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: - (1948)

Heft: 1095

Artikel: Swiss national day celebration

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-693961

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

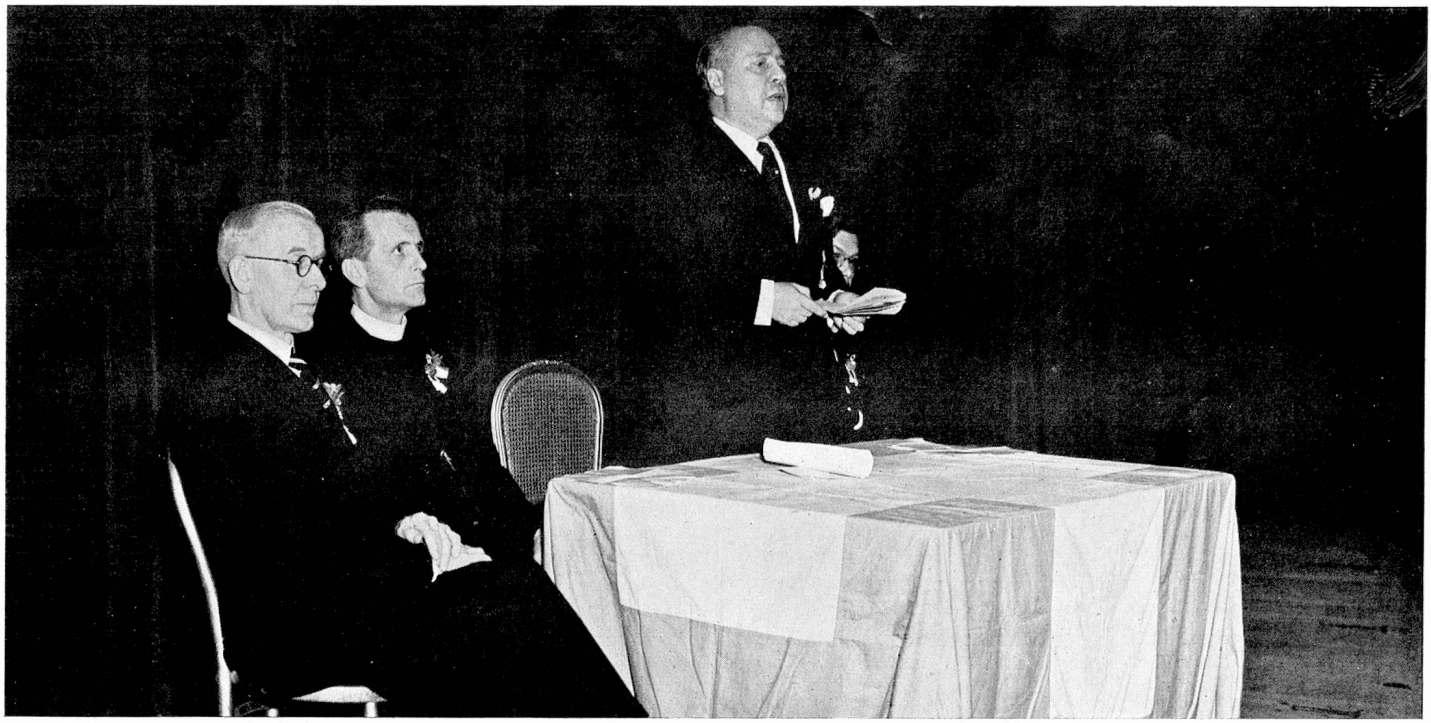
L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées 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: 20.02.2026

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



THE SWISS MINISTER'S OPENING ADDRESS.
Reading from left to right: **M. C. Berti, Rev. A. Lanfranchi, The Swiss Minister, M. Henry de Torrenté, Rev. H. Blum.**

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

1291 1948

at the LONDON COLISEUM on SUNDAY, AUGUST 1st, 1948.

