

# Home news

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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### MURDERED NAZI LEADER.

The murder at Davos of the Nazi leader Herr Gustloff by the young Yugoslav Jew Frankfurter, has caused a great sensation in Swiss Government quarters. Dr. Motta, head of the Political Department, had a long talk with the German Minister in Berne, who had interrupted the stay he was making in the mountains. The German Minister considers that the situation is very serious, as the murder, in his view, is a consequence of the violent Press campaign carried out by the Left-wing newspapers in Switzerland against the National Socialist régime in Germany.

The question will be examined by the Cabinet, when Dr. Motta will make his report. It is estimated in Government quarters that the law adopted last March to prevent the Press from attacking foreign Governments and endangering the foreign relations of Switzerland has not been applied as it should have been.

Under cross-examination Frankfurter is reported to have said he had not known Herr Gustloff, and personally had nothing against him, but he was a Nazi leader, and the shots he fired at him were in his mind directed against Herr Hitler and the whole Nazi régime in protest against the anti-Jewish persecution in Germany. He added that he did not belong to any political or other organization, and that nobody had ordered him to murder Gustloff or had even tried to persuade him to do so.

Frankfurter was born in 1909. He studied medicine at Leipzig and Frankfurt, but did not succeed in obtaining his diploma. He was then some time at Berne University. Last July he left for Yugoslavia, but soon after came back to Berne.

#### SWISS BANK CORPORATION.

The accounts of the Swiss Bank Corporation for the year 1935 are for the first time drawn up in the standard form required by the new Swiss banking law.

The net profit for 1935 amounted to 7,116,142f., against 7,239,300f. for 1934. At the general meeting to be held on February 28th the directors will propose to pay a dividend of 4½ per cent. (unchanged), and to carry forward 1,056,085f. (against 1,139,943f.). In view of Article 5 of the Swiss banking law it is proposed to take from the special reserve, amounting at present to 23,000,000f., an amount of 16,000,000f., which will be allocated to the ordinary reserve fund, bringing the latter up to 20 per cent. of share capital (160,000,000f.) — namely, 32,000,000f. The balance of the special reserve will be used as an internal reserve.

#### UNION BANK OF SWITZERLAND.

Owing to shrinkage in business and losses sustained by the realisation of frozen capital abroad, the Union de Banques Suisse (Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft), one of the leading institutions, is to carry out a capital reorganisation.

The report states that Sw.Frs.47,600,000 (£3,171,000 at current rates) of standstill assets abroad could only be liquidated at a heavy loss. Depreciation of bonds and shares held by the bank and on debtors reaches Sw.Frs.27,700,000 (£1,846,000).

To cover further losses arising out of forced liquidation of frozen assets Sw.Frs.25,000,000 (£1,666,000) is reserved. The total amount needed for depreciation reaches Sw.Frs.52,700,000 (£3,513,000). To cover this the share capital will be reduced from Sw.Frs.80,000,000 (£5,333,000) to Sw.Frs.40,000,000 (£2,666,000) by writing off the nominal value of the shares from Sw.Frs.500 to Sw.Frs.250.

In addition to this operation, Sw.Frs. 12,000,000 (£800,000) is to be taken from open reserves, which will thus be reduced from Sw.Frs. 32,000,000 (£2,133,000) to Sw.Frs.20,000,000 (£1,333,000).

The profit and loss account shows a profit of Sw.Frs.2,800,000 (£186,000) for 1935, as against Sw.Frs.2,900,000 (£193,000) for 1934.

The payment of a 4 per cent. dividend on the new reduced share capital is proposed. The dividend for 1934 was 3 per cent.

The case of the Union Bank of Switzerland and the several recent applications for a moratorium by other Swiss banks clearly show that the cause of Switzerland's banking difficulties is due mainly to frozen assets abroad, especially in Germany.

#### SWISS BANK DIVIDENDS.

The following dividends have been declared: Aargauische Hypothekenbank, Brugg, 5½ per cent. (1934: 5½%); Kredit Kasse, Lyss 5 per cent. (1934: 5%); Bank in Zug, 4 per cent. (1934: 5%); Schweizerische Hypotheken Bank, 5½ per cent. (1934: 5½%); Spar & Leihkasse Frutigen, 6 per cent. (1934: 6%); Gewerkebank Zurich, 5 per cent. (1934: 6%); Hypothekbank Lenzburg, 5½ per cent. (1934: 5½%); Volksbank Reinach 5½ per cent. (1934: 5½%); Gewerkebank Baden, 5½ per cent. (1934: 5½%); Schweizerische Bodenkredit Anstalt, Zurich 5 per cent. (1934: 6%); Caisse Hypothécaire du Canton de Fribourg, 5½ per cent. (1934: 6%); Genossenschaftliche Zentral-Bank in Basel, 5 per cent. (1934: 5%).

