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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Quite a shock amongst the Swiss in this country followed the news published in the Sunday papers of November 5th that the Soviet Government had refused to acquiesce in a resumption of diplomatic relations between our two countries. The Federal Council after a meeting considering this "deus ex machina", issued an official statement on November 7th. It commenced with a reference to a declaration of March 29th last, expressing the anxiety of the Swiss Government of upholding correct relations with all countries and consequently a wish to normalise the existing status with Russia. The Swiss Minister in London who had taken up his duties in July last received the necessary instructions to contact the Russian Ambassador to Great Britain and to take whatever steps desirable to bring his important mission to a successful issue. On September 7th Minister Ruegger conveyed to Ambassador Gusev of the Soviets the wishes of the Swiss Government underlining *inter alia* their mutual interest of maintaining the trade agreement of February 24th, 1941, and a sincere desire to achieve a friendly settlement of other questions still awaiting a solution. The Soviet Ambassador suggested that these proposals might be confirmed in writing and after requesting and receiving the necessary authority from the Federal Council an official memorandum was handed to Monsieur Gusev on October the 10th. In a written reply handed to the Swiss Legation on November 1st, further negotiations were rejected on the grounds that the Swiss Government had in no way disavowed its hostile attitude to the Soviet Union. The Berne communiqué ends by repudiating the accusation which misconceives the attitude of the Swiss people and its government and which is apparent to any impartial or well-informed opinion.

For the information of readers who are not very conversant with the foreign policy of our highest magistrates, we may say that our attitude towards Russia was dictated by the late Federal Councillor Guisepppe Motta—no doubt the greatest Swiss statesman which our country has produced in this century. In the main his policy was based on ideological principles to which at that time every Swiss was prepared to

subscribe. However, some radical changes have taken place and for an impartial observer it appears somewhat strange that for over a quarter of a century this policy has not been reviewed or revised and that we have blindly ignored the writing on the wall. There is some satisfaction in the belated admission—perhaps retarded by the complete military and economic encirclement which obscured our vision—that whilst Russia can ignore and can do without Switzerland, we certainly cannot choose and maintain a similar course. There is nothing undignified in changing one's mind; even a great prime minister has admitted mistakes. It looks as if the Federal Council will have to undertake a journey to some Canossa; our foreign minister, M. Pilez-Golaz, whose resignation was accepted without much ado has already taken the first step. It is unlikely that our Government will not be able to find some acceptable formula, the more so as Great Britain and the U.S.A., at all times staunch and sincere friends of our country, can be relied upon to lend us their guidance and influence.

Here is a report from the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in Geneva and published in the paper dated November 7th:

"Discussions of the cause and probable effects of Russia's rejection of Swiss overtures for a resumption of diplomatic relations naturally fill many columns of the Press here. The matter is also a main subject of conversation."

The newspapers do not try to conceal the fact that Russia's 'No' represents a diplomatic setback of the first magnitude, the full significance of which can at present hardly be estimated. Public opinion has now crystallised into two main currents.

Those persons and political parties inimical to Soviet Russia would like to have seen trade, but not diplomatic relations resumed. They remark that

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu mardi, le 12 décembre, 1944, à 5h. 30, dîner à 6h. précises au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W. 1.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.

Démissions.

Admissions.

Divers.

Les membres sont priés de s'inscrire par écrit pas plus tard que le 9 décembre auprès de M. P. A. Moehr, Hon. Secr., Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C. 2. Prière de s'abstenir de téléphoner.

LE COMITE.