

# The Swiss victories at Henley and the English press

Autor(en): [s.n.]

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): - (1936)

Heft 766

PDF erstellt am: **24.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-694179>

## **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

## **Haftungsausschluss**

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

## BERNE.

An attempted stay-in strike by 600 hands employed by the Selve Metalworks in Thoun was nipped in the bud by prompt and firm action of the management and the authorities. The workers were asked to start work or leave the factory. After a first refusal, the works were evacuated just as the authorities of the town were preparing to take action. The trouble arose out of a proposed 6% cut in the rates for piece-work.

The strike has been settled after a duration of three days on the basis of a 2% wage reduction.

The town council of Bern has voted a credit of 174,000 francs for the construction of bomb proof shelters.

After the Spar- and Leihkassen Thun und Steffisburg, a third banking institute of the Bernese Oberland, the Volksbank, Interlaken, A. G., has been granted a two years moratorium.

## LUCERNE.

A moratorium for two years had to be granted to the Kreditanstalt, Lucerne.

## SCHWYZ.

The commune of Küssnacht is building a new Home for Citizens at a cost of 320,000 francs.

## SOLOTHURN.

Judge Hans Stampfli was presented with a gold watch in recognition of 50 years service in Solothurn's judicature. He commenced his career in 1886 when he was elected Clerk of the Court in Dornach.

An illicit distillery, manufacturing alcohol from sugar, has been discovered in Grenchen. The delinquent is under lock and key and the still dismantled. A number of "customers" have been traced.

## BASLE.

Prof. Dr. Jakob Wackernagel has celebrated his jubilee of 60 years service as University Professor. For 47 years he lectured at Basel University, whence he returned some twenty years ago, after a 13 years stay at the University in Göttingen. He received his first appointment in Basel in June 1876, barely seven months after winning his degree. And still he is giving his lectures. Truly a Grand Old Man.

M. Hermann Hinderling-Kägi, well-known artist and at one time teacher in drawing and painting to many generations of pupils at the Upper Realschule and the Dewettschule, has died at the age of 83.

Colonel Karl Vonder-Mühlhülli died at the age of 57. Dr. Vonder-Mühlhülli practised as a barrister in Basel, was for ten years chief editor of the Schweiz. Militärzeitung and in 1926 was given the command of Infantry Brigade 11. During the war he was a member of the General Staff, later in charge of the intelligence service.

## ST. GALLEN.

"Chinderfescht!" Magic word to all those who ever held an anxious look-out for the four great flags, flying from the tower of the St. Laurenzen church. Once again the hearts of thousands of happy schoolchildren, from the smallest "Erstgietz" to the young "Bese" from the Talhof, and even including the proud Cadets from the Real- and Kantonsschule, they all beat higher and carefree, as they were wending their way through decorated streets, thronged by spectators from far and near, up to the traditional site on the Rosenberg. Happy days, unforgettable days! The festival procession, a sight never to be forgotten. The children dressed in white, with banners and flags, garlands and wreaths of flowers, a wonderful spectacle. And the traditional "Bratwurst und Bärli!" Who would not be young again, free from the cares of this world of stern realities, and live, yes live, just for one short day, am Chinderfescht z'Sanggale!

The project of a new road along the Wallensee continues to trouble the minds and tempers. Glarus prefers that the existing road along the left border to Mühlehorn and thence over the Kerenzerberg should be improved. St. Gall is convinced that only a new thoroughfare along the right-hand side will adequately solve the problem of better communications, especially from a strategic point of view. The latter argument appears to be unanswerable; in fact it is supported by the opinion of the General Staff.

## AARGAU.

The new military organisation demands extended accommodation in Aarau. A considerable building programme is under consideration, such as a new riding school, stables, improvements in the barracks, etc. The cost is estimated at 103,000 francs.

The dear Cervelats, or rather the butchers have had to bear a hasty retreat. The increase in price brought such a reduction in demand that the price quickly went back to its former level.

