

Editor's post-bag

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EDITOR'S POST-BAG

"Maur",
19, Steels Road,
Hampstead, N.W.3.
June 12th, 1950.

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

Dear Mr. Editor,

What has happened to our Tourist Propaganda?

The years following the closing of the war, were years of enthusiasm for travel and holidays in Switzerland. Everybody went or wanted to go to Switzerland. This year all that has changed.

As a result of the devaluation of the £ and the subsequent refusal of the Swiss Authorities to assist the tourist trade by some form of preferential rate of exchange, everybody is now saying I am not going to Switzerland any longer. Most of my friends are spending their holidays in France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Scandinavia, Austria, Germany and even as far afield as Yugoslavia and Spain. This is very regrettable, because the Englishman is a man of settled habits, if he likes a place he will go there again and again. This used to be the case with Switzerland, it will now be the turn of some other country.

Unfortunately there is a general impression among English people that after the devaluation it is no longer possible to spend a decent holiday in Switzerland. The Authorisation Office for Travel to Switzerland is now granting the full £50, which is ample for anyone to spend a splendid holiday in Switzerland among glorious scenery that is unequalled together with first-class food and drink and service.

The wrong impression prevailing among the majority of English people that after the devaluation the allotted money could no longer allow of a fine holiday, ought to have been fought tooth and nail early in the spring, through the press, kino, radio, posters, etc.

I put myself the question whether it would not have paid Switzerland in the long run to maintain the old rate of Sw.frs.17.34 to the £ at any rate for the time being, or say a rate of Sw.frs.15 to the £ for the tourist trade, in order to retain these hundreds of thousands of enthusiasts, which considered Switzerland the "Holiday Land par excellence."

I wonder if we could ask our Legation to take the matter up with our Authorities at home?

Yours sincerely,
Armand Hinderling.

* * *

Birmingham, June 13th, 1950.

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

Dear Sir,

It is a coincidence that two points of view regarding atomic energy appeared in your last edition. Can there be any other way than Christianity in action to meet and face destruction of any kind? The opportunity is here now for nations, which have been the least affected by two world wars, to lead boldly in a world effort to make full use of their material gains in

some measure. Material assets have been lost by the belligerents and their struggle in sweat, blood and tears to regain a healthy economy and, at the same time, make progress towards a welfare world, must have a profound effect upon every nation. The way of life we have established is not to be lightly cast aside. We have fought and suffered to reach this state — but — "We then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not please ourselves."

The welfare world can only be established by faith, trust and by every Christian accepting the necessity of a cosmic understanding, by working for it, and by example. It is our personal responsibility.

Dunant and Pestalozzi were world leaders and their personal work and sacrifices have borne fruit.

Yours faithfully,

Christian Kunzle.

* * *

9, Holyrood Quadrant,
Glasgow, N.W.
14th June, 1950.

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

Dear Mr. Editor,

I have been very interested to read Mrs. Renée M. Back's criticism of the Swiss girls who have come to Scotland for household and similar jobs.

I also am a Swiss by birth, and would like to add



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a word on the same subject. I fully agree that those girls mentioned by Mrs. Back can only run down the good name of Switzerland and its quality.

I could also give a few examples of girls up here in Scotland, and I can only add that none of them could stick out even a year in her job, according to the dirty and hard work they were asked to do. One of them even complained that her Lady expected her to do out the fireplaces "in her nice clothes."

Now, I would like to go into the roots of all the trouble. First of all, if we were to find out beforehand *what* these girls have been doing back home, we would see that most of them are not suitable for the work required here. There is seldom amongst them all, one that can call herself "Haustochter" with experience, or "Hausangestellte", which is equal to a Housekeeper in this country. The girls who do come over here to work in households are usually girls without knowledge in housework or cooking. They are as follows:—

Servicestochter, Junior Kitchen Staff, Office Girls and Shop Girls, etc.

all of them not knowing much more than washing dishes or peeling potatoes. What is more, they are usually dissatisfied at home for one reason or another, and just want a change and less work than back home.

There are not many professional nurses and governesses coming to this country, and of those who have, I have never heard a complaint.

However, I am quite sure there are some who take the job seriously here in Britain, but again, there are all those who do not intend to or even try, and this should be stamped out.

In conclusion, I may say that they also complain they do not get enough entertainment in Scotland.

They miss their usual gay evenings out back home, until midnight, and this they only find out after their arrival. I would, therefore, not advise anyone in Scotland to engage a Swiss for the house. I have, up to now, never seen it turn out satisfactory for both sides.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Hanny Farquharson.

* * *

7, Bercean Walk,
Watford.
15th June, 1950.

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

Dear Sir,

I was very pleased to find Mrs. Wuest in the last number of the "Swiss Observer" breaking a lance on behalf of the Swiss girls. No doubt there are black sheep among them, but are there none amongst the employers?

Where there is trouble, however, the reason for it is, as a rule, the result of misunderstandings. Very few of these girls coming from Switzerland are trained domestics and this is not generally realized by employers; I question whether even some of the employment agencies realise this from what I have just heard. Now, would any English business man expect his secretary or clerk to be a trained cook or domestic servant? He would not dream of it; then why should he or rather his wife expect a Swiss business girl to be a trained domestic?

This problem is not a new one, forty or fifty years and longer ago Swiss girls came to England to work in households, but they went as a rule into English homes where mostly two or three servants were kept and the Swiss girl, being generally of a well-educated type, was asked to look after the children and possibly help the lady of the house in light house work.

In recent years the type of employer has changed. People who used to employ just one general servant cannot get one because this type of girl now can earn more money in a factory, so they think that "one of these Swiss girls" will make a good substitute. Many, however, do not realise that these girls belong to quite a different class with a vastly different background to that of the erstwhile English general servant and, of course, they find that things do not work.

Some years ago we had in our family a Swiss girl who, being a bank clerk, was of course no cook and not very adept in English housekeeping methods. My wife did the cooking and let the girl look after the children, the housework was shared. Things worked satisfactory and I am pleased to say that there still exists a real friendship between my family and that lady who now occupies quite an important public post in her canton.

If all those here, who, whether officially or unofficially, are a party to helping a Swiss girl to a place in an English household, will realize the difficulties of the problem, they will contribute a great deal towards keeping up the prestige of Switzerland in general and of the Swiss girls in particular.

Yours faithfully,

F. von Bergen.



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