O mon cher pays, sois mon seul amour,
Sur ton sol il fait bon revenir,
Dans ton sein qu'il est doux de finir
O patrie, où j'ai reçu le jour ! . . .

Beautiful weather — a clear sky and glorious sunshine — heralded in the 657th Anniversary Celebration of our Country's Independence, which was held at the London Coliseum, by the Swiss Colony in London.

Despite an alarming world situation, which may at any time have its serious consequences, two thousand two hundred of our countrymen and women foregathered at the London Coliseum to spend a few carefree hours amongst themselves and to be in thoughts with our kinsmen across the sea.

It was a happy gathering full of enthusiasm, and it is only to be regretted, that not all of our compatriots, who wished to attend our National Day Celebration, could be accommodated. The theatre which has seating capacity for 2,200 persons, was packed from top to bottom, and I understand that over four hundred applications had to be turned down owing to restricted seating space. Many were thus disappointed, but it is only fair to say, that no blame can be attached to the Organising Committee, they had booked the largest theatre available at no mean expense; the trouble is, that owing to the increased arrival of our young people from home, the Colony has considerably grown.

In my last year's report, I made a few suggestions, and I am very grateful to see that each one has been adopted by the committee, I advocated larger premises, this has been done; I suggested that the celebration should be held on the actual day, *e.g.* on the 1st of August, instead, as heretofore, a few days previous, that too was carried out. Lastly, I strongly supported a suggestion, made by the President of the Swiss Mercantile Society, to make the performance more attractive by getting artistes, if possible, from home; this too was carried out, and I feel convinced that all those, who were lucky enough to be present at the London Coliseum, will agree with me, that all these items have greatly improved the performance.

The programme opened with a March " Lausanne qui rit ", by Dal Monte played by our excellent Swiss Orchestral Society under the conductorship of Mr. E. P. Dick, with great vivacity.

This was followed by a Prayer by Father A. Lanfranchi, who rendered thanks to God Almighty for having guided so kindly the destiny of our little country.

The Federal Pact of 1291 (Bundesbrief) was then read by Pastor H. Blum, which in its simplicity is most impressive.

The Swiss Hymn (Schweizerpsalm) accompanied by the orchestra, was then sung by the audience, and this time with " heart and soul ".

Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, the Swiss Minister, delivered the patriotic address on this memorable day, he said :

Chers compatriotes,

Ce soir, dans la paix du crépuscule, les cloches de tous nos temples et toutes nos églises du plus modeste oratoire à la plus majestueuse cathédrale, annonceront le 657ème anniversaire de la Confédération.

Réunis dans cette enceinte, nous nous associons à l'allégresse générale, mus comme tous nos compatriotes par un sentiment de gratitude envers la Providence qui, durant plus de six siècles, a si visiblement protégé l'édifice dont quelques hommes libres d'Uri, de Schwyz et d'Unterwald ont jeté les fondements dans le Pacte de 1291.

Il en est des idées comme des hommes. Les unes à peine viables meurent avant d'éclore ; d'autres s'étiolent ou ne dégagent qu'un pâle rayonnement, d'autres, au contraire, jettent une grande clarté ; elles triomphent et se perpétuent à travers les générations. Tel devait être le sort extraordinaire de la Charte par laquelle débute notre histoire. Comment se fait-il qu'en dépit du recul des temps, nous ne puissions encore nous défendre d'une profonde et mystérieuse émotion à la lecture de cet antique document? La raison la voici : Le Pacte de 1291 seul parmi les traités d'alliance des anciens Suisses, formule explicitement les principes essentiels qui sont à la base de notre Confédération ; seul il définit les " constantes " qui, traversant notre histoire, ont régné sur le développement moral et matériel de notre peuple. Dans un saisissant laconisme, il énumère les conditions qui permettront de grouper, au cours des temps, dans un pays géographiquement compartimenté un nombre croissant de communautés distinctes, jalouses de leur particularisme, de leur autonomie, de leur physionomie propre ; des peuples différents par l'origine, la culture, la langue et la religion.

