

# What others think of us [continuation]

Autor(en): **Muller, Edwin**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1938)**

Heft 863

PDF erstellt am: **09.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691631>

## **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.

we have sought such an invitation for some time past, without success. Now the case is altered; this reverse must be put right at the earliest moment and we shall soon be able to shout: Hopp, Schwyz! To show you the truth of this, here are England's Continental defeats and their corrections at home:—

1929 in Madrid: Spain 4, England 3.  
1932 in London: England 7, Spain 1.  
1930 in Berlin: Germany 3, England 3.  
1935 in London: England 3, Germany 0.  
1930 in Vienna: Austria 0, England 0.  
1932 in London: England 4, Austria 3.  
1931 in Paris: France 5, England 2.  
1933 in London: England 4, France 1.  
1933 in Rome: Italy 1, England 1.  
1934 in London: England 3, Italy 2.  
1934 in Budapest: Hungary 2, England 1.  
1936 in London: England 6, Hungary 2.  
1934 in Prague: Czechs 2, England 1.  
1937 in London: England 5, Czechs 4.

And so far unrequited remain:—

1936 in Vienna: Austria 2, England 1; and in Brussels: Belgium 3, England 2. Austria is no more. So it is Belgium's and Switzerland's turn next. But you see, we are not alone to win a game against England.

MG.

### WHAT OTHERS THINK OF US. THE PARADOX OF THE SATISFIED SWISS. Condensed from The Forum. (U.S.A.)

Edwin Muller.

(Continuation).

There is little abject poverty among the Swiss. Conversely, it is surprising how few rich men there are. It isn't that large personal fortunes are taxed out of existence. The income taxes in the higher brackets, the inheritance taxes, etc., are lower in Switzerland than here. And Switzerland has businesses that are big businesses even by our standards. Yet the leading men in finance and industry are willing to put forth their best efforts for rewards that seem very modest indeed by our scale.

Incredible as it seems to us, the Swiss apparently doesn't want vast wealth. It isn't fashionable. There's little place in Swiss culture for lavish display, for "conspicuous consumption." There's not much of the gambling spirit. Enough is enough.

Of course, the Swiss have their faults. One misses in them the innate gaiety of the Austrians across the border. But they are relatively prosperous in the midst of economic depression, soberly happy in an unhappy world.

That they are so is due, not alone to the character of the people, but to the characteristics of their government. The Swiss distrust the concentration of great power in the hands of one man. The executive power is vested in a commission of seven, in which the President ranks equally with the other six. The executive is subordinated to the legislative, and the legislative arm is supplemented by an effective use of the initiative and the referendum. Even more than in England, the work of government is carried on by permanent officials, civil service appointees who do not change with changing administrations.

Another characteristic is the tendency to decentralize. Large powers are entrusted to the states — the cantons — and on those powers the central government cannot encroach. It must be so. The Swiss have no racial unity. They are split into French, German, Italian and others. They speak four different languages. To an outsider it is hard to see what some of them have in common.

Take a farmer of the Canton of the Ticino. He lives on the southern slopes of the Alps, cut off by the great central chain from the rest of Switzerland. He is Catholic, speaks Italian, grows olives and wine like the Italians across the frontier. What has he in common with a city worker of Zurich, Protestant, German-speaking, allied by race to the nearby Bavarians? Yet the two have co-operated in one government for centuries. They are tolerant of each other's local culture and customs, never trying to force them into a standardized pattern. In national matters they fight it out with ballots and abide by the majority decision. In foreign matters they stand together under the Swiss motto, "One for all — all for one."

In Switzerland, generally speaking, the government is behind business but not in it. The Swiss wants to run his own business with as little interference as possible, yet he recognizes situations where the government must interfere. When he permits that interference, however, he watches it very jealously.

For years government subsidies have pegged the price of wheat above the world price level. When foreign currencies were disorganized after

the war, the government subsidized certain exporters and limited the production of certain commodities. Laws still in effect forbid the establishment of new watch factories without government permission. When the world depression shot the tourist trade to pieces, the erection of new hotels was forbidden.

The majority of voters show themselves willing to tolerate this necessary interference with their liberties chiefly because the Swiss identifies his government with himself. "The government?" he says. "I'm the government," whether he's a banker, a railway conductor or a hotel porter.

There's no move to make Switzerland self-sufficient. No *ersatz*. They have to buy, they want to sell. They believe in free trade, and make the most sparing use of tariffs. All they ask for is a prosperous world around them. Even without it they do pretty well.