## GRISONS.

The cantonal Health department announces that the recent epidemic of infantile paralysis may be considered at an end.

A great landslide has interrupted all traffic through the Viamala. For a distance of 150 metres a mass of rocks estimated at 10,000 cubic metres covered the road. It will be several days before the road can be thrown open again.

## VAUD.

The Montreux-Bernese Oberland Railway reports a loss of 199,000 francs for the year 1935.

## VALAIS.

The Grand Council resolved to reduce the number of Councillors from 1 per 1,100 souls to 1 per 1,400 souls. This resolution has to be submitted to the people for approval.

## NEUCHÂTEL.

A delegate of the U.S.A. Foreign Office, Mr. Hickerson, has arrived in La Chaux-de-Fonds, to enter into negotiations with the Swiss Watch Chamber concerning the export of watches to the United States and the conclusion of a new commercial treaty.

## GENEVA.

The Lac Lemman Steamship Co. closed its accounts for the year 1935 with a loss of 244,432 francs. The debit balance now stands at 1,284,256 francs. Last year was the worst ever, with receipts 66% less than in 1934.

## TICINO.

At the Cantonal Shooting Festival in Bellinzona, 1,050 competitors participated. Champion in pistols, with 570 points better than world record, was the 67 years old D. Giambonini, president of the organising committee.

## The SWISS VICTORIES at HENLEY and the ENGLISH PRESS.

There is much of a sameness in the reports sent to their respective papers by the "special rowing reporters" who missed no opportunity to interview the captains and trainers of the different crews at Henley. Though after the semi-finals on Friday the Swiss victories were generally anticipated there were only two dailies which previous to that predicted the unparalleled feat of the Zurich crew. The Japanese competitors enjoyed a very good press and added to their well-staged spectacular appearance were favourites for the Grand Challenge Cup; I am told that on the morning of the semi-final the betting was four to one in their favour.

The *Daily Express* reporter, two days before the final, expecting the Leander Club to reach the last stage expresses his doubts as to its ability to "survive the formidable task." This is what he writes on July 6th:

"Zurich sent nine oarsmen to compete. As I forecast in Saturday's *Daily Express*, they won three of the principal events — the Grand Challenge Cup, the Diamond Sculls, and the Stewards' Cup.

If Captain Arthur Dreyfus, their coach, had not withdrawn the brothers Homberger from the Silver Goblets, I believe Zurich would have won that, too.

*Ruffi took the Diamonds for the second year in succession; a record for an overseas sculler.*

What is the secret of the Swiss successes? Can English oarsmen learn anything from their methods?

Their style of rowing, based largely upon the principles advocated by Mr. Steve Fairbairn — who sent them a telegram of congratulation — is as near perfection to highest English traditions as can possibly be attained.

*Where they gained an advantage was in superior physical fitness and ability to get off the mark with exceptional speed.*

In all their races they led after the first few strokes, and, having established a reasonable margin in their favour, were able to regulate their pace according to circumstances.

In the final of the "Grand," Laurie, who stroked Leander, made a characteristic spurt after a mile had been covered, but the crew could not "crack" the Swiss.

The superiority of the Zurich men was even more pronounced in the four-oared race for the Stewards' Cup. They led again after the first few strokes, and steered a perfect course. Leander wandered all over the river, and never looked like winning."

Equally confident was the *Morning Post* after the first heat on July 3rd:

"The beautiful Swiss crew from the Zurich football club beat Cambridge's Head of

the River crew, Jesus, so gently but so firmly that risking one's reputation for the hundredth time as a critic, one gives the opinion that Switzerland are not merely avenged of Jesus, who beat them last year, but are the probable winners of the Grand Challenge Cup.

Never have I seen more perfect virtuosity in an eight-oared boat. The poise in coming forward, the rhythm which the stroke imparts, the delightful drawn out finish become unpopular with some of our eights now, told its story to-day."

