

City Swiss Club

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1958)**

Heft 1329

PDF erstellt am: **17.07.2024**

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ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL CITY SWISS CLUB.

Friday, 14th November, 1958,
at the Dorchester Hotel.

How many times have we been told, and how many times has the warning been sounded, that the Swiss Colony in Great Britain is slowly dying, and that in a few years' time it will have ceased to exist altogether?

Whilst I agree that the stringent immigration regulations badly hamper a most necessary rejuvenation of our Colony, I do not as yet despair, nor do I feel inclined to commission anyone to compose already a funeral march for the last Swiss leaving his earthly abode in this country for the Elysian fields, whence there is no return.

Casting a look back over the last three or four years, there have been few signs noticeable of an early demise — on the contrary, the activities of the many Societies in particular, and the Colony in general, have in fact been just as lively as in pre-war days, which is a comforting sign.

A more alarming factor I consider is at present the indifference which quite a number of our compatriots — with many years' residence in this country — are showing towards the efforts so gallantly made to keep the Swiss community together, and to make them feel that, although living in a foreign land, there is yet left a little corner which will remind them of their own country.

One invariably hears the excuse when asking for support for some of the various arrangements which are made, "I am getting too old", or "I have done my share in the past". Well, of course, we are all getting older, whether we like it or not; that cannot be helped, but surely that should not mean, providing we are still enjoying reasonable health, that we must stand aside, becoming merely onlookers? As for having "done our share in the past", I may say that many of us have done so willingly and with good grace, and yet continue to do so, because we know that by doing so we have rendered, and are still rendering, service not only to our fellow countrymen, but also in a much wider sense to our homeland.

As I said before, the immigration laws at present are a great handicap to an increase of our Colony, and we can but hope that the efforts which are continuously made by our Embassy and Government, to ease the situation, will in the long run be successful. In the

meantime, if we wish to keep the Colony alive and active, we must fall back on our older generation even if they *have* done their bit in the past.

They must again step into the breach. Most of the various Swiss Societies in this country have for many years been useful in knitting the friendly relations with our English friends. By their work they have made ourselves and our country known to them, but often — all too often — their efforts for closer collaboration have met with luke-warm support or indifference.

I do not, of course, mean that only a Swiss who joins a Swiss Society, or subscribes to the "Swiss Observer", is a good patriot; but, member or no member, subscriber or no subscriber, I consider that whilst remaining Swiss he also owes something to his country which has given him so much. This duty he can fulfil by showing an interest in the life and activities of the Colony, by attending at least some functions, be they lectures, film shows, meetings, patriotic demonstrations or social events.

And why not make a start by attending the Annual Banquet and Ball of the City Swiss Club, which will take place on Friday, 14th November, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1 (see advertisement).

The said Society, which celebrated its Centenary two years ago, needs no introduction, and, without undue praise, has done more than most Societies in fostering friendly and close relations between our two countries.

The committee of the City Swiss Club is most anxious that this year's Banquet and Ball should be a real Swiss evening, to which they welcome all members and their friends of the Colony, whether members of the Club or not.

As on former occasions, a number of prominent personalities in this country will be the guests of the Club, and the Swiss Ambassador (Honorary President), who will be accompanied by Madame Daeniker, will be in the Chair.

Tickets have been kept at a reasonable price, and speeches are promised to be of an equally reasonable length. Those ladies who have some misgivings with regard to a new dress need not worry — they are most cordially invited to come along in the same attire as last year, which we then admired so much and which we should love to see again. I feel sure that this evening will be a most enjoyable one, giving us all an opportunity of meeting old and new friends.

Au revoir, then, at the Dorchester!

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