

# The Swiss popular diets

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## ENGLAND v. SWITZERLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL MATCH.

We have received the following communication from the Swiss Legation :

The return-match which has been arranged between the national Football teams of Switzerland and England will take place on the Chelsea Football Ground, Stamford Bridge, London, on Saturday, May 11th, 1946, at 3 p.m. Tickets can be booked in advance from Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son, Ltd., Berkeley Street, London, W.1. The prices of the seats *including booking fee* are 23/-, 11/6; and 5/- and 2/6 will be charged for standing room. Only the 23/- and 11/6 tickets can be booked in advance.

Thanks to the kind help of Mr. S. F. Rous, Secretary of the Football Association, Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son, Ltd., have been instructed to set aside sufficient tickets to accommodate all those Swiss spectators and their friends in the United Kingdom who have already responded to the enquiries circulated by the Swiss Legation in London.

Applications for tickets from persons in Switzerland should be sent to the office of Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son, Ltd., in Geneva, in order to ensure that all those who are able to obtain British visas from the British Legation in Berne as well as transport to and accommodation in London can attend the match.

On Wednesday, May 15th, the Swiss team will play against Scotland at Hampden Park, Glasgow. Tickets can be obtained from Mr. George G. Graham, J.P., Secretary of the Scottish Football Association, 48, Carlton Place, Glasgow, C.5.

SWISS LEGATION, W.1.  
London, 21st March, 1946.

## NEW APPOINTMENT AT THE SWISS LEGATION.

M. Frédéric Rothenbühler, 2nd Secretary of Legation, has been attributed to the Swiss Legation in London. M. Frédéric Rothenbühler studied Law and Economics chiefly at the University in Berne and after some practical work in a lawyer's office and in various Courts took his degree in 1941 as solicitor. He then worked on the staff of the Federal Economical Department; in 1942 he was transferred to the Federal Political Department, where he was appointed Attaché.

## AFTERMATH.

When in their folly men unsheathed the sword,  
And nations, blindly hating, came to grips,  
All human welfare faded in eclipse  
And widespread misery was their reward.

Dead are their hopes that once so highly soared,  
They hear, afar, with curses on their lips,  
The dreaded horsemen of Apocalypse,  
Whose shouts and hoofbeats ring a ghastly chord.

For famine stalks through war-torn stricken lands,  
Nature herself averts her kindly face  
And dark forebodings haunt the human race.  
Victor and vanquished both hold out their hands,  
Not for Gargantuan feasts in sumptuous style,  
But for a meagre crust . . . . . Was it worth while?

J.J.F.S.

## THE SWISS POPULAR DIETS.

Swiss Democracy is by no means merely a product of the French Revolution. Already in the Middle Ages the sovereignty of the people expressed itself in the Popular Diets, such as are still to be found in the cantons of Glarus, both Appenzells, and in Obwalden and Nidwalden. Once a year, either on the last Sunday in April or the first in May, all the inhabitants enjoying the full rights and honours of citizenship assemble in the open air, in order to elect officials and vote on the laws. The entire people determines its destiny by the count of hands.

The Popular Diet in Glarus was first mentioned in the year 1387. It was regarded as sacred and anyone speaking of it without proper respect was liable to banishment and the confiscation of his property. All the men of the canton assemble in the centre of the little town, within the "Zaun" (fence); even the school-children have their privileged place at the foot of the Government Stand, so that from their earliest days they learn from the example of their elders, and are educated to the great idea of common responsibility towards the State.

The Appenzel Popular Diet, as a sovereign political institution, dates back to the days of the struggles for liberty at the beginning of the 15th century. It is mentioned in the year 1403, when the army of the Abbot of St. Gall was beaten at the Speicher. In 1597, religious differences led to the division into the two half-cantons of Inner and Outer Rhoden. On the appointed day, the picturesque squares in Appenzell, Trogen or Hundwil are filled with thousands of citizens, each carrying a rapier or sword in his hand as a symbol of liberty. The roll of drums, the music of pipes, marches and the Song of the Popular Diet rise up to the spring sky and give the ceremony a fitting consecration.

The Popular Diets of the three original cantons very probably became political institutions in the year 1309, after the confirmation of the liberty of these cantons by the Emperor. Schwyz retained her Popular Diet till 1848, Uri till 1928. Since 1398, the Nidwalden Popular Diet has been traditionally held in the walled-in ring in Wil on the Aa. That of Obwalden was transferred in 1621 from the "Grund" in Sarnen to the Landenberg, where once the castle of the tyrants stood. The ecclesiastical dignitaries who take part in the procession open the ceremony by celebrating mass, to commend the Diet to the Almighty's protection. The Usher carries the Sword of Justice in his right hand. In Obwalden, the old signals are still given on the horn. In Nidwalden, the banners once captured from the enemy are hoisted over the heads of the assembly.

Human and divine rule still dominate in equal parts the ideas of the inhabitants of those valleys, who preserve the old forms of democracy unchanged, and every year proclaim at the Popular Diets the profound significance of Swiss freedom.

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