

Notes & gleanings

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1921)**

Heft 9

PDF erstellt am: **12.07.2024**

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to understand one another. Our national life suffered badly from the want of mutual understanding. Now, if it is utopian to ask that every German-speaking Swiss should pass part of his life in a French-speaking canton to get acquainted with his confederates of the other idiom, such an effort can at least be claimed from the so-called future leaders of the people. A certain pressure has since been put on the intellectual youth in that respect, and it is now a fact that far more students of Zurich, Berne and Basle spend one or two terms in Geneva or Lausanne than was done before the war. The happy result is that the intellectuals of the different parts of our country get acquainted with each other's aspirations and so are better equipped to comprehend each other's different mentality, which cannot but tend to the good of the country. Swiss universities of both languages are now getting pretty well aware of the solidarity. This is shown clearly by the fact that this year for the first time a *Swiss University Almanack* (Schweizerisches Hochschul-Jahrbuch 1920/21; Verlag Ernst Bircher, Bern) has been published. It contains articles from the pens of a number of highly qualified gentlemen from all the Swiss universities. An essay on the Swiss Students' Movement is also included, proving that the editor, Dr. von Waldkirch, is conscious of the fact that the younger academic generation has its own will and its own ideals and should have a chance in the working out of university life reforms.

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If Swiss people had to beware of certain foreign influences in the past—mainly because they were too overwhelming and too disproportionate—they are now aware of great opportunities, hitherto missed through sheer lack of initiative. There are a thousand things we could learn from America, for instance—a country, the institutions of which are so similar to our own. The *Swiss Economic Missions to North America* were a wonderful opportunity to get into closer touch with that people. Many happy suggestions and many fine impressions have been received by those five hundred pioneers who participated in one of the expeditions. This year's spring festival of the well-known Zurich literary society "Lesezirkel Hottingen" has been a kind of revival of those interesting trips. The festival took place in the Tonhalle, decorated as a big ocean-steamer. It had the character of a rendez-vous of all friends of America, wherever they might dwell in Switzerland. It has surely not failed to bring together once more Americans living in Switzerland and their hosts of the dear old European republic which in so many respects is relying on the transatlantic sister nation.

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If we turn our eyes *westwards*, anxious to know what rôle America will play in the world's evolution, wondering when the States will enter the League of Nations and by so doing make it definitely a living thing, we are bound also to face the possibilities emerging from the policy of the great power of the *East*—Russia. If *we* don't, other people do, Swiss like ourselves. Many people of the possessing classes in Switzerland too often forget the pledges of November, 1918, and, enjoying the actual dissensions among the Socialists, believe capitalism, or as they like to style it, "the country," safe once more. That the Socialists are talking now and then about 'tactics' proves, even if those discussions disunite the party temporarily, rather that they are fully alive than dying out. No capitalist should think it superfluous to consider again

and again the possibilities of industrial peace; nor should he rely merely on Mr. Laur's dragoons. Is not the real situation such that if revolution is to be avoided—though nobody could fix a date for that revolution—Swiss people of every party must prove their good will lest the extremists of both sides drive them where they do not want to go. The *Swiss United Communist Party* is not yet definitely constituted. But it is going to be. A congress of all Communists, those belonging actually to the Swiss Communist Party—very small hitherto—as well as the representatives of the Left Wing of the Swiss Social-democratic Party, took place in Zurich on March 6th. No dispatch regarding its decisions has yet reached us, but there can be little doubt that a good many of the 8,700 Social-democrats who voted against the 21 conditions of the Executive will enter the new party. It may not be a very large number, but it will be quite sufficient to prepare technically a revolution with the aid of the Third Internationale, if goodwill should fail to animate the relations between employers and employees henceforth. Instead of magnanimous financial reforms we understand, unfortunately, that an Act similar to the English Emergency Act has been prepared by the Government. Whether we shall have violent troubles in our country or not depends, of course, ultimately to a large extent upon international developments. However, it should not depend on these exclusively. Swiss people should endeavour to solve their social problems even if other folk fail to do so. That we are but a small country is with respect to the question of industrial peace an advantage rather than a difficulty. Whether or not our people will take it to heart, lies yet on the knees of the gods.

P. L.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

The discussions in the English Press and the suggestions in some quarters of removing the LEAGUE CAPITAL to a less "neutral" venue have subsided after the Council Meeting of February 26th in Paris. *The Daily Telegraph* (Feb. 28th) reports as follows:—

"It was to be expected that the action of Switzerland in refusing passage through that country of the international troops on their way to Vilna to maintain order during the plebiscite would be discussed by the Council of the League of Nations. The matter came before the Council yesterday, and M. Leon Bourgeois spoke very plainly, emphasising the surprise felt by the Council over the action of the Swiss Government. M. Dunant, Swiss Minister in Paris, explained the Swiss point of view. When Switzerland joined the League, he said, she let it be known that the principle of neutrality must remain the basis of her foreign policy. While Switzerland would be disposed to allow troops to pass through the country to act as police when a definite agreement had been reached between the States interested, she considered that this condition had not been fulfilled in the case of Poland and Lithuania, and therefore there was a danger of complications in the near future. Moreover, the Soviets were hostile to the intervention of the League, and it might be difficult to withdraw the troops if that were deemed necessary. M. Dunant argued that as it appeared probable that the Bolsheviks would begin a military offensive in the next few months, combined with revolutionary movements in European countries, and that as reinforcements might have to be sent to protect the League troops, the Swiss Federal Government had to consider the possibility of its neutrality being called in

question. Under these circumstances Switzerland had, at the outset, to give a negative reply to the League, rather than be compelled later on to withdraw permission under more difficult conditions.

