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CORRESPONDENCE.

53, Priory Road,
London, N.W.6.
9th September, 1947.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

Dear Sir,

Having been away from London for my summer holiday I have fallen into arrears with reading the Swiss Observer. This is why I follow your invitation only now to comment upon Mr. F. Isler's "reflections on the 1st of August."

It seems to me your correspondent does not appreciate the origin, purpose and justification of Swiss Neutrality, which have been stated and restated many times by eminent Swiss citizens during recent years. It is no doubt correct to say that an absolutely overwhelming majority of Swiss profoundly agree with our traditional policy of neutrality. In the course of generations Swiss Neutrality has become an axiom in just the same way as the "Monroe doctrine," even if of much smaller consequence and with much less weight behind it.

This does not necessarily mean that the traditional Swiss policy of neutrality should not make room for a better policy if one can be found. But does Mr. Isler really suggest a better one?

His argument that Hitler and Mussolini would not have spared Switzerland if they had possessed the atom bomb is hypothetical. In their lust for bigger booty Switzerland might still have been much too insignificant a target for them to attack. With equal justification one might argue that atom bombs will never be used in war, because they are far too destructive if possessed by both adversaries. After all, poison gas was not used in the last war for similar reasons.

Surely Mr. Isler oversimplifies matters when he says "the obvious answer is to make sure that their Governments' first duty is to put the good of the country before any other purpose and the unity of the people before party interests." Who is to make sure that this is done in the right way? And which is the right way? It is exactly what Hitler and Mussolini did in which they considered the right way. Is not the interplay of party or sectional or local interests one of the fundamental elements of democracy? The right "to agree to differ" is perhaps the greatest democratic privilege.

"Secondly," says Mr. Isler, "the civilised nations of the world must plan and work together and each must agree to do what is best for the whole."

Thirdly, all the nations must lose the habit of war and acquire the habit of Peace."

No one will disagree with these simple truths; but who is to make them do it? The real statesmen of our time have been trying to do it for years, but without obvious success. Surely Switzerland has gone more than a little way in demonstrating by her example how it can be done, but can she do more?

"Fourth" states Mr. Isler "let the people know the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." Well, who knows the truth in these days? And who will force those who might know it to tell the others? And how many think they know the truth and tell the others and are found to be wrong? If things were really as simple as that, let the people adopt a christian way of living and we shall have peace and happiness in our time and in the time of our children. But that is not quite so simple, either.

Yours faithfully,

W. MEIER.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

The monthly meeting of the City Swiss Club took place at 6.30 p.m., Tuesday, 9th September, 1947, at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1. Mr. R. de Cintra, the President, took the Chair. Only 24 members were present.

After the usual toasts the President welcomed the members and Mr. X. Speichert, the guest of the evening.

Mr. de Cintra acquainted the meeting with the recent deaths of our members, E. Devegney, M. Bonnaire, and coupled with these names that of Mr. P. E. Imhof, late Secretary of the Swiss Club (Schweizerbund). The usual silent tribute was then rendered to our departed friends.

Mr. Cyril Chessex was then unanimously elected to the membership of the club.

The President read a letter from Monsieur Le Ministre, who had received a telegram from Federal-Councillor Max Petitpierre, conveying patriotic greetings to the Swiss Colony in the United Kingdom on the occasion of the 1st August.

Mr. de Cintra regretted that the previous idea of renewing the annual dinner and dance must now be abandoned in the light of the recent cuts imposed on Hotels and Restaurants, he did, however, promise the members that he would endeavour to arrange one or two tea-dances during the coming months.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 8 p.m.

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