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The Chairman *pro tem*, Mr. A. Stauffer, congratulated Mr. W. Meier, who had been Vice-President and Chairman of the Education Committee since 1935. on his election as President. and said that he felt sure Mr. Meier would fill his new office with the same energy and businesslike efficiency as he had devoted to the Education Department. Mr. Meier suitably responded on assuming the Chair and this terminated the proceedings.

The Annual General Meeting was followed by an Ordinary Monthly Meeting, at which Mr. J. E. Schneider was elected an Active Member.

W.B.

**CITY SWISS CLUB.****(Monthly Meeting)**

The well attended Meeting of the City Swiss Club was certainly a memorable one for all those who love Culture and the real beauty of the French language when spoken by such a master as Monsieur René Varin, Cultural Attaché to the French Embassy in London.

In the absence of the Chairman, Colonel Anton Bon, who was unfortunately ill, Monsieur de Cintra took the Chair, and after the toasts to the King, La Suisse and, last but not least, "La France" he introduced our Guests of Honour, Messieurs René Varin and François Weymuller, French Press Attaché in London. He welcomed several other Guests amongst them Lt.-Col. Riesen, the new Swiss Military Attaché, Monsieur Clottu, Attaché Social, Monsieur Marin, Manager of Brown's Hotel, and Monsieur Dafasse, Secretary of the French Institute. He was very pleased also to welcome the sons of several of our Members.

He then asked M. Varin to address us, his subject being a sort of an aperçu on some aspects of the life of France. But it was not to a study or some lecture that we were to listen to, but to a most delightful *causerie* in that easy, elegant, flowing French of a most cultured man who never had to search for words but who, like an artist, brushed a picture full of colour, beauty and reality, all this mixed with charm and humour. After having remarked that the appointment of cultural Attachés was a novelty to be no doubt welcomed but which alas, had not brought much culture or charm in this world in the last few years, M. Varin proceeded to describe the effect of the Occupation on the French mind, the famous "esprit français." If that period had been a very sad one it had been a stimulating one as well, for those at least who had resisted and mixed courage, moral courage, with culture. The "Editions de Minuit" were a testimonial of this; it was during that time also that many books had been prepared in the silence of the Occupation. Artists had even decorated books which had not been written, which could NOT be written, but the pencil scribbled down in sketches what the pen could not write. The Germans were doing all they could to suppress any book which should testify that the French spirit was not dead . . . . . but French ingenuity was there making light of this "heavy" oppressor. Hence the work entitled "Philosophie du Moyen Age" which was not allowed by the Germans because it showed the strong links which existed at one time or another between France and England. Its author asked then the Germans to mark with red pencil (not blue !!) the paragraphs they objected to. This they did. The author translated all these passages into latin and had them printed in italics; this "revised" edition was submitted again to the Germans who passed it at once with a triumphant smile ! All these very obvious passages became famous and were often quoted.

New philosophies, new trends of thought were born during the war. The sadness of the occupation, the shadow it threw are often reflected in them, perhaps most in the much discussed Existentialisme, possibly also the neothenisme. But what really matters is that people still thought and never allowed their prison days to let their minds go stale. They re-acted and this was shown in the many stories, most of them true, which were told. There is the one of the

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village where the German H.Q. had a very smart Officers' Mess, which the peasants had to keep well supplied. One evening the lads of the village let a pig loose in the Mess, where it played havoc. It was driven out by furious German Officers who heard quite a few laughs in the darkness. The Priest was well-known for his wit and everybody wondered if he would make any reference to it in his sermon. The next Sunday the Church was full and when the time came for the sermon, the Priest chose as his text "He came to his brethren but they did not recognize him." The whole of France heard about it.