The *Daily Mail* (July 4th) has little more to say than "Zurich proved that the fastest stroke in the world cannot compete with that of a normal, physically powerful crew, rowing at a slower rate but with great power and rhythm."

A reporter, however, has extracted a "secret" from Capt. Dreyfus, and here it is (July 11th):

"At Croydon airport I encountered Mr. A. Dreyfus, captain of the Zurich rowing club. The Swiss boat had been despatched home by ordinary transport, but the oars which did the deadly work the crew took with them by air.

Mr. Dreyfus imparted the startling news that his all-conquering Zurich crew, which the knowledgeable ones at Henley proclaimed the best in the world, was not necessarily the best at his command.

"I could have filled three boats," he said, "but we had to be so careful not to contravene your rules."

The Amateur Rowing Association, I may explain, decrees that any person who earns a living as a mechanic, labourer, or artisan is not fit to be admitted to the select circles of English rowing.

So Mr. Dreyfus put into his crew eight bank and insurance clerks, university students, a company director, and one garage clerk.

This is the comment of the *Neus Chronicle* (July 6th):

"The Swiss club, Zurich, sent one complete eight and a sculler, and their triumph could not have been more complete; they won three events and refrained from competing in a fourth, perhaps luckily from our point of view.

*In the Grand and Stewards' Cups they were opposed by the cream of English rowing — Leander, stroked in each instance by the successful and brilliant Cambridge stroke, W. G. R. M. Laurie, whose generalship was perfect, but neither the eight nor the four possessed the pace of the Swiss.*

The visitors proved to be expert watermen, for the conditions were difficult; they displayed a style and perfect rhythm which contained no perceptible fault; they exhibited splendid judgment, and the gallant and timely spurting efforts of Laurie did not disturb them.

The manner in which their sculler, Ruffi, outclassed our two best Henley men, Warren and Tyler, was rather distressing."

The *Daily Mirror* (July 6th) is wondering:

"Henley's last day is always Zurich in glamour, and, Ruffi speaking, the end of this year's Ascot-of-the-river was as good as any I can remember.

But to be reasonably serious. Many river fans would probably like to know how these great Swiss rowers from Zurich make themselves so fast.

*This bronzed, sturdy eight outrowed Leander in the Grand Challenge Cup, a four of their also put paid to Leander in the Stewards' Cup final, and E. Ruffi, needless to say of the Zurich R.C., successfully defended the Diamond Sculls against T. H. Tyler.*

Well, Mr. A. Dreyfus, the Zurich captain, tells you: "We take sport very seriously. I never rest until all my men are in bed. Fitness, confidence and grit at the right time have carried Zurich to victory."

*Switzerland are the first nation ever to take three trophies away from Henley."*

The *Observer* (July 12th) melancholy says:

"Only six of the eight trophies at Henley Royal Regatta are open to foreign competition, and four of these have now left the country. Many well-known judges of rowing are saying that it was just as well, from the British point of view, that the Swiss pair, A. Homberger and K. Schmid, withdrew from the Silver Goblets, or otherwise that trophy may now be reposing in Zurich in company with the Grand Challenge and Stewards' Cups and the Diamond Sculls. Be that as it may, there is not the slightest doubt that British rowing

received the greatest blow it has ever had at this year's Henley. Before this year two trophies had been taken abroad in 1914, 1921, 1929, 1934, and 1935; but that was the greatest number that had been allowed to go since the regatta was established in 1839.

Although there had been foreign competition for the Grand Challenge Cup, the Blue Riband of the Rowing World, every year, except 1924, 1926, and 1930, since the regatta was resumed in 1920, the foreign challenge had been successfully beaten off until this year, so that the "Grand" goes abroad for the first time since 1914. Why was it that British oarsmen did not see the truth of that old proverb, Coming events, etc., etc.? Last year the Zurich eight came over to Henley for the first time, and, after a terrific race, were beaten by three feet. They returned to Switzerland, determined to profit by their experience, and they devoted themselves ever since last year's Henley to fitting themselves for this one, with the result that they "walked off" with the Grand. By concentration they produced one of the best eights that has been seen at Henley for many years. Their boat control was excellent, and they were a powerful crew with a very hard drive from the stretcher.