Par le Pacte de 1291, les trois Pays d'Uri, de Schwyz et d'Unterwalden, créent entre eux une véritable association juridique. Ils s'unissent sans idée de conquête, pour se défendre contre l'ennemi du dehors et pour instituer, à l'intérieur, le règne du droit. Puis apparaît le souci de protéger les individus et leurs biens, de sauvegarder les personnes. Il était naturel que, dans une fédération qui reposait sur la volonté des citoyens, le respect de la personalité fût l'objet de soins particuliers. Ce sera encore là l'une des constantes de nos institutions. En effet, le respect de la personnalité se confond, pour nous, avec l'amour immodéré de la liberté.

Telles sont les grandes lignes de cette Charte, à l'ombre de laquelle a vécu et s'est développée durant plusieurs siècles, non sans de graves vicissitudes il est vrai, l'ancienne Confédération, le corps helvétique — mosaïque d'états, de constitutions et de droits divers — qui devait s'effondrer avec la Révolution. Il s'ensuivit une période trouble et confuse à laquelle le Pacte de 1815 fut impuissant à mettre fin.

Une refonte de nos institutions était indispensable pour sauver la Confédération. Et ce fut après une brève guerre civile, conduite avec modération et

BASLER JODLERGRUPPE.

BASLER JODLERGRUPPE — " FAHNENSCHWINGER ".

humanité par le Général Dufour, que la Constitution de 1848, dont nous fêtons cette année le centenaire, fût établie.

La Constitution de 1848 est avant tout une oeuvre de modération et de conciliation. Certes, elle porte encore les traces des luttes politiques de l'époque. Néanmoins, il n'est personne aujourd'hui qui ne reconnaisse malgré ces ombres qu'elle a favorisé le développement économique et sociale du pays, tout en lui permettant d'échapper aux tourmentes qui maintes fois au cours de ce siècle se sont abattus sur l'Europe et le monde.

Le lien fédéral se resserre ; l'autorité centrale est fortifiée, la Confédération d'Etats devient un Etat fédératif qui seul à le pouvoir de conclure des traités avec l'étranger. L'armée fédérale est créée. De nombreuses et importantes dispositions répondent aux exigences politiques et aux nécessités économiques nouvelles. En bref la Constitution de 1848 groupe les Suisses en une véritable nation et fait de la Suisse un état moderne.

Dès lors, l'une des préoccupations constantes de notre politique intérieure a été, sous le signe d'une Charte non pas rigide mais toujours revisable — ce qui nous a permis de realiser notamment dans le domaine social des progrès considérables — la recherche de l'équilibre entre le pouvoir central et les cantons.

Certes, nul ne méconnait les nécessités économiques ou sociales qui peuvent amener le parlement et parfois même le peuple à confier au pouvoir central de nouvelles tâches. Mais il est une limite que l'on ne saurait impunément dépasser sans mettre en danger notre existence même. Bonaparte, à la veille de l'acte de Médiation, disait, avec l'éloquence impérieuse et brève qui lui était propre, aux députés suisses accourus à Paris :

> " Songez bien, Messieurs les Députés, à l'importance d'avoir des traits caractéristiques. Ce sont eux qui éloignent l'idée de toute ressemblance avec les autres Etats, écartent celle de vous confondre avec eux — et de vous y incorporer ".

Quoiqu'il en soit, la Constitution de 1848 a assuré à la Suisse un siècle de prospérité ; En sauvegardant le fédéralisme elle a finalement permis à tous les Suisses de vivre sous le même toit dans un esprit de tolérance envers les minorités linguistiques, confessionnelles et politiques.

