisms."

Mr. Keller then referred to the recent meeting in Rome of the two dictators and at length to the Czecho-Slovakian situation; as both these events have been dealt with in Dr. Gooch's lecture, which we are publishing at present, we need not enlarge on these matters, as the comments of both lecturers follow a similar trend.

As regards the Colonial aspirations of Germany the speaker said:

"Germany wants colonies. She needs them, too, — for the sake of her prestige. England, up to now, has taken up the attitude that this is not a matter for H. M. Government to decide, but for the League of Nations. This may be an excuse, it may be shirking the question at stake, for who is the League of Nations nowadays. Germany, Italy and Japan are out, the United States has never been in. The two principles of the League, the principle of its universality and the system of the collective security have been shaken very badly. Who is the League, or who leads it? England and France of course. England's action during the sanctions period proved that, and England's action a week ago when the Italian sovereignty over Abyssinia was recognised, proved it again. Germany, I said, wants colonies. And when England replies: very well, come back to Geneva, we shall talk it over there, Hitler refuses to have the colonial issue linked up with other matters of a general settlement and wants it treated in isolation. It is, I am bound to say, a hopeless mess. But there is one chance: Mr. Chamberlain having succeeded to come to terms with Mussolini, may be able to induce him to use his influence over Hitler. We can but hope that he does it and succeeds. Otherwise there will be no peace and quiet until Hitler has got what he wants, and, unfortunately one has to admit that he has what the Frenchman calls "flair" to choose the right moment for his surprises. Either he strikes when the English statesmen are in the country for a prolonged week-end or he strikes when France has no Cabinet. Germany, isolated, will be a constant danger to Europe, Germany tied up in a solid pact of non-aggression may be a good ally."

The lecturer went at length into the Spanish question and quoted Madame Geneviève Tabouis, the well informed diplomatic correspondent of the "Oeuvre" in Paris, and the author of a very interesting book, called "Blackmail or war."

It was a very interesting evening indeed, and when Mr. Suter thanked the lecturer on behalf of the audience he adequately voiced the feelings of the gathering.

QUELLE EST LA VILLE DE SUISSE LA MEILLEUR MARCHÉ?

L'Union suisse des Coopératives de Consommation vient de publier sa statistique donnant l'état des prix du commerce de détail dans les villes suisses au 1er mars 1938. Il en résulte que *La Chaux-de-Fonds*, malgré sa situation tant soit peu excentrique, est la ville de notre pays la *meilleure marché*. *Bienne* vient en *second rang* et *Fribourg* en *troisième rang*. *Zurich* est à la *moyenne* de cherté du coût de la vie, et *Davos* est la ville la *plus chère*.

D'après les chiffres index de l'U.S.C., le *coût de la vie* est aujourd'hui d'environ 10% *plus cher* qu'avant la dévaluation. L'Office fédéral pour

l'Industrie, les Arts et Métiers et le Travail a calculé, lui, qu'à fin février, le renchérissement dit "de dévaluation" n'était que de 5.3%. La différence entre cette statistique et celle de l'U.S.C. est due à ce que le chiffre index de l'Office fédéral englobe également des groupes de dépenses concernant le coût de la vie qui n'ont pas été aussi sensibles à la dévaluation que les produits alimentaires (les loyers par exemple). Mais la différence est due aussi à une autre façon de calculer les chiffres index pour les produits alimentaires: l'Office fédéral fait par exemple rentrer le pain intégral pour 50% dans la consommation totale du pain. Il va de soi que si cette proportion a pu être exacte autrefois, elle n'est plus justifiée à l'heure actuelle, la consommation du pain intégral n'étant plus aujourd'hui, d'après les constatations générales, que de 20%, en moyenne (13%, disait même une communication venue de Berne).

SOME OF THE FORTHCOMING SWISS EVENTS, 1938.

