

Welfare Office for Swiss girls

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1975)**

Heft 1704

PDF erstellt am: **22.09.2024**

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law-suits. In 1918, the British consul-general called for plays staged in English, so the English Players Company was formed. Joyce, of all people, became business-manager. It was hinted that the British Treasury, which had given him a grant, would take it kindly if he made this patriotic gesture. Furthermore, Joyce was under suspicion on account of his decade in Austrian territory, and the Consulate required a gesture from him. Joyce was only too happy to take on this entertaining new hobby – the political aspects interested him not in the slightest. He persuaded actors to join the company on low wages, sold tickets with great aplomb regardless of whether the buyers knew much English, and crossed swords with the consulate staff, who resented his cavalier attitude towards them and his indifference to the war. Nevertheless, the first production, "The Importance of Being Earnest", with Joyce as prompter, off-stage singer and general factotum, was a success. One actor was the consular employee *Henry Carr*, who was annoyed at his low fee and demanded reimbursement of outlay on clothing, particularly a pair of trousers. Joyce accused Carr in turn of handing in money for only 12 tickets out of 20 he had been given to sell. Hard words were spoken. Carr demanded 150 francs for his clothes. But no, the clothes were not bought just for this performance, and Joyce argued disingenuously that Carr had his duty as a British subject to uphold. The upshot was that Joyce sued Carr for money owing on

tickets and for libel; Carr counterclaimed sums to cover an acceptable wage and expenses for costume. Joyce was not blind to the funny side but was disputatious by nature, and pursued with the suits. He won two; the libel case was deferred. Meanwhile, the Consulate washed its hands of Joyce and the English Players who nevertheless were doing well. Nora Joyce was one of their stars. Unfortunately Joyce was by now conducting a personal vendetta against British officialdom in Zurich, and closing in on Carr for the kill. But his libel case was unconvincing; still he refused legal advice to drop it and then rejected orders to pay costs and damages to Carr. By this time he had tried to publicise this "hounding of art by authority" to the extent of writing to Lloyd George! The court decided to proceed by distraint against him. He refused to give up his books and typewriter, and so finally, the judge, ordering him to turn out his wallet, divested him of 50 francs. It was a peevish affair, but Joyce did succeed in discomfiting the Consulate somewhat. Various officials are further mocked in "Ulysses" – the Players, however, started losing money and ceased to exist after a while.

Through his many activities, Joyce kept his family constantly on the move, with relatively long stays in the Universitätstrasse and the Seefeldstrasse. In the latter flat, he used to disturb Philipp Jarnach, the assistant of Ferruccio Busoni with his boisterous singing in the

mornings. Joyce also found time for innumerable friendships, quarrels, and a curious flirtation with a demi-mondaine whose beauty struck him as the embodiment of art. He seems to have contented himself largely with gazing.

Joyce went on to scandalise many with the publication of "Ulysses" in 1922, and to baffle everyone with the serial publication of "Finnegans Wake". In Zurich he was the young "penman" in his swaggering prime. In Paris he was an international figure, and notoriety and ill-health made him reticent and sombre. But all this is outside the geographical ambit of this magazine and so must remain another story.

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