

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: - (1949)

Heft: 1108

Rubrik: Schweizerbund

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NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE.

Annual Review.

The 1949 yearbook of the N.S.H., edited by Dr. A. Lätt, has made its appearance. It consists of a collection of studies and essays in French, German and Italian, contributed by some of the most eminent Swiss writers and thinkers, on matters which concern the well-being and the economy of Switzerland. It is an impressive array of wisdom and learning, a forum wherein expression is given to all that is finest in Swiss thought and expert knowledge as applied to problems of the day.

It would be invidious to single out for special comment any of the contributions since all of them are, in style and treatment, of a uniform high order. Space does not permit even a partial analysis; all that can be said is that the work which is not one to be read at one sitting, is a rich intellectual feast for which leisurely absorption and a good deal of concentration are indicated.

The subjects dealt with are many and various. They include, to mention but a few of them taken at random, a brilliant report by Dr. W. Stucki on the Havana World Trade Charter, with a clear-seeing, realistic conclusion; studies of Switzerland's economic national defence and her agrarian development by O. Zipfel and Dr. Gasser-Stäfer; Essays on the position of Switzerland in threatened Europe and in the uneasy stalemate between East and West by Dr. Werner Kägi and Luc de Meron, and articles on Labour and Wages in relation to the Cost of Living by Jean Möri and Nationalrat R. Bratschi. Prof. Max Huber writes engagingly on the cultural relations between Switzerland and Holland; the activities of the International Red Cross are dealt with by R. Bovey, and Dr. Emil Anderegg develops a thesis of the neutralisation of cities, zones and countries in time of war. The Auslandschweizer so dear to the heart of the N.S.H. will find valuable information in a contribution by Ruth Vischer-Frey, a legal expert who discusses the acquisition or loss of Swiss citizenship through marriage. The human note is struck in movingly written obituaries in memory of three prominent Swiss whose death occurred during last year. The concluding pages contain the useful feature of chronological tables setting out last year's events in the political and cultural sphere, these were compiled by Dr. K. Weber and Dr. Hans Ehinger.

The book is handsomely bound in black cloth with gilt lettering. It is admirably indexed and has the merit of being printed throughout in Roman type which is so much clearer and more restful to the eye than the Gothic script.

The competent manner in which the material is collected and presented to the public calls for the highest praise.

J.J.F.S.

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CARNIVAL AT THE "SCHWEIZERBUND."

The "Basler Fastnacht" (Basle Carnival) starts on Monday after Ash Wednesday at 4 a.m. and finishes on Thursday Morning. The "Maskenball" at Lucerne lasts for a fortnight and finishes on Ash Wednesday. The "Zürcher Sechseläuten" is a procession of people in fancy dress after which, on a huge bonfire they burn "The Bögg," but the "Maskenball" in the Schweizerbund (Swiss Club) in Charlotte Street lasted just round the Clock, i.e., last Friday the 4th of March from 6 p.m. to Saturday morning 6 a.m.

Sharp at 6 p.m. the first people in Fancy dress arrived, taking advantage of the offer to return the entrance fee to the first 6 people in costumes, and soon afterwards the whole place was buzzing with crowds, those with masks shouting their Carnival cry "Soli Du, gäll de kennsch mi nit."

A large crowd was expected, the Committee having sold 250 tickets in advance and it was regretted that so many people had to be refused admission, the house being full. The Hall was beautifully decorated with coloured paper streamers hanging from the wall and ceiling, balloons and other decorations fitting the occasion. On the first floor was an additional small dance floor with a Champagne Bar attached to it.

Six young members, under the leadership of Mr. A. Bühler and Mr. H. Wey, can be congratulated on their success of the organisation and decoration and they deserve the thanks of all who enjoyed a wonderful night.

Non stop dances to the tunes of an orchestra and the Swiss Accordeon Club who have given their services to the Club free of charge, kept the place alive all night. It was a great pity that, owing to the large attendance it was very difficult to see the costumes during the parade. Some of the costumes were really wonderful, although mostly home made. The jury consisted of two non-members who were in London on a visit and two wives of members, and their task to agree on the three best costumes was not an easy one. After long deliberations they decided on the following prizes:

1st Prize: Carmen Miranda with a head dress of a beautiful fruit basket. 2nd Prize: "A Trapper" who had a rucksack full of hares and pleasantries. This after demasking revealed to be "old Papa Bossert" and was much applauded. 3rd Prize: Half man, half woman.

Many other costumes were outstanding, one turned up as "Schweizerbund" before and after, one half of the dress ragged and dirty and the other half in immaculate evening dress.

The well frequented Bars closed at 2 a.m., but after an onion soup (or was it "Mehluppe"?) the crowd was fortified again dancing to a good accordeon band and a (not so good) gramophone until 6 a.m., having the legitimate excuse to wait for the first buses.

It was the first Fancy Dress Ball in the "Schweizerbund" for many years and the expression "like the good old times" could be heard from many an old member and visitor. It was also a good financial success to the Club who is still in need of funds for rebuilding.

A great many requests for a repetition have been received by the Committee, nothing has been decided yet and would-be-revellers are requested not to phone to the Club for tickets until an announcement has been made in the Swiss Observer.

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