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NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

(London Group)

Three Interesting Meetings at the Swiss Hostel for Girls

TRAVEL TALK

16th October

Those present had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Eric Mettler, Chief Correspondent of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", relating some of his experiences on his travels through Russia and Africa. The most interesting points, however, he made when answering the many questions that were put to him after his exposé.

Mr. Mettler's views on Russia tally with those of other visitors to that country. There is less tension and people will talk quite freely to visitors who speak Russian — and the wise visitor will, of course, keep off politics proper. Allowing for the great advance in many respects in the large town centres such as Moscow, even there housing is still in a precarious state, though the rents are low — the house space per person is far below that in any Western country. In the provinces nothing seems to have altered over vast areas from the times of the Czars. And no one can get a really objective over-all picture simply because travelling is still severely restricted. No doubt there is progress in many directions, particularly in the realm of industry, but it will be a long time before U.S.S.R. economic development even comes near that of our own.

On Africa Dr. Mettler's view might startle some optimists. He has come to the conclusion — having seen the position and heard the people intimately concerned at close quarters — that the dream of a multi-racial Africa (in the political sense) will remain a dream. "Uhuru" obtained, the African countries will have African governments and African political institutions. (Which does, of course, not mean that the white population in Africa will not get any hearing at all, but only so as members of the general body, not as separate "castes". — Rep.)

J.H.B.

RECITAL

25th October

On 25th October the Swiss Colony of London was offered an opportunity to hear one of the distinguished musicians of Lausanne, Anna-Marie Grunder, the violinist, accompanied by Prof. Constantin Regamey, in a most demanding and rewarding programme. The two Swiss artists were on their way back from a highly successful round of recitals in Warsaw, Moscow and Leningrad, wishing to make contact with musical circles in the British capital. The Nouvelle Société Helvétique seized the chance to invite them to give a recital for the music lovers of our Colony and their friends. It proved a most gratifying evening for those attending.

The programme comprised Beethoven's Sonata Nr. 4 in A minor, a Debussy Sonata, Prokofieff's Sonata Nr. 2 in D major, and a Rhapsody by our contemporary compatriot, J. F. Zbinden. Miss Grunder and Prof. Regamey seemed to be equally at home and in full mastery of Zbinden's newer medium of expression as with the classical style of Beethoven, the romantic mood of Debussy or Prokofieff's rendering of the elated agonies of an age of war and revolutions. The sure, straightforward interpretation these two artists gave to these most varied compositions appealed to all earnest seekers of an understanding of what the composers wished to say. We are especially grateful to them for acquainting us with one more of the impressive choice of modern Swiss composers. H.W.E.

"SOLIDARITY FUND"

13th November

From 26th November a full Governmental guarantee stands behind the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad — the purely private creation of a few enthusiasts of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique on behalf of their countrymen abroad. The need and usefulness of such an organisation of mutual help has already been proved by vast first-aid payments to many of our less fortunate compatriots in the all too numerous trouble-spots of this earth. The great service rendered thereby also to the home-country and Government in these few years of its existence has been repaid most handsomely by the grant of a full Federal guarantee of the fulfilment of the Fund's obligations to members in distress.

A momentous change has thus been brought about in the standing of the Solidarity Fund by the unanimous consent of both Chambers of the Federal Parliament and the silent approval of the population without a referendum being demanded by anyone. This milestone having been reached the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique seized an opportunity of hearing the chief architect and President of the Solidarity Fund, Dr. E. R. Froelich, formerly Managing Director of the Schweizerische Rückversicherungsgesellschaft, explain the ingenious conception and working of the Fund with the aid of the Federal guarantee.

It was an interesting talk, followed by a lively discussion.

H.W.E.

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OUR NEXT ISSUE

Our next issue will be published on Friday, 11th January 1963. We should appreciate it if readers could let us have any manuscripts or news items for publication by Wednesday, 2nd January.

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