

De l'impérieuse nécessité de resserrer fortement le lien confédéral

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DE L'IMPERIEUSE NECESSITE DE RESSERRER FORTEMENT LE LIEN CONFEDERAL.

Les événements d'Autriche nous rappellent, à nous autres Suisses, que les prétentions allemandes à l'hégémonie et le dessein du Troisième Reich d'opérer l'unification de tous les éléments du "Deutschtum" ne sont pas une simple parade, un article purement théorique d'un programme dont tout ne doit pas être exécuté. En assistant à l'un des actes de l'expansion germanique — joué avec une adresse et une promptitude consommées — on ne peut manquer de songer aux actes suivants... Sans doute, Hitler n'a agi comme il l'a fait, vis-à-vis de l'Autriche, que parce que les circonstances lui étaient particulièrement favorables. Le sort de la Tchécoslovaquie, ni celui de la Suisse, ne sauraient être réglés selon la même méthode. Il n'en est pas moins opportun, pour nous, de nous placer en face des réalités, sans nous laisser aller le moins du monde à un pessimisme décourageant, mais en considérant les faits tels qu'ils sont, non point tels que nous voudrions qu'ils fussent.

Le nouveau statut de l'Autriche aura des conséquences importantes pour la Suisse. Aucun danger immédiat ne nous menace; et rien ne serait plus ridicule et plus maladroite que de créer maintenant une atmosphère de panique, ou simplement de nervosité. Rien ne permet en effet, pour l'instant, de craindre quoi que ce soit pour l'intégrité de notre territoire. Et même si la situation devait évoluer dans un sens plus inquiétant, — ce qui ne paraît pas probable, — nos autorités ne seraient pas prises à l'improviste. Pour l'heure, ce n'est pas de cela qu'il s'agit.

En revanche, il est indéniable que, désormais, l'influence du Reich, puissamment renforcée dans notre voisinage immédiat, s'exercera chez nous avec une pertinacité plus marquée encore que par le passé. Nos relations extérieures comme notre politique intérieure pourront en subir les répercussions, qu'il serait prématuré de supputer, mais auxquelles il sera fort attentif au cours des mois qui viennent.

Le chancelier du Reich a proclamé à plusieurs reprises que, pour lui, la neutralité et la souveraineté de la Suisse ne sauraient être mises en question. On se souvient des assurances extrêmement nettes et catégoriques qu'il a plus d'une fois données à cet égard, notamment dans l'entrevue, de caractère officieux, qu'il eut naguère avec M. Schlutthes ancien conseiller fédéral. Au surplus, on n'ignore pas, à Berlin, qu'un coup de force contre la Suisse provoquerait sur notre sol une résistance acharnée, — sans parler des interventions que — cette fois, peut-être! — il déterminerait. Rien ne permet d'ailleurs de conjecturer que notre voisin du nord ait envisagé une manœuvre de nature militaire sur notre pays. Mais l'indépendance d'un peuple n'est pas seulement matérielle; elle est aussi d'ordre moral et spirituel. Plus s'affirme le pouvoir dictatorial et conquérant du Troisième Reich, plus devient impérieux pour nous le devoir de cimenter le lien confédéral et de défendre ce qui, dans notre patrimoine national, est un élément d'union et de compréhension mutuelle. On ne pourra rien contre nous si nous évitons la division. Les circonstances actuelles nous fourniront une belle occasion de mettre à l'épreuve, à cet égard, notre esprit civique. Déjà depuis quelque temps — et l'on doit l'enregistrer avec satisfaction, — il semble que certaines thèses du Conseil fédéral touchant la politique extérieure soient un peu mieux comprises qu'elles ne le furent précédemment. Il est hautement désirable que ce travail des esprits fasse des progrès et que la sage et prudente tactique du gouvernement reçoive dans le pays la plus large approbation.

