

Swiss turning a deaf ear to stories of Nazi infiltration

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SWISS TURNING A DEAF EAR TO STORIES OF NAZI INFILTRATION.

Reprinted from "New York Herald Tribune."

Occasional complaints in the Left-wing press of this country and elsewhere that dangerous Nazis and Fascists from Germany and Italy are reorganizing to-day in neutral Switzerland for a revival of their world-wide propaganda seem to fall on deaf ears in this Alpine climate. As far as a roving reporter can gather, the general attitude of the Swiss toward former Nazis is that a lot of good business people used to be Nazi, in an old ideological struggle that wrecked most of Europe, but that business is pretty good to-day and we ought to try to make it better.

There is evidence enough that unconverted Fascists are here to-day in some unknown numbers, and are actively propagating their doctrines of racism, of anti-Semitism, and extreme anti-Communism. German technicians who used to help the Nazi war machine are also here, and are being welcomed by various enterprises which can use their talents profitably, just as they are being welcomed in Allied countries. But the official attitude of the Swiss government is that all persons dangerous to Swiss security have long since been expelled from the land, and that one of the finest traditions of the country is the provision of sanctuary to persons whose political ideas make them refugees.

Currently the Left-wing Swiss press complains of two publications which are alleged to be the nuclei for a Fascist revival. One is the "Neue Politik," of Zurich, edited by a lawyer named Wilhelm Frick. The other is a Geneva periodical entitled "Courier du Continent," edited by one Paul Gentizon, who used to be the editor of "Le Mois Suisse" in Bern. Frick's law firm is alleged by Allied observers here to have been a widely-known intermediary during the years of Nazi power over Europe, whereby rich Jews escaped from central Europe by the deposit of funds which were turned over to Nazi officials. Frick, himself, is known

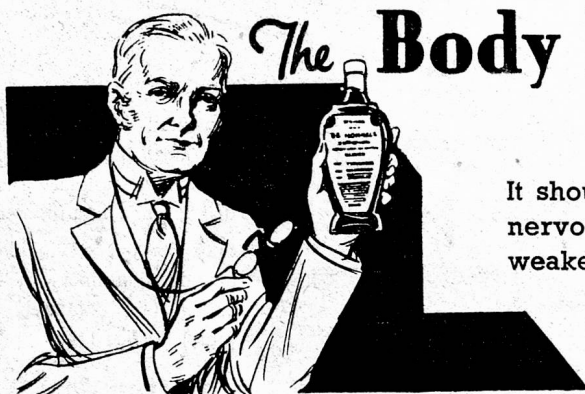
here as one of the "200," a group of influential Swiss who once petitioned their government publicly to do everything possible to keep peace with Hitler, since Hitler was bound to win the war and be master of the Continent.

"Le Mois Suisse," of which the editor of the new "Courier du Continent" was once an editor, is alleged by Allied observers in Switzerland to have been subsidized for a time by the Nazi and Fascist governments. Gentizon's new publication, published in Geneva, follows about the same editorial policy, which is to argue for a solid European bloc, devoted to anti-Communism and defense of the Continent against Russia. It is highly critical of American and British policies, and is also anti-Semitic.

Talking with some Swiss who were known as bitterly anti-Nazi before the war and during it, however, I find they consider these publications not too dangerous, and are inclined to consider most of the warnings against a rise of Fascist ideology in Switzerland a little far-fetched. Whipping Fascism as an ideology to-day, they assert, is like flogging a dead horse. Yet the hatreds and fears of war time die hard.

Just now there is an outcry in the Socialist press here against the entry into Switzerland of Wilhelm von der Bey, an electrical engineer who was employed by the I. G. Farbenindustrie until Germany's surrender. Von der Bey is alleged to have been the agent of the German Army sent to Norway in 1944, with the job of sabotaging Norway's industrial plant in case of an Allied invasion. He is now employed here in an engineering firm near Basel, and has the reputation of being an engineer of great ability. Another engineer to whose presence in Switzerland the Socialists are taking exception is Carl Reble, an expert for the Siemens company, who is working for a branch here which is stated for liquidation under the Allied-Swiss agreement to share some former German assets still in the country.

There has been a great outcry in Switzerland also over the immigration of Captain Heinz Stoelzel, once



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liaison officer between the army and the German scientists who were working in research laboratories at Peenemunde where the V-2 rockets were developed. Stoelzel is known to be an unrepentant German, and proud of his nation, however he may feel about Nazism. When he arrived in the country last summer he was invited to lecture before the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

In his lecture he asserted that Germany was well on its way to perfecting the atomic bomb, and then aroused some popular wrath by crying: "Thank God, the Allies did not seriously damage Peenemunde. German research will always continue, and in years to come will make important contributions to science, just as in years gone by."

Only a few days ago the arrival of a Finnish mathematics professor named Rolf Nevanlinna, appointed to a chair in Zurich University, provoked an outburst from the "Basler Vorwaerts," Left-wing newspaper. The professor, this newspaper said, was influential in his own country in organizing Finnish youth during the war against Russia to fight for Finland.

It is one of the complaints of anti-Nazis that the Swiss government has expelled some small fry, under Allied pressure, and left more dangerous men with better connections living in peace. They point out also that about 200 German Army internees, several of high rank, have been released in Switzerland and have received working permits to allow their continuous residence. All such complaints collide vainly, however, against the desire of Swiss business enterprise —

and Allied business men also in Europe — to hire the best talent available for their purposes, whether or not the men concerned once fought for Hitler or Mussolini.

In this connection, Allied military officers in Germany, responsible for putting German business back on its feet, have circularized the Swiss agents through whom German concerns once did business, urging renewal of commercial dealings. Several of the Swiss thus circularized were on the black-list of Allied governments during the war, and at least one has been denied a visa to go to the United States since the war ended, though he has obtained visas to go to other Allied countries and do business there. I find some confusion here among Americans as to whether the State Department is still trying to maintain black-lists of Switzerland's business men which have been abandoned by France, Great Britain and Belgium.

The attitude of the Swiss themselves toward ex-Nazis and Fascists could not be more nobly portrayed than in a book called "Swiss Neutrality," by Professor Edgar Bonjour, of the University of Basel, which was handed me by the Swiss Ministry of Information for my guidance, when I entered the country. "The noblest heritage of neutrality," wrote Professor Bonjour, "certainly lies in the right of asylum. To offer sanctuary to political fugitives is a right every state possesses, but Switzerland has exercised it at all times with notable generosity. The consciousness of this obligation is so deeply rooted in the national mind, and is so much a part of Swiss life, that it can only perish with Switzerland herself."