Like its neighbours, Switzerland has felt the pressure of Communism and Fascism. After the war Switzerland's grooves of foreign trade were clogged up. There was a rise of unemployment, discontent, strikes and other disturbances. The Communists moved in and for a time made progress.

Then came the fascist reaction, calling itself the Front Movement. There was the Society of the "Iron Brooms," promising to sweep democracy out of the country. There was the familiar technique of uniforms, parades, salutes. They were all set to create another fascist nation.

To-day what has come of it all? Communism in Switzerland is dead. The Front Movement can barely muster voting strength to put one representative in the national parliament.

There's no exciting story about this collapse of dictator movements. No great leader, no knight in shining armour, arose to stamp out Communism. There was no violent repression of Fascism. No fighting in the streets. Communism and Fascism were seeds that fell on stony ground and withered away.

It hasn't been easy for the Swiss democracy to maintain its principles — isn't easy now. German citizens in Switzerland number 150,000. Three fourths of the population speak German, are as German racially as the Prussians. (? Ed) A cardinal aim of the Nazis is to bring all German peoples under their rule. Hitler talks of "the lost Swiss tribes," and a flood of propaganda has flowed across the frontier by radio and the printed word. There has been violent agitation, centering in the German nationals — agitation to detach German Switzerland from the rest of the country and attach it to the Reich. The Swiss don't like it. In recent months Zurich motion picture audiences have had to be requested not to hiss the picture of Hitler when it appears on the screen.

It's a delicate problem for the Swiss government. A country of 4,000,000 must be wary in its treatment of a resident alien population belonging to a country of some 70,000,000, a belligerent country whose bombing squadrons are only a few minutes' flight away.

The alien in Switzerland has, in most respects, as much freedom as the Swiss — freedom of movement, of opinion, of engaging in business. But he is no longer permitted freedom of political agitation. No alien is allowed to address a political gathering. The Swiss have made it clear that they do not relish suggestions for change that come from outside.

Ever since 1914, military strategists have discussed the possibility that Germany might attack France through Switzerland. To prepare against such an attack, the Swiss have re-organized and re-equipped their army. Out of a 4,000,000 population they are now prepared to put 250,000 men in the field within three days.

Germany's annexation of Austria has caused them to speed completion of an elaborate system of pillbox forts all along the German and Austrian frontiers. Every able-bodied Swiss is a trained soldier. The farmer who lives within the threatened area is trained, if the need arises, to man the pillboxes on his own land.

The keynote of Swiss patriotism is defence. They want nobody else's land. Immediately after the war, when the Austrian province nearest Switzerland made overtures to join the confederation, the offer was firmly declined. But to defend their own territory they would fight to the last man.

And so the Swiss stand united, as they have for 700 years. They stand to-day in the midst of a troubled world that staggers insanely toward war. They hear around them the demands of the dictator-ruled nations: "Give us land, colonies, raw materials — or we shall take them." They answer by example: "Those are not the primary necessities. It is not aggression that makes prosperity but co-operation, within and without."

Above all, the Swiss are an answer to the pessimists who say that democracy won't work.

THE END.

Readers Digest.

### When at HAMPTON COURT have Lunch or Tea at the MYRTLE COTTAGE

Facing Royal Palace, backing on to Bushy Park between Lion Gate and The Green.

P. GODENZI, PROPRIETOR.

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"  
at every meal—for Health!



The ideal confection for the youngsters—Kunzle "Lanque de Chat" Chocolate Fingers. Made from the purest and best ingredients in the most hygienic conditions. Take some home for the kiddies to-day, they'll simply love them, and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that they are really doing them good.

"Lanque de Chat"

### CHOCOLATE FINGERS

and for you...

... may I recommend Kunzle's "Briton Assorted." These delectable Chocolates are appreciated by everyone, their delightful ever-popular centres make them a really special treat. Try some to-day — you'll be delighted with them.

4%  
PER LB.



### "BRITON" ASSORTED

Kunzle

MADE IN BIRMINGHAM

C. KUNZLE LTD FIVE WAYS BIRMINGHAM 15

Carew Wilson

"Sorry we can't come round—we've arranged to dine at the 'Myllet' with two of our friends—but perhaps you'll join us. . . . Yes! the place you admired so much when we passed it in the car. I know you're both almost epicures, but I can safely recommend the 'Myllet.' It's impossible to find fault with either the food or the service." The Myllet, Western Avenue, Perivale—opposite the Hoover Building.

Proprietor: A. Widmer (Swiss).