#### "NEW MODEL" ARMY FOR SWITZERLAND.

Decisions have been taken in Berne by which the Swiss Army is to be drastically reorganised and re-equipped.

At a special conference held recently between the Army Corps Commanders and the Direction of the Federal Military Department, we understand that the broad lines of an entirely new scheme of army organisation were agreed.

In the first place the new Swiss Army is to consist of a covering force which will protect the mobilisation of the field army. Secondly, the main army itself is, in accordance with experience gained in the 1934 manoeuvres, to be organised in eight "light" divisions, each with the proper complement of machine-guns and other equipment instead of the six "heavy" divisions at present existing.

#### WAGE CUTS IN SWITZERLAND.

By drastic cuts in expenditure and increased revenue from new duties, the Swiss franc has been saved from the danger of devaluation. After special sessions of both houses of Parliament, the new Budget has been balanced and passed.

All the middle-class political parties voted solidly for the new taxes and savings. Broadly, it may be stated that in the new Budget nearly £4,000,000 per annum will be saved and £4,800,000 will be derived from new taxes.

The reduction in expenditure will be achieved by imposing wage cuts of about 15 per cent. on the employees of the State railways and on officials. Cuts of about 10 per cent. will be made in the army. There will also be large decreases in the State subsidies to road building and similar projects.

The additional revenue will be derived from increases in indirect taxation of tobacco, petrol, fats, sugar and other products. There is also to be a new duty of one franc per 100 kilos on corn.

The new financial programme is mainly provisional, designed to cover a period of two years. In 1938 a drastic revision of the whole financial situation is contemplated.

#### LITERARY PRODUCTION IN SWITZERLAND.

The statistics for literary production in Switzerland during the year 1934 have just been published; 1,965 works were published, of which 1,375 were written in the German language, 470 in French and the remainder in Italian, the

three national languages of the country. The number is an increase on the previous year.

The Federal Council, in view of the large number of books being published by Swiss authors, has found it necessary to restrict the number of books permitted to pass the frontier from Germany. These books have become alarmingly popular on the Swiss market during the past year, as it is found that a German book can be sold in Switzerland, in most cases, more cheaply than one published in this country. This has naturally greatly affected the sales of genuine Swiss publications.

#### THE SWISS ELECTRICAL INDUSTRY IN THE YEAR 1935.

Exports of the Swiss electrical industry for the first eleven months of 1935 were about the same as in the previous year. There was a slight increase in dynamo-electric machines, but the export of steam turbines was reduced by 10 per cent. in weight and about 20 per cent. in value. The export of instruments and apparatus shows little change. Prices which have been obtained in countries having no electrical industry of their own have reached, as a result of international competition, a new low level. In the country itself the absence of orders of any importance and the completion of almost all the larger jobs on orders previously obtained are becoming unpleasantly obvious. In the distributing and retail trade turnover has become increasingly difficult to get during the year, and competition has been keener in consequence. The prospects for 1936 are not very favourable. The Swiss electrical industry, technically speaking, is well to the fore, and has excellent factories, but all foreign business done shows a loss, and the reduced turnover is insufficient to cover expenses.

#### MARCEL BENOIST FOUNDATION.

The 1934 prize of the Marcel Benoist Foundation, amounting to 30,000 frs. has been awarded to Dr. Max Askanazy, Professor of Pathological Anatomy at the University of Geneva, for his research work on cancer diseases.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

Dr. Heinrich Mousson, from 1912-1929 a member of the Cantonal Government, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. M. Mousson has rendered great services, for over 30 years, to the Canton of Zurich. Since 1929 he has occupied the post of President of the Administration Committee of the "Neuen Zürcher Zeitung." In the Army Dr. Mousson reached the rank of a Colonel having commanded the 2nd Artillery-Brigade.

An exhibition of English eighteenth-century mezzotint engravings was opened at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich recently, and will remain open until March 31st.

At an extraordinary meeting of the "Dakred A.G.," a building society of Zurich, it was decided to liquidate the company. As reported previously, the "Dakred A.G." was closed down by the police for allegedly having carried on business fraudulently. Two managers and one accountant of the "Dakred A.G." are still under arrest.