The constant desire of the Germans to impress people or to appear big was well illustrated in the following story — When Ribbentrop was Ambassador in London he decided to give a tea-party. It is customary etiquette that such invitations are made either in English or in French which is the accepted diplomatic language. He, the Champagne King, thought he would impress people by sending an invitation in German. He addressed one of them to Mr. Winston Churchill — the reply was awaited with great interest but it only arrived one hour before the party and said simply — "Dear Mr. Ambassador, I am most grateful for your invitation. I had however, to have it translated hence the delay for which I apologize. I shall be very pleased to come to dinner to-night."

There is the other one of the two prisoners, one British and one French who were well guarded by a German sergeant. One day they started talking about what they would do when the war was finished. The Englishman, looking at the barbed wire all round him said, "After that I want plenty of space and I shall go on a world tour." "A very good idea it is," added the Frenchman, "I feel very much like you and I want to see some of our Empire. I am particularly keen on going to Madagascar."

And what will you do they asked the German. "I," said he without hesitation, "I shall tour Das grosse Reich." "Indeed," stated the Englishman, "but what will you do in the afternoon?"

Such was the spirit of France in those days and Art progressed. True, men like Picasso, Mathis and others have created a school which, for a while, is having too much influence on younger artists and the same possibly applies to some composers. No doubt this will be corrected with time but meanwhile it was

## CITY SWISS CLUB

Will Members kindly note that a

### JASS & BRIDGE EVENING

will be held on **Tuesday, 18th March, 1947.**  
at **Brown's Hotel, London, W.1,** at **6.30** Dinner  
starting at **7 p.m.**

Those wishing to take part should send their application in writing to the Manager, Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1, to reach him not later than the 15.3.45.

P. A MOEHR,  
Hon. Secretary.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

### THE DANSANT

**DORCHESTER HOTEL, LONDON, W.1**  
(Ballroom Entrance — Park Lane)

**Saturday, 29th March, 1947, 3 to 6 p.m.**

Admission by Ticket @ 6/- incl. gratuities.  
Application in writing with remittance to Hon. Secretary, P. A. Moehr, Acme House, 20, Whitecross Street, London, E.C.1, not later than 24.3.47.

P. A MOEHR,  
Hon. Secretary.

better to create such strong reaction in Art as in Music or in Literature, than to just stand still in despair. It was at least a contribution.

Because France was very isolated, the voices which came from the outside were listened to with great attention and the speaker paid tribute to the B.B.C. for all what it meant to the 40 million French people. Another voice was also heard and listened to almost religiously every Friday in particular, it was that of the Radio Suisse and the famous Commentator, Monsieur René Payot. They brought hope and courage to those who were imprisoned and this will never be forgotten.

This is not all that Switzerland did. Because publications in France were forbidden, Swiss Editions of French books, new and old, soon appeared to maintain in the world the French thought and French literature and, suddenly, mysterious hands started delivering books on rich paper, beautifully printed, to addresses of friends. They came from Switzerland, were brought across the frontiers often at the risk of lives, to testify that the mind can never be a prisoner. These books circulated from hand to hand, with them were also the books published secretly on French soil. . . . those were printed on poor paper and were far from elegant but they testified for the spirit of resistance, of the desire to live and conquer.

M. Varin paid tribute also to those Swiss writers who are honoured in France, whom many believe are French, like Ramuz; he paid a special tribute to Pourtalès whose biography of Berlioz is so moving. These writers, however, have kept some of their Swiss qualities which the Speaker admired, their precision, their "ponderance" their thoroughness. He said what a wonderful experience it had been for him, as for many others, to be able to go to Switzerland immediately after the war, to enjoy its Peace, the sense of beauty that still exists, the honesty of the people.

He ended his delightful exposé, to which it is impossible to do justice in a few lines, by telling the story of Voltaire who had to flee from Potsdam with the police of Frederick the Great well after him. He managed to get to Colmar where the good news reached him that Switzerland was offering him hospitality — he went to Lausanne and in his first letter written from the Chateau de Mont-Riond addressed to his niece he said, "Ah ! Qu'on est bien ici."



Very prolonged applause told M. Varin how much we all had enjoyed his exquisite *causerie* and the Chairman thanked him most sincerely on behalf of all of us.