Nous devons peu à peu, — c'est indéniable, — nous adapter à des conditions nouvelles de la vie internationale. On entretient trop volontiers, en Suisse, l'illusion que, par un décret irrévocable de la Providence, la Confédération est placée à l'abri de toutes les convulsions, de tous les bouleversements. De notre histoire, il se dégageait pourtant des leçons bien différentes. Il n'y a pas, au monde, de stabilité parfaite, ni de sécurité absolue. C'est pourquoi il faut être calme... et vigilant.

Léon Savary.
(Tribune de Genève.)

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

PERSONAL

We extend our heartiest congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Bodenehr, of 17, Second Avenue, Acton, W.3, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Day anniversary which takes place to-day.

M. Bodenehr came to this country in 1883, he hails from the canton of Solothurn, and is well-known in London Hotel and Catering circles. M. Bodenehr is an Honorary Member of the Union Helvetia.

CONCERT NEWS.

The Swiss Orchestral Society's Annual Concert will take place on Tuesday, March 29th, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, at 8.30 p.m. prompt. An interesting program has been arranged of which I will give a few details. First, however, I wish to make two points clear which lent themselves to criticism last year.

If a society like ours does not dispose of unlimited means, it is natural that it must keep its expenses strictly within a given limit. Therefore, a year ago the small Conway hall was booked for the Spring Concert of the Swiss Orchestra. The result was that many people could not get seats and were obliged to stand, even overflow into the corridor. It also became evident that an Orchestra of 34 performers was much too overpowering in the small hall; the pieces were well rendered but the finer details were lost to the audience. The remedy for all this is, of course, to hire the large concert hall which incidentally costs four times as much as the small hall, but holds 500 people comfortably seated instead of only 100. We therefore decided last November to go in for a gamble, book the large hall and trust to luck that it may be filled to capacity. This means that all those good friends and supporters of the Orchestra need bring their friends along and we feel sure they will all be pleased with the entertainment now offered.

A further point I must raise brings me back to our concert given last October. So many of our friends expressed regret that the Orchestra did not play more pieces leaving far too much time to the soloists. This also has been remedied as you will see from the present program.

As this is our most important concert of the season the program has been kept rather on the classical side to show you what talent can do both in soloists and orchestra. We open the first part of the concert with Mendelssohn "Ruy Blas" overture and close it with that spirited first movement of Mendelssohn Italian Symphony. In the second part you will hear Mozart's overture "Le Nozze di Figaro," a selection from Puccini's "La Tosca" and the "Coronation March" by Meyerbeer.

The Soloists in the first part will be a sweet little girl, Rosemary Pfandler, and I am certain that her playing will greatly appeal to you. She will play the Adagio movement from Haydn's Concerto in D for Violincello and Orchestra. You will also hear a Cello Solo in which she will be accompanied by her brother Raymond Pfandler.

In the second half of the concert you will hear as Soloist, Theodore Weil, whom the critics last year called "a fine young artiste, capable, competent, and who has made remarkable progress." The applause which he received a year ago prompted us to ask him again to play to us and we are sure that you will be glad of this decision. He is, of course, an excellent violinist and will play Mozart's Concerto in A for Violin and Orchestra as well as a few solos, which, I have no doubt, will please you all very much.

This, then, is what you are being offered at our Spring Concert and all that remains for me to say is that the Orchestra's Committee hope that you will all come along and hear for yourselves. Tickets have been issued for one price only at 2/- including tax, and should you not be able to get one from the Orchestra's friends as advertised, you may purchase what you need at Conway Hall on the evening itself. Will you please note the date: Tuesday, March 29th, at 8.30 p.m., and come to Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. — By doing so you will make these concerts possible and in return we promise to give you of our best.

epd.

ZURICH—TOKIO BY FOOT.

We received, on Tuesday last, the visit of our countryman, Mr. Fritz Steininger, who on February 2nd of this year, started on his walking tour Zurich-Tokio, where he hopes to arrive in time for the 1940 Olympiade.

Mr. Steininger wears Swiss National costume, on his richly decorated coat are the words embroidered — Schweiz-Tokio, — he hails from Arbon and is 25 years old, we took him for even being younger.