Although they had tried to assimilate the methods advocated by Mr. Fairbairn, they were much longer in the water than most Fairbairn crews, and a much more uniform swing; in fact, their body work could almost be described as "orthodox." They fully deserved their victory.

In *The Times* (July 9th to 11th) some caustic criticism has been vented by correspondents about Mr. Steve Fairbairn's alleged "prescriptions" which are supposed to have been appropriated by our compatriots. This criticism is evidently directed against the wrong party; one of the writers candidly confesses:

"This comment confirmed my own impression when watching Mr. Arthur Dreyfus at work on Lake Zurich last September. I felt that, whether his crews won or lost a race, his methods provided data of importance for the future of rowing, because they were consistently directed to fundamental points and carefully adjusted in time to successive stages in preparation. Until English coaches have the same clear eye as he has for the fundamental in method they may snatch victories here and there, but they will not advance the best interests of rowing. At present they tend to be somewhat opportunist; to be misled, consequently, by the superficial and irrelevant. For a year they have been faced with the slow rate of paddling and smooth, leisurely finish of the Zurich F.C. crews. Apparently they have regarded these things as stylistic eccentricities. They may perhaps realize now that they are the carefully thought out anticipation of as graceful and powerful a racing stroke as has been seen at Henley for some time. If so, the second visit of Mr. Arthur Dreyfus and his crew will not have been in vain — for us also."

The Sunday papers excel more in their headlines than in actual comment. "Swiss make History at Henley" is the "Sunday Times" bold line. The Sports page in "The People" is headed "Switzerland haven't a Navy, but how they can row!"

To conclude I will quote a rather strange reflection from *News Review* (July 2nd) in the course of an article dealing with the Olympic Games:

"Almost viciously, eight trim oarsmen from Japan have been training for this week's Henley Regatta, the first European event of the kind in which Japanese sportsmen have been engaged.

Behind their studied preparations has been no mere sporting ambition, but an urge to carry off honours from the white man, in his own territory, to the everlasting glory of the yellow races.

For similar reasons, the Japanese athletic team which, five weeks ago, left Tokyo for Berlin's Olympic Games headquarters has been feverishly training."

Stranger still this well-informed weekly does not contain in last week's issue a single word about Henley Regatta though elaborating at some length on other sporting events.

A BROTHER in Buenos-Aires is anxious to learn the address of

**MAX EMIL HAUSAMANN**  
(born in Basel 1892)

by trade "Chemiker," and last heard of in Liverpool in 1930. Any information should be addressed to Box 2112 Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, London, E.C.2.

## NOTRE DEFENSE NATIONALE.

M. le colonel de Diesbach, commandant de la 2me division a exposé devant les délégués du parti conservateur suisse, la question de notre défense nationale. M. le colonel de Diesbach a traité le sujet dans toute son ampleur. Nous reproduisons l'essentiel de son magistral exposé.

M. le colonel de Diesbach a commencé par un tableau de la situation politique générale, dont les menaces ont décidé le Conseil fédéral à proposer au Parlement le renforcement de notre défense nationale.

### 1. La situation internationale.

Il est impossible de contester aujourd'hui que tous les peuples, non seulement en Europe mais dans le monde entier, se préparent fébrilement pour une guerre prochaine, dont aucun ne veut peut-être, mais que tous considèrent comme inévitable.

Une paix qui n'en était pas une, mais dont les exigences intolérables pour les vaincus ne pouvaient être maintenues que par la force, devait amener fatalement la situation actuelle, réaction très naturelle en face du bloc des vainqueurs qui se désagrègeait de plus en plus, rendant tous les espoirs possibles à leurs adversaires d'autrefois.