He then introduced M. Weymuller who had come really to answer questions, reasonable questions, which members might like to put to him. He felt, however, that it would be best if our Guest said a few words first on the subjects he would possibly like to be interrogated.

Our second Guest of Honour stated that the younger generation of France was quite determined not to return to the old institutions which, rightly or wrongly, had been blamed for what had happened, hence the creation of the fourth Republic which had taken time to find its constitution but was now an established fact. The French Empire had now become "L'Union Française" which was opening its doors much wider to the people outside Metropolitan France and which was, he thought, a very good thing. He then spoke about the "Conseil Economique" which was a further creation of France and a happy survivor of the unity of all French people during the dark years. These, men of various political opinions would come together to discuss important problems.

He spoke also of the "Plan Monnet" which might be called to play a very important part in the recovery of France. It was not the plan of one man, of Civil Servants or of the Government but it was the result of studies of groups of men, not only from all parties but of all types of trade and industries, engineers and workers, who had worked as a team and with a team spirit. This was something new in France, something which gave fresh hopes to many.

Questions followed this interesting exposé. They were on all sorts of subjects, the most interesting one being that of Dr. Egli who said how much the people of our Western civilisation were rejoicing in the fact that the next day an Anglo-French Alliance was going to be signed in Dunkirk. He wanted to know what the people of France really thought about this Alliance, was it received with tremendous joy, in a sceptical way, or otherwise? He also wanted to know what was the French attitude to the proposal of Mr. Churchill in 1940 for a United France and England and to his later one advocating a European Union?

M. Weymuller was of course very guarded in his answers but made no secret of the fact that most French people would rejoice in that Alliance. He doubted if the proposal of 1940 could be workable today with a united House of Commons and Chambre des Députés. For the present this Alliance would be largely on economical matters, it was clear that everybody wanted more freedom in trade and a possibility of exchanging goods without all the present restrictions; in this respect everybody should rejoice in this grand step forward which had just been achieved.

M. Varin expressed his own personal joy at the great event which was going to take place. He said if we could only forget the past, forget those things which had divided people and remembered a little bit more the happy links which had united individuals and nations, we should be very much nearer to the creation of that understanding amongst nations which the whole world desired so much. Yes, he believed this new Alliance would bear fruit and nothing would please him more than to be allowed to come again to the City

Swiss Club and tell us, in a not too distant time, of the fruit it had borne.

The clock said it was 10 o'clock. The Meeting had been one of the longest on record and yet no one had noticed how time had flown, so pleasant had the evening been. This is what the Chairman said in closing the Meeting.

A. R.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

P. J. Walker, B. C. Hossack, C. Krebs, Mrs. A. C. Muller, Jos. Frey, G. Berenger, E. Kaufeler, B. A. Brandt, W. G. Haag, Miss L. Baertschi, A. Bolla, C. A. Clark P. Moll, E. M. Foster, J. Arslanian, J. Kessler, Miss E. Tschachtli, H. Andrea, H. Binggueli, L. Storey, J. Margot, A. Gull, A. Halbluetzel, E. Rhyner, W. Schumacher, E. A. Grau, M. A. Kloetzli, C. A. Aeschmann, W. de Vigier, E. F. Homberger, Ch. Isely, W. Meier, Miss A. Hurter, W. Eichenberger, E. Hug, Swiss Club, Dunfermline, Th. Kimché, F. Schaerer, C. Bonta, Miss Schlupf, Miss R. Raccoursier, F. Streit, A. Kunzler, E. Wey, A. Hinderling, Chas. Gysin, K. Schwab, M. Gysin, Mrs. R. Collins, B. Sigrist, M. Jutzi, Mrs. M. Hilt, G. Ashley, Dr. E. Spuhler, Miss E. A. Bieri, W. Jseli, E. Schefer, W. Beckmann, H. Nicole, D. C. Maday, A. Perkins, C. Abderhalden, A. Kenyon, C. H. B. Hartnell, R. Wyss,

(To be continued.)



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