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British film authority who had spoken to the Club before. He argued, in a most complimentary way for Switzerland, that the Swiss should develop their film industry and bring to the world on celluloid the civilising message of their glorious history and institutions. He was loudly cheered.

On 6th March, the Committee of the Fete Suisse decided to cancel the 1942 meeting. The Fete Suisse had been staged regularly since 1864.

On the last day of the month, the Swiss Benevolent Society held its AGM at Brown's Hotel. Mr. Anton Bon, the President, was in the chair and the meeting was attended by the Swiss Minister, Mr. Thurnheer, Honorary President, by Mrs. Thurnheer, Patron of the Home for Aged Swiss, by Mr. F. M. Gamper, Chairman of the Committee of the Swiss Relief Centre, and by some 30 members. The President said that the Society's disbursement had increased during the year, rising from £5,150 in 1940 to £5,886 in 1941.

The April Meeting of the City Swiss Club was a highlight. Not far from 200 members heard a three man official delegation which had come to Britain to ask for an easing of the Navy blockade on European ports so as to let through overseas commodities to Switzerland. The three were Mr. Hans Sulzer, Chairman of Sulzer Brothers; Mr. William Rappard, former Harvard lecturer and professor in history at Geneva University and

Swiss delegate to the League of Nations; and Professor Paul Keller, teacher of Economics at the Commercial University of St. Gall.

The visit of the three men had prompted the *Daily Mail* to write a searing article on Swiss industrial and economic co-operation with the Germans. The *Daily Mail* alleged that Swiss factories were working full blast for the Nazis and questioned the grounds for offering them special treatment. An outraged "Swiss Observer" reader sent a letter suggesting that the Legation should make a reply publicly

to this image-destroying article—which had contained several erroneous statements.

The Swiss Mercantile Society heard in July a long expose by Mr. G. Keller, President of the Foreign Press Association, on the work of a neutral journalist in war time and described the way British censorship operated. He made particular reference on the difference between "newsmen" and "viewsmen", representing two vital and complementary aspects of journalism.

## NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS IN LONDON

The Swiss National Day was celebrated on Tuesday, 1st August at its usual venue, the Wimbledon Town Hall, in the presence of a smaller audience than usual. The ceremonial part unfolded smoothly and rapidly. It was opened on time by the Church youth group, who sang the Negro spiritual "Cum by Ya" under the guidance of

Father Bossard. The singing was interspersed by invocations by the Swiss Catholic Chaplain, who ended the "religious" element of the evening by saying the Lord's Prayer. He was echoed by the youths behind him and the attendance praying each one in his own language: German, French and Italian. This turned out to be the only prayer. It was a circumstantial prayer, but a short and fitting one which found no objections among the audience.

The federal pact was read in German by Pastor Uli Stefan before the turn of our Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, who was introduced on the stage by Mr. Virgil Berti, President of the 1st August Committee, came to make his customary speech.

"I see three main reasons why, not as a Swiss Ambassador, but as a citizen of our country, I am thrilled and truly elated to speak to you on our national holiday" said Dr. Weitnauer. "Firstly, I am convinced that the set of values Switzerland stood for, and stands for, in the world are still valid today" he added. Dr. Weitnauer then went on to say that first and foremost among the many points, good and bad, which made Switzerland stand out in the family of nations was the Swiss State itself and "the opportunities it provides for its citizens to lead a really full life, to develop their personalities completely, unhampered by any traditional loves or hatred, and to enjoy fully—if they set their minds to it—all the treasures of civilisation".

The second point was that, despite their well-sheltered existence, the Swiss were faced today with "very



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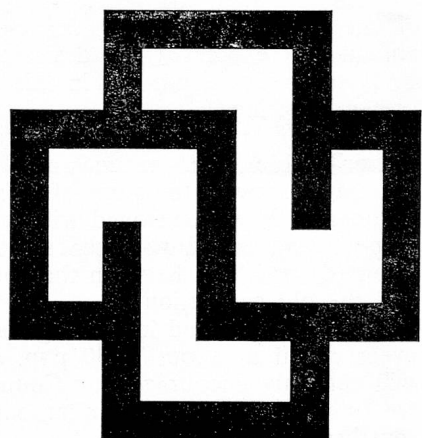
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grave problems". These were not only the more obvious ones of over-foreignisation, inflation, environment, educational reform and dissent, but the "whole impact of modern civilisation" which might "compel us to ask ourselves whether the principles and convictions we have lived by for so long are still the right ones at a time when problems of truly universal scope have arisen and humanity as a whole is called upon to tackle them".

Dr. Weitnauer stressed that we should not shirk the responsibility of seeking a solution to these problems. "We should not slavishly submit to foreign doctrines, neither should we try, like good Swiss schoolmasters, to teach the world what it ought to do". We should rather seek a continued dialogue with the world around us, he continued, and "let our conscience be the judge of what we, as good Swiss, do think we can accept or must reject".