D'autre part, les secousses financières, économiques et sociales aboutirent en Russie, en Italie, en Allemagne et dans d'autres pays encore à des régimes personnels, dont le principal levier est l'exaltation du nationalisme armé, qui mène sûrement et rapidement à la guerre.

Et cela d'autant plus que la guerre est la seule issue pour eux d'une situation financière intérieure intenable. La réalisation de leurs vives impérialistes est la conséquence naturelle du développement hypertraphique de leurs armements, et comme les autres puissances, stimulées par la menace évidente que constitue pour elles cet état de choses, ont fini par suivre leur exemple, la guerre n'est plus qu'une question de prétexte, d'occasion, d'opportunité.

Il est vrai que les groupements définitifs ne sont pas encore faits. On cherche partout à se créer des alliances. Des courants contradictoires empêchent, d'ailleurs, de voir très clair dans le résultat final de ces efforts.

Ce qui enlève tout espoir de voir cette situation se prolonger très longtemps sans que l'incendie s'allume, c'est qu'elle s'aggrave et se complique de jour en jour, d'heure en heure. A tout instant survient un nouveau brûlot enflammé qui risque de faire sauter la poudrière.

Aucun pays n'a plus aucune raison d'attendre, car le temps ne travaille pas plus pour lui que pour ses adversaires possibles. Ce sera le hasard, transformant brusquement une occasion en prétexte, qui mettra le monde en feu, et non plus une date, arrêtée d'avance par l'une ou l'autre puissance.

Et dans l'attente de ce hasard, les peuples en armes s'observent, prêts à se jeter dans la tourmente, à laquelle ils se résignent déjà, parce qu'ils ne voient plus ni possibilité de l'éviter indéfiniment ni avantage à la retarder plus longtemps.

Il est probable, mais non pas certain, que ce seront les puissances impérialistes qui déclencheront le cataclysme.

Certaines puissances qui consacrent leurs dernières ressources à s'armer jusqu'aux dents ont pu donner momentanément à leurs peuples l'illusion d'une prospérité apparente. Travaillant nuit et jour à renforcer leurs armements, elles ont diminué artificiellement le chômage. Et dans les pays à dictature, où on ne laisse pas discuter la valeur du papier-monnaie, et où l'on peut imposer les prix, il est toujours possible de tenir un certain temps dans des conditions où un régime constitutionnel serait depuis longtemps en faillite. Mais cela ne peut durer éternellement, malgré tout. Un jour, la faim fait sortir le loup du bois, et c'est la guerre. Le dictateur a fait assez pour son pays pour pouvoir compter en toutes circonstances sur une approbation enthousiaste et aveugle et, d'autre part, il le tient d'une main si ferme qu'il est assuré d'avance contre toute défaillance au moment critique. Mais, dans cette tragique partie de poker, où les puissances "bluffent" à qui mieux mieux, il n'est pas certain que ce ne soient pas celles qui, satisfaites et repues, devraient tenir le plus à la paix, qui ne déclencheront un jour la guerre pour préserver précisément leur "statu quo" menacé par les visées impérialistes des autres.

L'Angleterre, le pays le moins militariste du monde entier, mais le plus attaché aussi à ses biens matériels, vient d'arrêter un formidable programme de défense nationale, et ces précautions n'ont pas d'autre but que de lui permettre de frapper, s'il le faut, sur la table le coup de poing décisif. C'est tout de même la preuve irréfutable qu'elle aussi croit à la guerre très prochaine.

Aujourd'hui donc, les yeux s'ouvrent un peu partout devant l'évidence du péril, et le peuple

suisse, enfin alarmé, reproche carrément au pouvoir exécutif de n'avoir pas fait ce qu'il devait pour notre défense nationale, il paraît indiqué de rechercher avant tout les causes de notre imprévoyance et des mesures, quelque peu tardives, qu'on envisage aujourd'hui pour réparer le temps perdu.

Dans son message, le Conseil fédéral s'en explique avec cette modération qui caractérise les documents de ce genre.

La Suisse, dit-il en résumé, a eu trop de confiance dans la Société des Nations, dans la paix définitive, dans la Conférence du désarmement.

