

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: - (1976)
Heft: 1721

Artikel: We celebrate our holiday
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-690127>

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WE CELEBRATE OUR HOLIDAY

As has now become customary, our National Holiday was celebrated on Sunday, 1st August, with a short but deeply moving service in The Eglise Suisse in Endell Street.

The proceedings, in the presence of our new Ambassador and Mrs. Thalmann and members of the Embassy staff, were opened by Father Paul Bossard, who read a modern translation of the Swiss Eternal Alliance of 1291.

An appropriate and significant backcloth to this event was provided by three girls in National Costume carrying the flags of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, the three original signatories. Before reading the Pact, Father Bossard commended his audience to listen carefully to the words and to compare them to the Ten Commandments. "There is no doubt", he said, "that the Pact and the Commandments are by one and the same author". (For those members of our community who were unable to attend and for those for whom a re-reading of the noble sentiments expressed in the Pact will bring back happy memories, the text is reproduced on page 3.)

Next came the singing of two simple hymns, followed by a Bible reading (from Psalm 103) by Pastor Renou and a prayer of dedication by Pastor Stefan.

Then it was the turn of our Ambassador to address the congregation, the first time since he took up his new appointment among us that he has been able to speak to the community at large. His message was simple, clear and poignant but hopeful that our country can overcome the problems facing her. But there is no need for me to paraphrase – let Mr. Thalmann speak for himself:

"My dear Compatriots, Speaking to you today has a very special significance for me. It is the first time since I took up

my functions as Swiss Ambassador to the United Kingdom that I have had the opportunity to address the Swiss community as such.

On our national holiday it used to be the tradition for the speakers in all our villages to praise the eternal beauty of our Alps, the charm of our lakes, the discipline of our citizens and the virtues of our democracy, knowing very well that there is no one like us on this earth and that we are second to none! I do think that in the summer of 1976 we can be as proud as ever of belonging to Switzerland.

But on our country's anniversary I should like to turn my thoughts to the problems which not only concern our Government, but which in Switzerland, where all the citizens are entitled to take part in running the affairs of the State, are everyone's business. As you know, in some places there will be no bonfires this year and no fireworks or Bengal matches for the children, because of the drought which has struck the Continent so terribly in recent weeks. But the thankfulness for being a member of our motherland will, I am sure, be as deep and solid as ever.

Having passed the middle of the year, we now see that we are coming out of the worst recession the world has known since the war. Switzerland, though not hit so hard as some other countries, has also suffered. For the first time in a generation unemployment, that word which frightens everyone, has again been in the news. We have had to learn anew how to live more simply and with fewer resources. Fortunately, through the measures taken by the Government, the discipline shown by our industry and the efforts made by every citizen, we have been able to overcome the evil of inflation. But we must remain vigilant, because the road towards an upturn in

the economy, which implies increasing production and full employment, can present a number of dangers which could easily wreck our recovery.

In the political field, the Swiss electorate, for reasons which I do not want to go into here, has shown a reluctance to approve solutions put forward by the federal authorities. I am thinking of the recent 'no' to the legislation on 'land planning' and the notorious 'no' to the loan of 200 million Swiss francs to the international development fund.

This, I am afraid, reflected a lack of solidarity with those countries which are less developed than us and in need of our aid and support. We must all work – and we Swiss in particular – for the establishment of a world economic order which will be fairer and more rational. But in striving for this goal we should be careful not to destroy the present liberal market system with its free trade and the free flow of goods. This, after all, in spite of its many imperfections, has proved to be a vital impetus in promoting world trade.

In all recent referenda the turnout has been very low. This trend gives food for thought and some concern, because, in a democracy more than in any other political system, the running of the affairs of the state requires the active collaboration of the citizen. Of course, this abstention will not be compensated by the Swiss living abroad, who should soon be able to cast their vote while visiting their homeland.

One of the most difficult problems which our authorities, with the necessary help of the Swiss people, will have to overcome is to find new resources for the federal household. Stringent economy measures have already been taken but they are not enough; a new tax, modern and economical – which all of you living in this country know; VAT – will have to

Wir versammeln uns als kleine Gruppe von Christen

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für Bibelstunden in englisch:
jeden 1. +3. Sonntag, um 6 p.m.

für Gebetstunden: nach besonderen
Bekanntmachungen

Jesus sagt:
Ich bin der
Weg, die
Wahrheit und
das Leben.
Joh. 14, 6

an der 25 CALABRIA ROAD
LONDON N5 1HZ
(3 Min. von der Undergroundstation
Highbury/Islington) Wir laden Dich herzlich
ein! Swiss Evangelical Brotherhood

ARE YOU A YOUNG SWISS?

Do you know the biggest Swiss happening in town? The SWISS YOUTH CLUB, 48 GREAT PETER STREET, LONDON S.W. 1.

Every Sunday from 4 p.m. onwards the Swiss Youth Club under the auspices of the Swiss Churches in London is staging a "get-together" with a variety of happenings. From 4 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. "do-it-yourself" entertainment followed by an ecumenical Church service for those who wish to participate.

At 7.30 p.m. a communal dinner party opens a night of dancing and talking (In Schwizerdütsch). Refreshments are served at the bar by Club members.

Looking forward to seeing you!
Committee of the Swiss Youth Club.

be introduced to provide more money for the Government and to enable the Confederation to carry out its manifold tasks.

But, as you can imagine, the passage of this legislation past the scrutiny of the federal assembly, the political parties and interested organisations and, finally, the citizens, will not be an easy one. These are some of the problems facing us, but I am confident that a sense of civic duty is a commodity which still exists in Switzerland.

Let us not forget, in dealing with our day-to-day problems, the moral and cultural values which still form the backbone of our country and of which the three Confederates were profoundly aware. Let us not forget, either, their unbroken will to independence or the oath they swore to lead a life free from outside interference.

In conclusion, my dear compatriots, I should like to mention my gratitude — and, I am sure, the gratitude of all of you here — to the country in which we reside. It is indeed a blessing to live in a state whose people have always shown true friendship to Switzerland — a country which is witnessing profound changes, which is going through difficult times, but which, in spite of no longer being the great power it used to be, still has a lot to offer the rest of the world."

The service closed with a recital of songs presented by Miss Valerie Baulard,

accompanied at the piano by Robert Streit. Miss Baulard's programme comprised songs in German, Italian, French and English — acknowledging the multilingual nature of our country. For her encore, Miss Baulard chose the hauntingly beautiful "Blow the wind Southerly", made famous by the late Kathleen Ferrier.

In spite of an unfortunate car accident en route to Endle Street, Miss Baulard's composure and voice suffered no ill effects. She has a beautiful voice that ranges from contralto to mezzo-soprano with warmth, ease and versatility, all ably displayed by her choice of programme.

Miss Baulard has travelled extensively, singing with many of the world's great orchestras and conductors, she is no stranger to Switzerland, where she has given concerts, recitals and broadcasts.

Robert Streit, son of the late Fred Streit, and a long-standing friend of Miss Baulard, accompanied with sympathy, expressing his awareness of the accompanists skills and blending them to the voice.

After the service some of the younger members of the community, and some of the not-so-young, adjourned to the Swiss Youth Centre at the John Southworth Centre for an evening of dancing. A report will appear in a subsequent edition of the *Swiss Observer*.

WGS

NEWS FROM THE COLONY



Dr. Ernesto Thalmann, the Swiss Ambassador, addresses the congregation at this year's 1st August celebration in Endell Street.



Pastor Uli Stefan, who will be returning to Switzerland shortly, read a moving and prayerful dedication.



Some of the participants at the 1st August service entering the appropriately adorned Eglise Suisse.