As a third consideration, Dr. Weitnauer drew attention to the "privilege" of living in Britain. Pouring praise on the British, Dr. Weitnauer said that the first 18 months of his stay in their country had again given him an opportunity of appreciating the "high quality of life it can provide".

Dr. Weitnauer praised the politeness of the population, its civilised behaviour "the result of a long evolution towards a superior form of relationship between human beings". Bringing good cheer to all those who might feel pessimistic in the face of recent national developments the speaker boldly added: "Let us also gratefully acknowledge that, despite the stresses and strains of modern civilisation, in England law still rules supreme".

Dr. Weitnauer concluded by saying that, for all their differences, the British and Swiss people concurred towards the same goal: securing respect for the individual and his liberties "in the conviction that the only thing in the end that really matters in a country's life is what it can do to enhance the dignity of man and the full development of his personality".

The folk group "Chanson vevy-sanne" who were to provide the musical entertainment of the evening appeared on stage and were introduced by their leader, who immediately apologised that their performance would be in French. They opened the show with "Là haut sur la Montagne" and continued with a series of light, sprightly and vivacious classics such as "Le Vigneron" and performed now and then delightful regional dances, some of which were very fanciful indeed. The singers were on the stage for well over an hour. There were noisy stirrings at the back of the hall

towards the end, as the attention waned, but it was a highly enjoyable performance for which credit must be given to the 1st August Committee, who were responsible for finding the group.

The first part of the programme was concluded with the National Anthem, which everyone could sing thanks to leaflets placed on our seats. Crowds queued behind the cervelas counter and the bar during the interval. The attendance seemed smaller than in previous years. The great majority of the Swiss present at the Wimbledon Town Hall were youths, many of whom were students at the Swiss Mercantile School of English. The stalls were half empty when the programme began, but people flocked in gradually so that the box office was said to be satisfied with the result. The resident Swiss were seated in the gallery. There were surprisingly few of them. The 1st August Celebration in London is definitely tending to be a youth gathering. Before the show, residents had been invited to a reception in a room behind the stage.

The rest of the evening was given to dancing to the tune of the Harry Vardon Band, which regularly play at other Swiss functions. Young Swiss with all lengths of hair strolled on the immense Mecca-size dance floor and others drank large beers on the tables to the side. To most of them the evening ended relatively early as the last underground was scheduled to leave Wimbledon at 11.46 p.m. They will remember a most enjoyable 1st August night out.

(PMB)

### Is Bobby Fischer's mother Swiss?

A recent article on the World Chess Championship in the reputable daily "Le Monde" said that Bobby Fischer's mother was Swiss. A former nurse in fact. I had seen this stated nowhere else—but then I'm not a chess fan and have not been following the unending confrontation at Reykjavik very closely. Nevertheless, I tried to confirm this and consulted the 1972 "Who's Who", which doesn't even contain the name of Bobby Fischer. The "Daily Telegraph" information services were just as ignorant, and so was the Editor of the "Chess Magazine" in Hastings. It is known that Fischers' mother is remarried to a doctor and lives in London. If she is Swiss, then she must be the proudest mother in the Colony. However, she's probably not the happiest one as relations with her son were strained from his teens onward and Bobby Fischer doesn't want to hear from his mother anymore. Knowing his character, this is hardly surprising.

### SWISS CLUB, MANCHESTER

As part of a series of social events, members and friends were invited to a Film Show to be held on the 24th March, 1972 on the premises of Messrs. Ciba-Geigy, Healds Green, Manchester, and even if it was only for this venue, it would have assured us of a full success of the evening. The writer, and worse for him, was impeded from being there, and he felt certainly sorry for it, but it could not be helped. However, thanks also to information kindly received from Miss E. Rellstab, we are able to tell you more about it.

The large number of members and friends who all assembled at Messrs. Ciba-Geigy were most indebted to their staff who went all out to assure us of a splendid and friendly evening, presenting us with a buffet very generously stocked with an excellent assortment of food which included also drinks and coffee. This was indeed a very pleasant start for what had to follow.

After the Buffet the guests moved to the Lecture Theatre, where they were welcomed by Dr. Bolliger. Before the film started he notified the audience of the upgrading of the Swiss Consulate in Manchester to a Consulate General, and of the promotion of Mr. Born, who was unfortunately not present, to Consul General. Mr. Leuenberger was asked to pass on to him the best wishes of the Club.

Dr. Bolliger reported that Mr. H. P. Riesen had been elected as Hon. Secretary of the Club by the Committee. He reminded the members again of the 50th Congress of the Swiss abroad and expressed the desire that many of us would partake in this important meeting.

The film followed "Backerei Zurrer" which was made about 15 years ago, showed the story of a family quarrel. It was seasoned with good humour and ended with the solution of all the problems between the young and the old generation.

An enjoyable and interesting social event ended at about 10.30 p.m. and will certainly encourage our Committee to organise soon a similar come-together.

E. Berner.

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