Our globe-trotting compatriot carries an autograph book with him, which so far has been signed by various celebrities, such as M. Baumann, President of the Swiss Confederation, M. Minger, Federal-Councillor, Colonel Guisan, M. Lebrun, President of the French Republic, M. Stucki, Swiss Minister in Paris, M. Paravicini, Swiss Minister in London and Mme. Paravicini, etc., etc.

Mr. Steininger will stay a few days in London (Union Helvetia) before resuming his "wanderings" which will take him through France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, India, China and Japan, the distance he will have to cover will be 20,000 km. on land and 4,000 km. on water.

Before Mr. Steininger took leave from us we took a loving cup together, and wished him success in his undertaking which requires courage and determination.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The Monthly Meeting was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, March 9th. Mr. J. J. Boos, Vice-President of the Society, was in the Chair. He informed the Meeting that the Council had decided to complete the re-decorations and alterations at Swiss House during the Easter vacation so that for the forthcoming Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Society in the coming autumn, Swiss House would look at its best.

The Meeting was followed by a lecture on "So this is London," by Mr. Herbert Banyard. The students of the College were invited to the lecture and not for a long time has the lecture room been filled to its utmost capacity as on this occasion. The subject of the lecture was no academic discourse on a topical subject but merely a talk on some everyday occurrences in this great Metropolis by a man who in his capacity as taxi driver meets a great diversity of people and witnesses many unusual scenes. It must be said from the outset that Mr. Banyard, who recently gave his talk over the wireless, is no ordinary taxi-driver. He was also no stranger to Swiss House as he had previously lectured to the students of the College on "With Amundsen to the South Pole." He is of fluent speech and from the beginning to end the audience followed his remarks with rapt attention. Mr. Banyard possesses some of a lecturer's greatest assets in a superlative measure, a keen sense of humour and a fine repartee. He painted the ugly as well as the bright sides of this vast City which he knows like no one else from his multifarious criss-crossing of its vast and intricate net work of streets. Mr. Banyard often had the audience roaring with laughter, so much so that some complained of aching sides and if Mark Twain said that one good laugh a month was the finest tonic then there was no lack of invigoration in this lecture. Mr. Banyard also depicted some very sad aspects of the Metropolis, described some odd characters he meets on his daily duties. The lecture was followed by a very animated discussion in which quite a number of the audience took part. A cordial vote of thanks was moved by Mr. M. Schneider, Hon. Secretary, and heartily endorsed by the audience. A most enjoyable evening thus came to a close.

On Friday evening, March 11th, Mr. E. Wepf, a Member of the Society, gave a lecture to the students of the College at which some members of the Society were present. Mr. A. Levy, Principal of the College, was in the Chair.

Mr. Wepf, in a preamble to his lecture on "Alpine Views" gave some very interesting historical, geographical and geological data of the parts of our country which he dealt with in his lecture. We were told of a huge landslide, the peregrinations of the Valaisans into the Grisons, etc.

Mr. Wepf then went on to show a series of exquisite slides made from his own photographs. We saw views of the Grisons, Simplon, Belalp and Ticino regions and every picture shown was a masterpiece of photography. Mr. Wepf explained the pictures in detail and a special feature was a series of panoramic views depicting gorgeous mountain ranges with innumerable peaks and valleys, glaciers, lakes, etc.

In conclusion Mr. Wepf showed a number of coloured slides which represented the latest technique in colour photography and the audience beheld the chalets, mountain villages, alpine flora and fauna, etc., in their natural charm and picturesqueness. The audience was enraptured in all these wonderful views and all those who had the privilege of being present owe Mr. Wepf a debt of gratitude for his most interesting and delightful lecture. Mr. G. Jenne moved a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer which was vociferously seconded by the audience. Mr. Levy returned thanks on behalf of the College.

Before the audience departed, Mr. Levy made an appeal on behalf of the Swiss Benevolent Society. He asked those present to put as much as convenient into the Collecting Box after the Friday night lectures and to give their cast off clothes for the benefit of the poor Swiss in London. The few figures which showed the great work of the S.B.S. astonished everyone.

W.B.