

**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:** - (1969)

**Heft:** 1565

**Rubrik:** The "Swiss Observer" thirty years ago

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## THE "SWISS OBSERVER" THIRTY YEARS AGO

In the first issue of February 1939, we read of the death of Dr. M. O. Bircher-Benner, pioneer in nutrition research. There was an article in German on the new BOAC Air Terminus at Victoria and a verbatim report of an address by NSH (London) President Mr. A. F. Suter at the A.G.M. — the two of them practically filling the whole issue.

On 11th of February, we read that the Swiss Parliament had adopted a Bill empowering the Government to call men to the colours in an emergency. The valuable pictures of the Prado Museum in Madrid had been sent to Geneva to protect them during the Spanish Civil War. Swiss Army training had been extended. The Swiss writer Robert de Traz had given a successful lecture in London. He had also attended a meeting of the City Swiss Club. Two articles were in French, and one, "Sechzehn Monate Banditenleben in China", in German. Apart from a few news items, one short report and one essay only appeared in English.

The next issue carried a longish report on the football match between Portugal and Switzerland (2:4). The Swiss Choral Society had elected Mr. H. E. Nachbur as President and the Swiss Mercantile Society Mr. J. J. Boos. The Editor Fred Stauffer wrote about Swiss societies in London, which, at that time, still included Union Helvetia, Male Choir, Swiss Accordion Club and others since dissolved.

On 25th February, we read of increasing defence expenditure in Switzerland, an article on the Ticino elections, two reviews of Swiss pianist Adrian Aeschbacher's concert in London, a report on the S.M.S. A.G.M. (in great detail) and more of the "Banditenleben in China".

The first large advert of the Swiss National Exhibition in Zurich (May to October 1939) appeared in the first March issue. Italy had expelled Swiss journalists. Toscanini was to conduct at the one-year-old Lucerne Music Festivals. In Zug, a campaign had been started to combat bad language and swearing. An article reprinted from "The Times" praised Swiss stamps, especially those on international conferences. Two meetings were reported, the Annual Banquet and Ball of the Unione Ticinese (Mr. G. Eusebio in the chair) and the Lucullus Lodge Ladies' Festival chaired by Mr. A. Indermaur.

The next issue reported Mr. M. H. Vallotton's address to members of the British Cabinet, House of Lords and the Commons on Switzerland's determination to resist all aggression; Mr. Vallotton was President of the National Council. The Swiss Rifle Team as is was called at that time, had held its A.G.M. under Mr. H. Senn, and the NSH had organised a successful show of the famous Swiss film "Fuesilier Wipf".

On 18th March, we read of bad avalanches and badly snow-bound Swiss troops and skiers. For the first time, Switzerland had been represented officially at a Pope's Coronation. A big splash was made by an appeal to the Swiss Colony for prize money for the "Tir Fédéral". Mr. A. Nussbaumer had chaired the A.G.M. of the Swiss Benevolent Society. It is rather rare that four of the members belonging to the various S.B.S. committees at the time still be active in the Society in one way or another today: Messrs. J. Oertli, M. Rothlisberger, A. Rueff and Dr. Rast.

The last issue in March carried a report that the Swiss nation had been much astonished that the Czechs did not resist the German invasion of Bohemia and Moravia. The Swiss were determined that "Germany

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should never take Basle or Schaffhausen", and a number of papers advocated expelling German agents from Switzerland. The then President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Etter, had given an address on the grave international situation over the radio. There were extracts from Hitler's speech at the Berlin Sports Palace

and a report of a tea party "Troxler's Bold Street Swiss Café in Liverpool. A long article on Swiss neutrality was published (by Ignis of "World Review"). Another epistle in praise of the coming "Landi" appeared, this time from an American pen.



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