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LETTERS FROM SWITZERLAND

BY GOTTFRIED KELLER

On the occasion of the 100th birthday of Konrad Adenauer, not so long ago, I published a longish letter to the Editor in the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" concerning a conversation I had had with the Federal Chancellor about the Jewish problem.

Soon after publication of this letter, I received, with a Küsnacht postmark, one of the most extraordinary documents I have yet set eyes on during my long life. It is entitled "Historical Truth Nr. 1", consists of 38 pages, is written in the most atrocious German, is compiled and edited by an Englishman by the name of Richard Harwood and distributed or issued by "Historical Review Press", Richmond, Surrey, England.

In it the author contends that the generally accepted figure of 6 million Jews as having been exterminated by the German Nazis is simply a myth. According to this source the majority of the 3 million Jews which were exposed to Nazi occupation are "happily alive in Europe today" and the losses the Jews suffered can be counted by the thousands, not by the millions.

World Jewry, always according to this author, declared itself as a belligerent party when World War II broke out, which fact justified the Nazis in internment the Jews within their power as enemies.

To house them all it was "necessary" to build the camps of Maidanek, Buchenwald, Auschwitz, Belsen-bergen, Theresienstadt, Treblinka, Gross-Rosen, Belzec... to name but a few of these dreaded institutions.

And because many of the poor inmates died of infectious diseases, it was necessary to erect so many crematoria. Many of the horror pictures from concentration camps one saw once these camps became overrun are, again according to this extraordinary publication, simply fakes.

Pictures of that butcher Heydrich, of Goering, of Ohlendorf and, believe it or not, of Hitler himself adorn all this nauseating stuff.

The claim that 6 million Jews were exterminated by the Nazis was – always according to the text in front of me – simply a clever trick by Jews all over the world and later by the new state of Israel in order to extract huge sums as compensation from the Federal Republic of Germany. For obvious reasons I cannot here quote more of these pseudo-proofs that the Nazis were, after all, not so bad as they have been made out to be. However, having myself (in Hans Egli's company) seen the Buchenwald camp on April 23rd and

24th, 1945, i.e. very soon after its liberation, and the half-burned corpses still in the crematoria's stoves, I feel quite sickened by this attempt to whitewash one of the vilest régimes which history has ever had the misfortune to see – sickened and astonished that the attempt originates from Surrey – England, and that there seems to be a Neo-Nazi in Küsnacht-Zürich who sent me this elaborate document, anonymously, of course.

FAREWELL TO MONTY

On March 24th, a few hours after Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery's death, I received a telephone call from the Zürich studio of the Swiss Radio. Was I, they asked, having been told by Professor von Salis that I had known 'Monty' in London, prepared to give a short interview about 'Monty, the man'.

Within half an hour they drew up in Küsnacht, Radio car and all, and the interview duly took place and was broadcast two hours later. I only relate this because in that short interview I was able to reveal something which had, so far, never been divulged publicly: namely the Field Marshal's assessment of the Swiss Réduit National conception.

While on holiday in Switzerland 'Monty' had met, so he told me, "a chap called Guisan," and he had not hesitated to call his Réduit-concept "Rubbish, nothing but rubbish, unworkable rubbish." (All these were his words, speaking as he was, in his utterly clipped manner and direct style.) Asked why, 'Monty' – who was Chief of the Imperial General Staff when that conversation took place in April 1947 – told me his reasoning behind this extraordinarily harsh verdict. If, he said, the bulk of the Swiss Army was withdrawn into the Alpine Fortress called Réduit, the enemy – meaning Hitler, of course – would not have hesitated to bomb a few large Swiss towns into rubble in case of an armed conflict.

Nor would he have hesitated to shoot a hundred women and children a day to break the Army's morale and make it come out and fight. This, in 'Monty's' view, would have been bound to demoralise the men in the Réduit within days, as well as that of the authorities. The situation, in his view, would quickly have become untenable. And so on and so forth. I then asked Montgomery what the reaction of

General Guisan had been. "He said", 'Monty' answered, and I had the impression that he was being quite frank about it, "that I was no doubt an excellent desert and tank general, but that the situation in Switzerland was quite different owing to the enormous difference in terrain between mountainous country and the African desert."

This conversation, about which I made a private note at the time, may interest many of those readers of the *Swiss Observer* who, like myself, consciously lived through those momentous and anxious days of World War II. At any rate, putting it on record now is, I think, worth at least a paragraph in one of these Letters from Switzerland of mine.

HOW DO WE DECIDE?

General Antonio de Spínola has been expelled from Switzerland. He is a former Portuguese Colonial Governor and author of a book which prepared the way for the revolution and liberation of Portugal from the yoke of Caetano's fascist regime. He subsequently became Portugal's first post-Caetano President and internationally a well-known personality, monocle and all. When he came to Switzerland he was given a tourist visa for three months, coupled with the traditional condition that he had to refrain totally from any political activity while of Swiss soil. However, he clearly broke this promise and as a consequence of a sensational story published in the German magazine "Stern" the Federal Council decided to expel him. Spínola then asked a Geneva lawyer to issue a strong protest on his behalf.

Two BUPO agents (BUPO means Bundespolizei, Federal Police) were then attached to him and de Spínola and his Secretary plus the two agents first went to one of the best Geneva restaurants to regale themselves on lobster, duck, crêpes Suzette and wine. The meal over, the two BUPO agents conducted de Spínola, monocle and all, and his Secretary to a waiting Police helicopter for a flight to Zürich-Kloten airport.

There the two Portuguese were conducted straight to a waiting plane of Varig-Airlines, while fuming photographers and press reporters were barred from getting anywhere near him. While the plane took off, Federal Councillor Furgler of the Justice- and Police Department gave a press conference in Berne, during which he explained the reasoning behind the expulsion decision, and ending it with the resounding statement: "We are not a Police State and never want to be one."

One can only hope that the Federal Council is equally watchful in the case of left-wing would-be revolutionaries as he proved to be vis-à-vis this so-called rightist would-be "Putschist".