#### GENEVA.

The helmet of the London "bobby" figures in a controversy in Geneva which threatens to become a first-class political issue.

The government of the canton of Geneva proposes to replace the present full-dress hats of Geneva policemen by helmets similar to those worn by the London Metropolitan Police. This has caused several Genevese patriotic societies to protest.

One claims that "it would be an offence to Geneva's pride and patriotism" to do away with the Napoleon pattern cocked hats which the police of Geneva at present wear on state occasions.

The Geneva government is socialist; the patriotic societies which have protested are conservative.

The question of the policemen's hats is thus likely to become a first-class political issue in the tiny "Republic and Canton of Geneva," as the city is officially termed.

#### AARGAU.

The death is reported from Aarau of M. Alfred Jenny, senior partner of the "Baumwoll & Wollweber Jenny & Co., in Aarau, at the age of 59. M. Jenny was a well-known personality in Industrial circles of the canton of Aargau; in the Army he reached the rank of a Colonel. (Commander of the 6th Infantry Brigade).

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## NEUCHÂTEL.

The authorities of the community of La Chaux-de-Fonds, have informed the Cantonal Bank of Neuchâtel that they are unable to pay any further interest due on the last loan, owing to heavy commitments in connection with unemployment relief.

## VALAIS.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leopold Inesch has died at Siders, the deceased took a great interest in the political and economic life of the canton of Valais. M. Inesch was well-known all over Switzerland as a Wine Merchant.

## ST. GALLEN.

M. Zaruski, since 1906 Manager of the Municipal Electricity Power Station and the Municipal Tramway Co., has celebrated his 40th service Jubilee.

## FRIBOURG.

Dr Eugen Dévaud, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Fribourg, has been asked by the University of Madrid to give a cycle of lectures.

## TICINO.

Monsignore Angelo Jelmini, the new Bishop of Lugano was consecrated in Lugano on Sunday last, in the presence of the Papal Nuntius in Berne, Monsignore Bernardini, the Bishops of Chur and Sitten, and a great number of the population.

## MINISTER GEORGES WAGNIERE.

Rom, im Januar.

Es ist in Zeiten materieller Bedrängnis und geistiger Zerküftung unter der europäischen Himmelskugel besonders erfreulich, wenn die Schweizer im Ausland zäher als je am eidgenössischen Sinne festhalten und sich und den Nachbarn ein unverfälschtes Bild brüderlicher Einigkeit geben. So geschah es bei der Abschiedsfeier für unsern scheidenden Gesandten aus Rom, die einer nicht immer zu umgehenden Banalität eines Festbankettes sich völlig zu entschlagen wusste, dafür aber zu einer seit Jahren nicht mehr so stark erlebten patriotischen Weihstunde erhoben wurde. Es fehlte dem grandios aufgezogenen Festmahl nichts an äusserem Glanz; aber nicht dies verhalf ihm zu seinem gediegenen Goldgehalt. Ein um sein Vaterland hochverdienter, gescheiter und gütiger Eidgenosse, den das hohe Alter wohl geädelt aber nicht ermüdet hat, nahm Abschied von der ihm liebenden und verehrenden Landsgemeinde der Volksgenossen in Italien.

## WAGNER IN EXILE:

The Story of the first Five Years in Switzerland. As told by Max Fehr in "Richard Wagner's Schweizer Zeit" (Erste Band: 1849-1855). (Aarau und Leipzig: Verlag H. R. Sauerländer & Co.)

(Musical Opinion, January, 1936).

(Continued).

Wagner's greater activities in Zürich were orchestral, and we find him conducting overtures by Weber and Gluck to open a concert and taking in the second part a symphony, which on one occasion was the "Jupiter" of Mozart, and on all others the symphonies of Beethoven. Zürich could not then have known much about Beethoven, for the symphonies were announced in the concert programmes as "mit verstärkter Orchester," the said augmentation bringing up the players to a total of fifty! However, the genius of Wagner as a conductor through his introduction of the Beethoven symphonies was soon recognised, and as guest conductor he was a great "draw," increasing the box-office takings threefold. Then came on the scene Hans von Bülow, a young man escaping from the study of the law rather than its clutches, and with him, as the law-reports say, Alexander Ritter, son of Wagner's friend and patron and a clever young musician. The operas conducted by Wagner included "Don Giovanni," "Magic Flute" and "Figaro" (Mozart), "Fidelio" (Beethoven), and "La Dame Blanche" of Boieldieu, of which latter he gave a number of performances. Opera brought success equal to that of symphony, and a climax was reached with the production of "The Flying Dutchman," which came on the good people of the town like a bolt from the blue, opening out before them a new world.