En somme, ne croyant plus la guerre possible, elle considérait l'armée comme un luxe inutile. Il est exact que le Conseil fédéral a lutté à plusieurs reprises et très courageusement contre les pacifistes qui voulaient la supprimer, aidés dans leurs efforts par les socialistes qui l'attaquaient et l'attaquent encore sans cesse.

Et le Parlement s'est fait l'écho de l'opinion publique, celle de ses électeurs, tandis que le Conseil fédéral, plus ou moins influencé lui-même par les espoirs chimériques de paix universelle, n'a pas osé affronter les répugnances que manifestaient les Chambres à voter des dépenses pour une armée qui semblait désormais inutile. Il eut été bien avisé cependant — l'heure présente le prouve — d'exiger quelles se prononcent catégoriquement pour ou contre la défense nationale. Une occasion s'offrit en 1928: il s'agissait de leur demander un premier crédit, tout à fait insuffisant d'ailleurs, pour notre aviation pour ainsi dire inexistante. Si au lieu de 20 millions, qui ne correspondaient à rien, le Conseil fédéral en avait demandé cent, quitte à se les voir refuser, il serait aujourd'hui plus à l'aise pour expliquer au peuple suisse qu'il ne doit s'en prendre qu'à lui-même de tout ce qui nous manque à l'heure actuelle.

M. de Diesbach a rappelé ici que bien des voix se sont élevées pour dénoncer le danger de cette confiance béate dans la paix. Lui-même, dès 1920, il écrivait dans la "Revue militaire suisse":

"On répète un peu partout, mais sans y croire, qu'il n'y aura plus de guerre. Sans doute, les peuples qui l'ont faite sont tellement épuisés et écourés qu'il faudra autre chose à l'avenir qu'un prétexte pour déclencher le cataclysme. Mais n'y a-t-il pas trop de plaies infectées pour qu'on puisse espérer les voir guérir sans l'intervention du bistouri? Et puis l'impérialisme a-t-il réellement disparu avec la puissance militaire allemande, ou bien n'a-t-il fait que changer de camp? Autant de questions inquiétantes. Ce que l'on peut dire cependant, c'est que dans les démocraties ou les monarchies constitutionnelles, où les princes n'exercent plus aucun pouvoir personnel, il est presque impossible qu'un gouvernement puisse assumer la responsabilité d'un conflit armé. Mais il faut tout de même compter avec certains courants d'idées, qui peuvent devenir assez forts à un moment donné pour fanatiser un peuple. Une dictature surgit toujours alors pour les exploiter; la guerre en est la conséquence fréquente."

"Nous prêchions dans le désert, constate M. de Diesbach, et la satisfaction d'avoir vu juste et d'aussi loin ne me console pas de l'avoir fait inutilement.

Aujourd'hui, nous croyons avec le monde entier à l'imminence de la guerre. Quand éclatera-t-elle? On ne peut le dire d'avance, comme il est impossible de prévoir le moment précis où un mourant rendra le dernier soupir.

Mais ce peut être à tout instant, et c'est ce qui est particulièrement angoissant pour nous qui manquerions encore de tant de choses, si la guerre nous surprenait demain.

C'est donc à la lumière de cette constatation peu réjouissante et en considérant la grave menace qui pèse sur nous, que nous devons examiner notre situation militaire et l'efficacité possible des mesures que propose le Conseil fédéral pour combler les lacunes de notre défense nationale.

**UNION HELVETIA CLUB.**  
1, GERRARD PLACE, W.1.

**THE SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS**  
will be held in the Club-house on  
**FRIDAY, the 31st, July 1936.**  
Dancing from 8.30 p.m. until 2 a.m.  
**SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS AT MID-NIGHT.**  
Admission by ticket, price 2/-. each.  
Dancing on Saturday evening, 1st August  
as usual.

*Drink delicious "Ovaltine"*  
*at every meal - for Health!*