Dans le discours qu'il a prononcé le 20 juin dernier, à l'occasion des Fêtes du Centenaire de la Constitution, le Président de la Confédération M. Celio a pu relever le fait qu'au sein du Conseil fédéral, les trois Suisses — l'allemande, la française, l'italienne — sont représentées et de même les quatre grands partis politiques. Le Président de la Confédération est de langue italienne, le Président du Conseil des Etats de langue allemande, le Président du Conseil national de langue française ! Tous trois représentent une minorité politique, confessionnelle ou linguistique. Le Président de la Confédération représente lui-même trois minorités.

Rien ne saurait, mieux que ces constatations, montrer le degré de maturité atteint par notre démo-

cratie. Comment s'étonner que l'exemple de la Suisse ait vivement frappé l'étranger et que des esprits avertis y voient le prototype de l'Europe de demain. Je lisais récemment sous la plume d'un journaliste français : " La Suisse est l'image de l'Europe de demain, ... si le bon sens et la sagesse ou pour tout dire l'instinct de conservation l'emporte dans la lutte engagée contre les forces de destruction. L'Europe sera fédérale ou elle ne sera pas . . . ".

Ainsi, une nouvelle carrière s'ouvrirait pour l'idée force exprimée par la vénérable Charte de 1291, rajeunie, developpée, perfectionnée par la Constitution de 1848 : l'unité dans la diversité des communautés d'hommes libres puisant chacune leur force, dans leur culture, leurs croyances, leur langue, leur originalité. Telle serait la formule libératrice proposée à une Europe pacifiée.

Certes, nous sommes loin encore de la réalisation de cet idéal. Des obstacles, à première vue insurmontables, s'opposent à une Fédération de l'Europe. Souhaitons néanmoins que soit entendu le message de la Suisse et reconnu l'importance de son rôle précurseur que le poète a rappelé dans ces vers connus : " C'est elle qui, parmi les Nations obscures, la première alluma sa lampe dans la nuit ".

The Minister's address was acknowledged with hearty acclamation.

And now came a splash of colour into the proceedings, the curtain divided and before us appeared our Ticinese brethren dressed in their picturesque national costumes.

They were the members of the Corale Unione Ticinese, who, under the conductorship of Mr. Carlos Valchera, presented us with a little comedy entitled " Una Serata al Grotto ", both singing and acting was enjoyable to watch and listen to, and I am sure it brought back to many, happy hours spent in their lovely canton. If the two characters, who acted (by the way quite convincingly), the part of slightly (!) intoxicated members of the party, and the scene about the " Murder of the Ape " could have been eliminated, their otherwise delightful performance would have been perfect.

That the audience enjoyed the appearance of our compatriots beyond the Gotthard, was proved by their vociferous applause.

The clapping had hardly ceased, when the members of the Swiss Male Choir appeared on the stage headed by their conductor, Mr. E. P. Dick. Unfortunately, owing to the holiday season, the Choir was considerably depleted, but their rendering of " Mon Hameau " by Jacques-Dalcroze, was most enjoyable to listen to, it was finely and feelingly sung. The next song, " Freiheit und Vaterland " by Stunz, lost some of its impressiveness, owing to the choir not being complete. Both the choir, and its conductor fully deserved the acknowledgement given so spontaneously.

The playing of the " Berner Marsch " by the Swiss Orchestral Society brought the first part of the programme to a close, and an interval of twenty minutes was announced.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to make any arrangements for refreshments, a cup of tea and a bun

THE CORALE UNIONE TICINESE.

or two would have been very acceptable, owing to the warm and heavy atmosphere of the theatre.

The second part began with an " Ouverture " by Suppé well played by the Orchestra, the Colony is indeed lucky to have such an excellent orchestra and conductor. Loud applause again greeted their performance.

Once again the curtain rose, and in a semi-circle sat the " Basler Jodler Gruppe " consisting of 25 members, dressed in their " Chuttli und Chäppli " with two very attractive " Bärnermeitschi " in their midst.

Thunderous applause greeted them, which they acknowledged by rising from their seats.