- July 4th, American Independence Day Celebrations will be observed at the leading resorts.
- Grisons Cantonal Gymnastic Tournament at Davos.
- July 6th-October 15th, Vacation Courses in French Language and Culture at the University of Geneva.
- July 9th, Anniversary Celebration of Battle of Sempach Victory at Sempach near Lucerne.
- Bathing Beach Festival at Geneva.
- July 9th-10th, Annual Summer Ski Races on Jungfrauoch.
- International Rowing Regatta at Zurich.
- July 9th-September 11th (on Wednesdays-Thursdays in case of rain - Saturdays and Sundays at 9 p.m.) Lucerne Passion Plays on Hofkirche Square at Lucerne.
- July 10th-15th, Eaux-Vives Festival at Geneva.
- July 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st, Open-air "William Tell" performances at Interlaken.
- July 11th, Bicycle race from Thusis to Davos (Parsenn Cup).
- July 11th-24th, Summer School of European Studies (1st series) at Zurich.
- July 14th-August 7th, Vacation Courses in Modern French at the University of Neuchâtel. (1st series).
- Middle of July, Beginning of Conducted Tours for Visitors at Davos.
- Middle of July-Middle of August, International Music Festival Weeks at Lucerne:
 - a) International Music Exhibition.
 - b) Gala concerts with support of eminent conductors and soloists.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

MARRIED COUPLE, young, willing to work with view to management of small modern country hotel in Worcestershire. Swiss preferred. Write Box No. 88, c/o Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

- Sunday, June 12th — Symphonic Social Choir — Annual Outing to Clacton-on-Sea, Coaches leave Swiss Club 10 a.m.
- Thursday, June 16th — "Fête Suisse" at Central Hall, Westminster.
- Saturday, June 18th — from 3 to 6 p.m. — Reception at the Foyer Suisse, 15, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1, to meet M. le pasteur et Madame Pradervand.
- Friday, June 24th, at 7.45 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting — to be followed by a causerie by A. Tall, Esq., of the Swiss Federal Railways, on "Swiss Alpine Guides and Mountaineering" at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.
- Tuesday, June 28th, at 7.30 p.m. — City Swiss Club — Dinner and Dance, at Brent Bridge Hotel, Hendon. (See advert.).
- Wednesday, July 6th, at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting — at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.
- Saturday, July 9th — Swiss Sports and Garden Party — Duke of York's Headquarters at Chelsea.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION.

(A Company limited by Shares incorporated in Switzerland)

99, GRESHAM STREET, E.C.2.
and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W. 1.

Capital Paid up s.f. 160,000,000
Reserves - - s.f. 32,000,000
Deposits - - s.f. 1,280,000,000

All Descriptions of Banking and Foreign Exchange Business Transacted

: : Correspondents in all : :
: : parts of the World. : :

SWAN RESTAURANT

(Proprietor: G. WIRZ, Swiss)

— 59, Gresham Street, E.C. 2. —

Morning Coffee - Luncheons - Tea
Swiss Specialities
Choucroute garnie - Bratwurst etc.
Grills, Home made Cakes & pastries

POPULAR PRICES

Phone: MET. 3350

Divine Services.

EGLISE SUISSE (1762).

(Langue française).

79, Endell Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.

(Near New Oxford Street).

Dimanche, 12 juin 1938.

11h. — Adieux de M. U. Emery Installation de nouveau pasteur, M. Marcel Pradervand, par le président du Consistoire, M. Alf. Brauen.

7h. — Prédication de M. Marcel Pradervand.

BAPTEME.

Le 5 juin 1938: Yvonne, Odette Hyde, née le 27 janvier 1938 à Snowdown, nr. Dover (Kent), fille de George Hyde de Salford (Cheshire) et de Mathilde, Marie, née Magnenat, de Vaulion (Vaud-Suisse).

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

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

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 12. Juni 1938. *Trinitatis*.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst, Predigt: Herr Pfr. A. Goebel. Sonntagschule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst. Pfr. Hahn.

8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

CONFIRMATION.

Am Pfingstsonntag, den 5. Juni wurden confirmiert.

Victoria Adams, von Georgetown (Brit. Guiana);

Norman Henry Büchi von Sirmach (Thurgau);

Marc John Fischer von Meisterschwanden (Aargau);

Paula Marguerite Haberstick von Basel (Stadt);

Marlise von Jenner von Bern;

Dennis Hans und Gwendoline Margrit Moser von Rüederswil (Bern);

Margrit Schmid von Stammheim (Zürich);

Edith Anita Sommer von Sumiswald (Bern);

Margrit Violette Tanner von Dintikon (Aargau);

Margarethe Wydler von Ottenbach (Zürich).

Anfragen wegen Religions-bezw. Confirmandenstunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten an den Pfarrer der Gemeinde: C. Th. Hahn, 43, Priory Road, Bedford Park, W. 4 (Telephon: Chiswick 4156). Sprechstunden: Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.

Printed for the Proprietors, by THE FREDERICK PRINTING CO., LTD., at 23, Leonard Street, London, E.C.2.