

The Swiss press and neutrality

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THE SWISS PRESS AND NEUTRALITY.

The Swiss dailies are gradually disengaging themselves from the bondage of servitude which an arbitrary foreign dictatorship assisted by a complaisant censorship at home has forced upon them. "Der Krug geht zum Brunnen bis er bricht." The Nazi threat that the editors would in due course be deported to the steppes of Russia or into the Great Beyond has re-kindled the old fighting spirit and has even moved our own Government to lodge a mild rejoinder in Berlin of which the following is a translation:

The chief of the Political Department communicated to the Federal Council this morning the report of the Swiss Legation in Berlin on the statements made on October 14th and 15th by the German press chief. A report was also given by the Swiss Minister in Berlin of a talk which he had with this official.

The Swiss press as a whole tries to observe the reserve which the maintenance of good relations with all the belligerent powers demand.

The Federal Council therefore regrets the criticism which it has been thought fit to address to the press and to its control in general. It particularly regrets the threats that were uttered. This view has been communicated to the German Minister in Berne and to the Swiss Legation in Berlin.

Amongst the many references in the English press we quote the following from "Truth" (October 23rd):

Quoting the remark of Bismarck that a nation must pay for window panes broken by its Press, the Berlin Foreign Office spokesman, Dr. Schmidt, has been reading another lecture to the Swiss and Swedish newspapers on maintaining neutrality. He said "There is no room for editors who write against the New Order. They will be given short shrift, perhaps by finding them a new home in the steepes of Asia or, better still, by extermination." This outburst was caused by an article in the Swiss paper *Libera Stampa* calling the New Order a "child-devouring monster." The German radio also listed the *National Zeitung* of Basle, the *Neue Berner Zeitung*, the *Lucerne Vaterland*, and the *Weltwoche* of Zurich as heading a section of the Press increasingly hostile to the New Order. Similarly, the Swedish Press is brought to account for the propaganda articles published in the Swedish newspapers after the recent visit of their editors to Britain.

With a few exceptions the Press of the two remaining neutral countries in Europe — for Spain is non-belligerent — has throughout the war — expressed its detestation for everything that the New Order means and foreshadows. It would be inconceivable that the descendants of the men of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden of the 15th century should to-day be willing to yield their independence to the blackmailers and mass murderers of Berlin and Rome, or approve the systematic enforcement of slavery now proceeding throughout Europe. "We would rather be in the Asiatic Steppes or even in the 'great beyond' than in the 'New Order' which the Wilhelmstrasse spokesman described — that is our answer," proudly replied one of the accused papers.

No country outside the occupied territories knows so exactly the real extent of German brutality

and the horror of the much-vaunted New Order as does Switzerland. Unable to take any effective part in fighting the cause of freedom, almost starved by her own lack of raw materials, threatened on all her frontiers, she yet carries on her mission of mercy with the Red Cross, and adds her voice of encouragement to those fighting for their own and her freedom. In spite of the threats of barbarism against prisoners of war, her citizens maintain their great work of succouring the unfortunates. The Swiss are doing a great and difficult work and deserve all honour and thanks for it.

When reading the above official statement of the Federal Council we also happened to find on our table the September issue of the *Schweizer Monats Hefte*. This is an excellent monthly the study of which we recommend to every Swiss who is broadminded enough to appreciate the "other man's view." One of the features is a regular article entitled "Political Survey" and contributed by its editor Dr. Jann von Sprecher. It records in a critical and at times one-sided way current military events and the involved and uncommittal language reminds us of the armchair strategist so prevalent nowadays. The author, with unmistakable glee, speaks (in September) of the far-reaching annihilation of the eight army in Egypt ("weitgehend zusammengeschlagen"). On page 329 he ventures the assertion that the English are a nation "noted for the scanty consideration they exhibit towards their friends" ("die bekanntlich auch ihren Freunden gegenüber wenig Rücksicht zu kennen pflegen"). We do not grudge Dr. von Sprecher his own opinion but we are curious to know how such utterances published in a leading Swiss monthly can be brought into harmony with the declared neutrality policy of our Government, with the press decree making such recitals a punishable offence and with the official statement reiterated above that the Swiss press tries to observe the reserve which the maintenance of good relations with all the belligerent powers demands.

SWISS STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

Through the courtesy of the London Office of the Swiss Bank Corporation we are enabled to publish the quotations of some of the leading stocks on November 11th, 1942.

Swiss Bank	490
Crédit Suisse	545
Banque Fédérale	375
Suisse Réassurances	3600
Nestlé	925
Industrie Aluminium	2800
Brown Boveri	676
Ciba	6200
Motor Columbus	353 ex div.
Ateliers Oerlikon	515
Sulzer	1110
Cia. Italo-Argentine	141
Fischer	985
Saurer	785
Confederation 3% 1936	102.30
Jura-Simplon 3½%	102.75