

City Swiss Club

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CITY SWISS CLUB. An Interesting Evening.

On Tuesday, February 11th, the members of the City Swiss Club met at the Dorchester Hotel to listen to an address given by Mr. John Biggs-Davison, M.P., on the subject of "Suez and Since".

Owing to the absence of both the President and the Vice-President, who were in Switzerland, Mr. Th. von Speyr, Hon. Secretary, occupied the Chair with much competence.

It is regretted that the attendance was not more numerous, only about sixty members being present. Through unavoidable circumstances the members had been informed only at the last moment of the arrangements made, which, no doubt, accounted for the small attendance.

After an excellent dinner, the Chairman introduced the speaker to the company, and also welcomed Monsieur J. J. de Tribolet, 1st Counsellor of Embassy, and Dr. E. M. Bircher, Press Counsellor at the Embassy.

Mr. Biggs-Davison startled the audience by stating that he was going to behave in a most un-English way to-night and outline in his talk of "Suez and Since" more the general ideas and political directives than practical, matter-of-fact politics. He claimed that the defeat which England and France suffered over Suez and since in the Middle East generally, was a defeat

of Europe; that this had happened under American pressure. America had dislodged the British and French from their foothold in Egypt but not even gained a toe-hold in a region which was now penetrated by Soviet Communism.

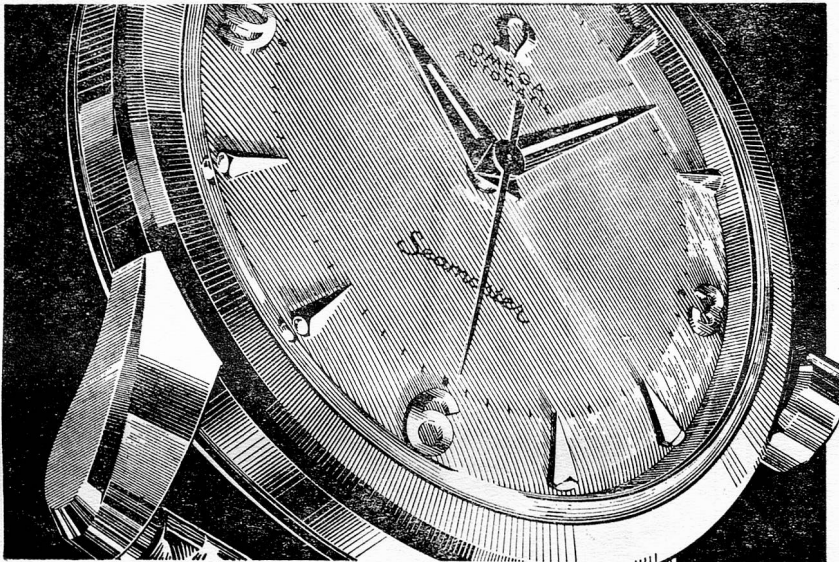
According to Mr. Biggs-Davison the preponderance of European influence in the Middle East was essential because the Middle East was a vital link in the maintenance of Western civilization and of peace. Cyprus must be held and the link of Western Europe through Israel and Irak with the Commonwealth should be striven for with all possible means. That could only be done on the basis of a European solidarity, which was as essential to the Middle East peace as to Europe itself and the world as a whole. It was through European solidarity alone that Europe could gradually free herself and become independent of the protection of the U.S.A. This, in the speaker's view, was a most important point, because — as inter-continental rockets became more and more developed — he could not see that in five or ten years' time the U.S.A. could be relied on to risk the devastation of her own territory in order to safeguard Europe from a Russian invasion.

The talk by Mr. Briggs-Davison was followed most attentively, and left the audience with much food for thought.

Mr. von Speyr warmly thanked the speaker for his excellent talk, and closed the Meeting at 10.30 p.m.

Press Reporter.

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