Correspondence

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whereby Switzerland has welded its diverse components into a smooth-running political instrument. For the paradoxical character of race and culture applies also here.

Thus, the government of the country is not centralized, as are the governments of the great States, but proceeds from the periphery towards the centre. Switzerland has no parliament, but many parliaments; it has no parliamentary system, but many such systems.

Yet this most loosely knit of all European State structures is in fact the most stable.

Turning now to achievement, one meets with the same element of the unexpected, the apparently illogical.

For example, we know that England acquired her pre-eminence in the last century by reason of her wealth of raw materials for the creation of industrial revolution. In Switzerland, by contrast, one has a poor country, as all mountainous countries must be intrinsically poor, lacking in most raw materials, and in coal most of all.

Such a land, on the logic of its geographical facts, one might expect to develop only within the well-defined and narrow limits of husbandry and the like.

But what does one find? One discovers a country unknown entirely to the ordinary English visitor bent on the enjoyment of climate and scenery, a country highly industrialized, with such great centres of heavy industry as Zurich.

And so, once more a paradox. Switzerland is land-locked the full circle of its frontiers. Yet in Zurich, in this year's very lovely National Exhibition, I saw a display of modern machinery which included giant propellers for the largest class of ocean-going liners!

Switzerland, then, as a modern state, presents the picture of many paradoxes, and the significance of these paradoxes has at this time real value and importance. For this reason: they offer the lie direct to those who claim that there are irreconcilable racial and political differences between Germans, French and Italians, since these all live amicably side by side under the red cross of Geneva, speaking their own tongues, worshipping in their own way, conducting their community life according to their local traditions.

Switzerland shows us these three great racial types welded loosely, yet firmly, into the mould of a peace-loving modern State; and, in doing so, points a plain moral by demonstrating the falsity of much of the Totalitarian ideology.

POUR LA PATRIE.

Over the week-end two contingents, numbering altogether about 800, of our compatriots, who have been called up to join their respective units, will leave, or have already left London for Southampton-Havre *en route* for Switzerland.

Amongst those who are going to serve our country, are many friends whose faces one will miss, for many this call brings hardship and for not a few almost bankruptcy, to those we would say to keep a stout heart, remembering that even the darkest cloud has a silver lining.

To all who have answered the call of our country we wish a safe and speedy return.

CORRESPONDENCE.

(In encouraging and publishing correspondence on any matter of interest to our readers we wish to stress that we do not necessarily subscribe to the opinions expressed therein. The following dwells on the traditional neutrality of Switzerland in an unorthodox manner but probably reflects the feelings of not a few of our compatriots. ED. S.O.)

55, Firsby Avenue,
Shirley — Croydon,
11th Sept., 1939.

The Editor,
THE SWISS OBSERVER,
23, Leonard Street,
E.C.2.

Dear Sir,

I was sorely disappointed to find from your article entitled "WAR" that you, too, harbour the sentiment which appears so prevalent in Switzerland, namely that Switzerland should remain neutral in the present conflagration.

It simply passes my understanding that our country should take up this attitude which, I consider, is thoroughly unworthy of her. I will admit right away that Switzerland's neutrality is a matter of international agreement, but while Hitlerism is rampant such agreements count for very little, and events during the last few years have proved conclusively that neutrality would very quickly become a myth if Germany should emerge victorious from the present struggle.

When one recalls the anxiety that the Swiss registered during the liquidations of Austria and Czechoslovakia, and remembering the colossal amounts of money that Switzerland had to spend recently on defence work, it seems to me the most logical thing to take an active part in this fight to save Democracy, particularly for a country that likes to think of herself as the very cradle of Democracy.

If there could be two opinions as to the instigator of the present war, there would be some excuse for Switzerland keeping neutral, but the issue is so clear that no sane person can have any doubt on the matter.

I have the feeling that Switzerland, by taking an active part in this war on the side of England and France, could materially shorten its duration, as I believe this fact would have a marked moral effect on the poor, misled German nation.

It will be entirely due to the efforts of England and France if the freedom and independence of Switzerland is safe in future, and it appears to me wholly unworthy of our country to let others fight her battles while she looks on.

I believe that the example of Switzerland would even induce other neutral countries to revise their attitude, for there can be no doubt that peace in Europe can only be attained by the complete overthrow of the Nazi regime.

When one considers the prompt response of the British Dominions, it is indeed painful to think that the countries which will most immediately benefit by the overthrow of Hitlerism, namely the countries bordering on Germany, cannot pluck up enough courage to throw in their fate with England and France.

It may be argued that the assistance of Switzerland would make no great difference, but if that were so, why did Switzerland make such enormous monetary sacrifices in the last few years for military purposes? I, myself, think that the active participation of Switzerland would be of the greatest moral and strategic benefit to the Western Powers. The strategic advantage is quite obvious, and the moral effect little less so.

The recently repeated assurance of Hitler that he will respect the neutrality of Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland is not due to sudden generosity, but to strategic considerations. These promises would, of course, soon be forgotten if he were to prove victorious.

Another point that should cause all European countries to safeguard their independence by assisting towards a quick decision, is the position of Russia, a country which may possibly wait for the thorough exhaustion of the present protagonists before again releasing on a distracted world her particular brand of political propaganda.

Talking of Russia, you record with justifiable pride the fact that Switzerland has decided against resuming diplomatic relations with that country, but so long as Switzerland can maintain relations with a Government with a record of iniquity, broken pledges, and brute force, like the German, the whole matter appears somewhat insincere.

If I can be convinced that the present attitude of Switzerland is worthy of her heroic past, and is, at the same time, serving her interests, taking a long term view, I shall be glad to hear the arguments.

Where is the Swiss who will be proud of the future liberty and independence of his country if he knows them to have been secured by English, French, and Polish blood?

Yours faithfully,

J. FREI.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Saturday, September 23rd, at 2.30 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — Monthly Meeting — at "Swiss House," 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

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Dimanche 17 septembre 1939. **JEUNE FEDERAL.**

11h. Culte et Ste-Cène. M. M. Pradervand.

Le culte du soir est remplacé par un bref culte au Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1, à 5h.

Pour tout ce qui concerne le ministère pastoral, prière de s'adresser à Monsieur le pasteur Marcel Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4. Téléphone Mountview 5003). Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11-12h.30.

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Sonntag, den 17. September:
Eidgenössischer Bettag.

Vormittags 11 Uhr: Gottesdienst und nach demselben Abendmahl. Predigt v. Pfr. E. Bommeli über das Thema: Volk und Menscheit. (Psalm 29, 9 und 96, 7) Lieder: 79, 81 & 84.

Nachmittags 5 Uhr in Bedford Way 15, Nähe Russell Square: Zusammenkunft, insbesondere der jungen Schweizer und Schweizerinnen. Ansprachen von den Pfarrern Pradervand und Bommeli. Jedermann freundlich eingeladen!

Mittwoch: Schwyzerchränzli (gewohnter Text) f.d. Setzer. Sprechstunden, Religionsunterricht.

Anfragen wegen Religions — bezw. Konfirmanden Unterricht sind erbeten an Herrn Pfarrer E. Bommeli. Sprechstunden: Jeden Dienstag von 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche, Jeden Mittwoch von 5-6 Uhr im Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1.

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