Meanwhile Wagner, in his home, was occupied with the project of his "Nibelungen Ring," the while beset with nerve and other bodily ills, to alleviate which he had to submit to a diet of milk and water. However, he seems at times to have had enough strength to climb in the locality of Schiller's William Tell, tramping by the side of his friends Uhlig and Ritter, with the "Young Siegfried" and "Siegfried's Death" simmering in his head. From its conception and writing out (1850-1852), the change of titles from Sieg-

Auch wer nicht Einblicke hatte in die Arbeitsfälle unseres Gesandten während der 18 Jahre seiner Tätigkeit in Rom, konnte es an dem Dauerzustande der ausgezeichneten Beziehungen der Schweiz zu Italien ablesen, dass unsere diplomatische Vertretung keinen bessern Händen anvertraut sein konnte. Die Zeiten sind vorbei, wie Consul Biaggi aus Genua zutreffend ausführte, als die Diplomatie sich in gesellschaftlichen Aeusserlichkeiten erschöpfte und einer Sinekure gleichkam. Dr. Wagnière wurde von seiner leitenden Stellung am "Journal de Genève" während des Weltkrieges nach Rom geschickt. Es waren Zeitläufte, in denen unvermeidlich auch manchem Schweizer in Italien mehr als ein Haar gekrümmt wurde. Nicht besser wurde es während der darauffolgenden Spanne des bolschewisierenden Liebgelns der Massen und im ersten Ansturm der faschistischen Revolution. Unser Minister kannte kein Wanken und kein Zaudern und sah schon wenige Jahre nach seinem Amtsantritt im Abschluss eines vorbildlichen Freundschaftsvertrages zwischen Italien und der Schweiz den Niederschlag seiner diplomatischen Bemühungen. Ihm zur Seite stand der geistig ebenbürtige, heute leider nicht mehr unter den Lebenden weulende Legationsrat Dr. Th. von Sonnenberg, dem in Dr. Broy seit fünf Jahren ein würdiger Nachfolger erstanden ist.

Neben der augenfälligen diplomatischen Grossarbeit galt für Georges Wagnière aber keineswegs der Satz *de minimis non curat praetor*, und gerade diese so wichtige Uebung hat ihm den Dank der Schweizerkolonien in Italien sichergestellt. Diesem Tätigkeitsbezirk nahe liegt die patriotische Fürsorge, die ihren Ausdruck in Tausenden von Vorträgen und Ansprachen in den Schweizervereinen fand. Wir hatten einmal Gelegenheit, Mussolini zu schildern, was für unsere Kolonie der *confrencier* Wagnière bedeute, der seine Themen aus dem politischen Gegenwartsleben der Schweiz holte und es dabei auch nicht an Betrachtungen über ausserpolitische Ereignisse fehlen liess. Mussolini, bei dem unser Gesandter in hohem Ansehen steht, wurde darüber nachdenklich und äusserte einem anwesenden Minister gegenüber: "Solches erscheint mir als vollwertige praktische Demokratie; *beati i Svizzera!*" Dass unsere grossen und kleinen Interessen im gastlichen Italien bei unserem Gesandten mustergültig aufgehoben waren und wir Schweizer uns zudem in der Wahrnehmung sonnen konnten, dass Dr. Wagnière zu den feinsten Köpfen des diplomatischen Korps gezählt wurde und an Ansehen und Volkstümlichkeit an erster Stelle stand,

fried to Götterdämmerung was not made until 1863.

Things Wagnerian had now begun to move in Germany. In 1852 Liszt announced the fifteenth performance of "Tannhäuser" at Weimar, and presentations of the other operas had become so frequent that Wagner issued a brochure of instructions concerning their production, for the guidance of intendants and conductors. (Alas! ten years later Wagner found a copy still uncut in the office of an intendant at Munich.) Though under forty and vegetating in Switzerland, Wagner and his music was on all tongues, of which fact he seems to have been kept well informed. He condemned in his own polished style the bungled performance of "Tannhäuser" in Berlin, which enables us incidentally to remark that to-day we do not hear "The Flying Dutchman" or "Tannhäuser" as first orchestrated. By this time all the German intelligentsia was running pell-mell after the man at Zürich, one newspaper published there saying that Wagner might well exclaim, "God save me from my friends," and went on to declare that so much homage was not good for any man.