During the last few months the Colony has on several occasions had the pleasure of hearing Jodlers in London and the Provinces, namely at the Albert Hall, on the occasion of the R.A.F. Festival, " Fête Suisse " Central Hall, Westminster, General Guisan Dinner at the Dorchester Hotel and at the Eisteddford in Wales; but without belittling the performance of these other Jodling choirs, I venture to declare, that the " Basler Jodlers " were the best we have heard in London for a long time. They have excellent material at their disposal, and their singing, under the unobtrusive conductorship of Mr. Heinrich Hartmann, was a real pleasure to listen to, and we are greatly indebted to the " Schweizerbund " for having given the Colony an opportunity to hear this magnificent choir.

It was as if a breeze from our beloved mountains had swept across the sea, and with deep emotions, we listened to their gay and earnest melodies.

Their performance was opened with a March " Gruss an London ", played with vivacity by the " Ländlerkapelle Bornbuebe ". (Clarinette, guitar and two accordeons).

The Choir then sang R. Fellmann's lovely song " O mein Heimatland " in which the passage " O Heimat wie bist du so schön ", beautifully rendered, brought a lump in the throats to many in the audience.

Again the Ländlerkapelle played, this time a Polka " D'r Bassgyge-Toni " and most enjoyable it was.

Both Emmy Braun and Friedel Nyffenegger are the possessors not only of good looks but also of lovely voices, and one could have listened to their singing for ever. Emmy Braun sang " So zwoi wie mir zwoi " and " De Zwänggrind ", whilst Friedel Nyffenegger rendered Fellmann's delightful " E-n-Umfrag ", both with excellent accordeon accompaniment. If ever the attribute " golden voices " can be used, surely these charming young singers can claim it, they are both a great asset to the " Basler Jodler Gruppe " especially Friedel Nyffenegger, for taking some of the solo Jodels in the choir.

Seldom before have I heard " Los, los, de Gugger " by Fellmann sung so well, and how delightful and roguish the " Geissbühler Trutzliedli " also from Fellmann, was rendered.

" The Ländlerkapelle " played a Waltz " Bym Chrütterlisi " so temptingly that two of the members of the choir could no longer resist, and then and there they swung the young ladies round to the delight of all the onlookers.

As a diversion, Willy Bolliger, gave an efficient display of " Fahnenschwingen ", accompanied by the " Ländlerkappelle "; which, judging by the applause, was greatly enjoyed.

The " Basler Jodlergruppe " terminated their programme with P. Muller's " Verlorne Heimat " and " Heimatlied " by F. Pfirstinger, both sung with feeling and restraint creating in many of their listeners a real feeling of " Heimweh ".

Thus our visitors from the old and venerable City of Basle have, by their remarkable singing and playing, given us a few moments of sheer delight and joy for which we are deeply indebted to them. Thanks to you, " Basler Jodler Gruppe ", for your fine performance, which has ever brought us nearer to that little land which we call our " Heimatland ".

The 1st of August Celebration was concluded with the Swiss Orchestra playing the " Gladiator's Farewell " by Blankenburg, and by the Swiss National Anthem sung by the entire audience.

In summing up I am delighted to say, that it was a most enjoyable afternoon, everything went without a hitch.

Hearty thanks are due to the President of the 1st of August Committee, Mr. R. Dupraz and its members and in particular to Mr. A. Bon, who was again instrumental in collecting the funds for this celebration, to Mr. H. Marfurt (Secretary), Mr. O. Sommer (Treas-

ALLTRANSPORT & STORAGE LTD.

Directors: O. A. DETTWILER, F.S.F. (SWISS). H. E. NACHBUR, F.S.F. (SWISS). F. T. SMITH. *Secretary:* F. N. RODGERS, A.C.I.S., A.C.C.A.

Cartage Depot:
8, EAGLE WHARF ROAD,
NEW NORTH ROAD,
LONDON, N.1.

