

Editor's post-bag

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1949)**

Heft 1104

PDF erstellt am: **26.09.2024**

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EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

25th November, 1948.

Madame Tussaud.

Dear Mr. Editor,

Dr. A. Latt's fascinating account in your issue of 10th September is partly founded on Madame Tussaud's own "Memoirs" which, curious as they are, cannot be relied upon as historical evidence. When the "Memoirs" were written, a morbid curiosity was ripe in everything that happened during the French Revolution and Madame Tussaud with her great shrewdness and consummate showmanship must have found it a fruitful and convenient occasion for giving the public the thrills they wanted.

I doubt very much that her casts were made at the foot of the guillotine or that she was either permitted or forced to take moulds of the newly severed heads of the victims. Why should the revolutionary leaders wish to perpetuate the memory of those they destroyed? In any case neither Foulon nor the Princess de Lamballe were guillotined; the former was lynched by the populace and the Princess lost her life in the September massacres. Charlotte Corday, incorrectly described as a peasant girl, was a well educated young woman of aristocratic descent, a niece of the great Corneille and a friend of the Girondins.

These inaccuracies do not detract from Madame Tussaud's merit but they show that the "Memoirs" must be taken *cum grano salis*.

Yours,

J.J.F.S.

* * *

20th December, 1948.

The Editor,
The Swiss Observer,
London, E.C.2.

Dear Sir,

Having just returned from a very happy three day cruise on the new Cunard White Star Liner "Caronia," which took some 450 guests — among them H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh — from Gourock to Southampton, I feel I ought to relate one extremely pleasing item of news to your readers.

While walking on the promenade deck of this indescribably graceful and lovely new liner with my wife, we suddenly found ourselves addressed in Schwyzerdütsch. We were, of course, more than surprised to hear our language, which we thought we monopolised in this company.

The lady who addressed us turned out to be as Swiss as we are: Miss Marianne Straub, from Amriswil. She works as designer for a well-known Bolton (Lancs) firm and most of the soft furnishings of the state rooms, lounges, salons and other rooms of this super luxury liner — built as a dollar earner for cruising in the South Sea and Caribbean — were designed by Miss Straub. I could not help feeling proud and pleased that Swiss taste, efficiency and workmanship should have contributed to this outstand-

ing achievement in shipbuilding called "Caronia." I was present during a conversation between the Cunard Line's chief internal architect and Miss Straub, when they discussed further plans for some rooms which were not yet finished. How proud she must have felt, when he — literally — told her: "Whatever you do, I leave it all to you, the job could not be left in better hands."

Here, I thought, is an example of a modest but gifted Swiss lady who by sheer hard work, conscientiousness, and good taste has contributed most powerfully to the achievement of something very beautiful. Surely her name deserves being mentioned? Surely she has rendered a great service to the name of the Swiss abroad?

Yours sincerely,

(Sig.) Gottfried Keller.

* * *

23rd December, 1948.

To the Editor,
The Swiss Observer,
London, E.C.2.

Dear Sir,

I was very much interested in your excellent account of the launching of the M.V. "Caronia" and your remarks about the Swiss Navy reminded me of an incident in 1935, when the Royal Motor Yacht Club had a rally in Antwerp and Brussels, to which nearly 30 Motor Cruisers turned up from many ports from this country.

We were sailing up the Scheldt, I was at the wheel alone on deck, while the crew and my friends were down below "splicing the mainbrace," when I saw a large Motor Barge coming along flying the flag of Basle on the bows and the Swiss Cross at the stern. Having suffered for more than 25 years from remarks about the Swiss Navy, I immediately called out: "All hands on deck" and when everybody came tumbling on deck to see what was wrong, I sung out: "Who said the Swiss had no Navy, look over there." I gave the Bargemen a hail in Swiss, which was returned heartily, but I am not bothering you to tell you what happened to me for disturbing the peace of my friends down below.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

R.E.P.

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