The Wesendoncks now come on the scene, and at a performance of "The Flying Dutchman" sent bouquets to the occupants of boxes for presentation to the composer. Wagner's fortieth birthday was celebrated at the Stadt Theater by three concerts and an oration delivered by Niederman, evidently inspired by his "Lohengrin" and the ideals Wagner often expressed. The poem is thought to have been written by Frau Wesendonck: if so, the spiritual quality of the poem honours herself and Wagner; anyhow, soon afterwards he composed the "Album Sonata" for piano, dedicating it to her. This was his first composition he had written for six years! Despite the success of the birthday concert and a proposal to make him a Freiburger of the canton, Wagner was evidently restless. Soon he was asking Liszt to intercede for him with the Royal House of Saxony and the Saxon authorities: Liszt did so, but could convey no hopes of success. The answer of the authorities was swift and sudden: in three days the warrant for arrest was re-issued, and with it went a new photograph and an intimation of present whereabouts.

This decision of the Saxon police seems to have wounded Wagner deeply in his swelling

dessen sind wir uns gerade jetzt wieder bewusst geworden.

Dies ist auch der Schlüssel zum Gelingen der Abschiedsfeier geworden. Ausdruck verliehen dieser Erkenntnis zahlreiche Tafelredner. Geistvoll und diplomatisch sorgfältig gefeiert war das Wort des Legationsrates Dr. Broy, erschöpfend der Aufriss des verdienten Präsidenten des *Circolo Svizzero* in Rom, Pio Gusberti, aufschlussreich die Ausführungen des Präsidenten der schweizerisch-italienischen Handelskammer, Steinmann aus Mailand, brillant der Trinkspruch des Korrespondenten des "Journal de Genève" Theodor Baucher, auf den der Presse stets verbunden gebliebenen ehemaligen Kollegen und ergreifend schliesslich die Dankadresse des 85 jährigen Veteranen der Kolonie, Herrn Emilio Meyer. Dr. Maurice Sandoz sandte einen formvollendeten dichterischen Gruss aus Arosa. Allen antwortete ernst und launig der Gefeierte selbst mit der ihm eigenen flüssigen Rednergabe. Es war ein von hohem Geiste beschwingtes Wort eines auf das Vaterland stolzen Bürgers und der Dank für treue Mitarbeit an die grosse, siebzehntausendköpfige Schweizerkolonie in Italien. Harmonischer, ergreifender und vor allem schweizerischer konnte die Feier unter dem Absingen der Landeshymne nicht ausklingen.

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pride, for in a letter to his sister he speaks of "your lovely police," and suggested that they might better spend their money than in framing his portrait. However, he could still occupy his mind with the "Ring," while they talked of a special theatre for its performance at Weimar or Zürich. Probably the rebel in him was weakening as he saw his aspirations as an artist so thwarted. He walked the mountains, he visited Italy twice, and became as nature-sick as a Lake poet.

In October of the year 1853 Wagner was in Paris with Liszt: he lunched with Berlioz; and on the last day of the visit, at a lunch, there were present four women, — Minna Wagner, Cosima Liszt, Mathilde Wesendonck, and Marie Wittgenstein. What combustible material! Back in Zürich, Wagner was soon engrossed in the composition of "Das Rheingold," working direct at the orchestral score in pencil, completing it — on January 14th, 1854 — in the amazing time of eleven weeks! As he wrote to his friend Ferdinand Heine, he neither saw nor heard anything until the end of the task was reached.

The circumstances of the Wagner household have long provided both sympathetic and scandalous gossip; however, at this time everything in the home was beautiful, except the parrot, who would chatter, "Richard Wagner is a wicked man." There were a few stalwart friends, the dog Peps, and Minna, who was asked to teach the parrot to say that Richard Wagner was a good man! Then there was the quarterly allowance from Wesendonck paid to Minna through Jakob Sulzer, though the generosity of the transaction had a set-off by some sort of lien on the operas.

We must now be brief over other facts from this entrancing book. There are details of the performance in Zürich of the "Faust" Overture, written in days of poverty in Paris. Von Bülow prepared a piano transcription of the overture, but this Wagner declined, dubbing it "piano jargon." There were other successes in Zürich and not a little jargon about the Future of Art; also there was peace to be sought with Authority in Saxony. Of course, Wagner in his own view had been guilty of nothing very reprehensible, but at the time of the flight into Switzerland and for some time after, Authority as then constituted would have taken his head on a charger to the reigning King.

The End.