Head Office:
ALLTRANSPORT BUILDING
LITTLE TRINITY LANE
LONDON · E · C · 4

Telephone:
CENTRAL 5200 (15 Lines).
Cables: ALLTRANS.

SHIPPING TO SWITZERLAND

by all Steamers from

London, Goole, Hull, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Bristol.

Agents for British Railways and all Principal Air Lines

urer) and Mr. J. Zimmermann for their painstaking hard work, to all the artistes who provided us with such a pleasant entertainment, not forgetting Madame Bolla, President of the Rütli Club and the many young Ladies, mostly dressed in Swiss national costumes, who sold programmes and badges, and thus did a tiresome job with ever smiling faces, to the courteous staff of the London Coliseum and lastly to all the many donors, who by their generous donations, made it possible to secure the spacious London Coliseum.

* * *

In concluding this narrative I can do no better, than to repeat the few words which I wrote on the occasion of last year's 1st of August Celebration at the Casino Theatre, in this paper:

"And now, dear compatriots, we are living at a time when great changes, affecting the thoughts and actions, the habits based on tradition and experience, and even our ideals, are making themselves felt and are taking place, whether we like it or not.

It is a period, during which we see the old order which has served up till recently and has achieved what we are wont to call our modern civilisation, slowly, but inevitably make room for a new arrangement which is, as yet, hidden from our eyes, but for which we all, each according to his ideas, strive and yearn.

We Swiss, on this 1st of August 1948, feel that we too are subjected to all those tormenting, conflicting, perplexing and anxious currents of thoughts and actions arising from them. We see our, on the whole smoothly and peacefully working, democratic way of doing things, assailed by happenings beyond our frontiers.

Switzerland to-day is a nucleus of what Europe to-morrow, and the whole world later on might be and we are ready to sacrifice everything rather than that oasis of sanity in the heart of Europe should be destroyed.

And in this spirit we will remember the "Rütli Schwur," and that motto from which springs our whole achievement, political, economical and cultural and to which we have a right to be proud to-day:

ONE FOR ALL; ALL FOR ONE."

ST.

"DIE SCHWEIZ MIT IHREN REIZEN."

O homeland, rarest treasure,
An earthly paradise,
Whose beauties beyond measure
Delight and charm our eyes:
Those glaciers, glorious wonder,
Bright in their silv'ry glow,
The green-clad pastures yonder,
The still blue lake below.

Where, clustered round the lakeside,
The friendly hamlets stand
And where, far up the hill-side,
Lies rich and fruitful land,
Where orchards, vineyards, flourish
By nature's bounteous grace,
To strengthen and to nourish
A free and sturdy race,

Where on the rocky ledges
The Alpine roses bloom
And tender e'ergreen hedges
A fallen hero's tomb,
Where in the leafy alleys
Birds to the echo sing
And from the hills and valleys
Our joyful yodels ring,

Where chapels stand, denoting
A hallowed battle site,
Where banners still are floating,
Proud relics of the fight,
All these we shall be shielding
While yet our lifeblood runs,
Thus proving, staunch, unyielding,
The courage of your sons.

(Translated by J.J.F.S.)

MAGGI's BOUILLON CUBES

Delicious meat juice concentrated and flavoured. An ideal meat stock for soups. A stimulating hot drink, made in a moment.

Specially packed in glass airtight containers of 24 cubes (approximately 6 pints). Price 1/3

One of Maggi's Products Made in England

MARBER & CO.
(Food Products) Ltd.
6 & 7, St. George's Lane,
London, E.C.3.

cvs19

SWISS ALPINE COLLEGE
DAVOS 5250 feet

BOARDING SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS, age 12-20. **Courses in modern languages.** Classics, sciences and commercial. Small classes. Individual attention. Summer and winter sports.
Open-air life in beautiful surroundings.
Holiday Courses: July - September.
Prospectus and full particulars from the Headmaster.