"In reply to the Swiss Minister, M. Leon Bourgeois spoke of the great moral damage the League had sustained by the decision of the Swiss Federal Council. This decision was all the more regrettable because it was taken before the conditions under which the passage of the troops might be required were ascertained from the League. He held that if there had been an exchange of views, the incident would not have arisen. It was only as a precaution that Marshal Foch had to take in advance in order to study the technical conditions of the problem that Switzerland had been asked to allow the passage of the troops. It was not an announcement of the departure of the troops. M. Bourgeois concluded with the hope that the misunderstanding that had arisen was only temporary, and would be surmounted by frank explanations."

The Daily News and Leader dispatch of the same date adds that M. Bourgeois asked M. Dunant to say to his Government at Berne: "We have seen at Paris men deeply moved by the injury done to the League of Nations, but who are at the same time resolved to forget this injury . . . in order that there may be complete harmony in striving after a common end."

The Pall Mall Gazette and Globe (Feb. 28th) gives the following comment and strikes a note which we need hardly state we have not come across in any other paper:—

"The refusal of Switzerland to allow international troops on their way to Vilna to pass through her territory was severely criticised at last week's meeting of the League of Nations Council. The plea of scruples over neutrality will not convey much impression of sincerity. Switzerland has not made up her mind yet whether the League or Germany is going to be the more formidable authority, and in any case she thinks the former is the safer to offend."

The announcement that INSURANCE COMPANIES in Switzerland have decided to raise the tariff for sickness policies for women clients has generated a good deal of merriment in those papers which took notice of it. Extra rates are to be levied, according to the lowness of the neck or the brevity of the skirt. One local paper, presuming that the company directors are mostly men of over sixty, suggests that the time of these directors could hardly be better employed than in taking the respective measurements previous to fixing the rates in each individual case. The following are some answers to enquiries made by *The Daily Express* (Feb. 25th):—

"As far as medical testimony goes there is no evidence of chest complaints caused by young women wearing low-necked dresses," said a high medical authority last night to a 'Daily Express' representative.

"I should have thought the wearing of low-cut dresses a healthy custom, provided a scarf is thrown round the neck in a cold atmosphere."

Sir Thomas Dewey, late chairman of the Prudential Assurance Company, was amused when informed by a 'Daily Express' representative of the report from Switzerland. "Insurance companies in England," he said, "are not likely to inflict any penalty on young women wearing their dresses low cut. I always thought it was a healthy custom and to be recommended in reason."

The STRIKE FEVER has penetrated even the reporters' gallery of the Conseil National; however, no great harm seems to have been done. The dispute is referred to in *The Observer* (Feb. 27th) as follows:—

"That even in the Swiss Parliament it is possible to have too much tri-lingual eloquence (in French, German and Italian) is proved by an incident which took place the other day in the Lower House in Berne. As a rule the Conseil National meets at 8 a.m. and talks till 12.30, when it adjourns for its 'Mittagessen'; but sometimes it assembles again at 4.30, adjourning generally at 6.30 or 7. Of late, however, there have been so many Demosthenes that a strict limit has had to be placed on their eloquence. So much have they had to say, indeed, on all sorts of questions that extra sittings have had to be held, and the Press representatives, as a rule forty to fifty in number, have had to be all day long in their gallery, and half the night, telephoning or telegraphing to their newspapers."

"When, therefore, it was proposed to hold a sitting late on Wednesday, the journalists were all up in arms, and sent in a written petition to the President. This was read aloud by the President, whereupon who should get up to oppose it but the reddest of red Socialists, and the most ardent advocate of an eight hours' working day, who scolded the journalists like a schoolmaster?"

"It was accordingly decided that the extra sitting should be held, but the journalists decided that they would not attend it. Consequently, when the time came the Press gallery was empty. Some members, it is true, tried to telephone or telegraph their speeches to the papers most sympathetic to them, but no record of their eloquence has appeared, and it is to be feared it is lost to the world."

Several papers give short obituary notices of Col. L. von Stürler, director of the Swiss Federal Arms Factory in Berne, and Eugène Burnand, the great religious artist.

ONT ETE HOTES DU GOUVERNEMENT BRITANNIQUE.

M. Gustave Ador, ancien Président de la Confédération et Président du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, est arrivé à Londres le 24 février pour présider les séances plénières du 'Provisional Mixed Committee' composé de sous-commissions économiques et financières, comité qui a été chargé par la Société des Nations de procéder à des travaux d'études préliminaires en vue de la création d'un organe économique permanent. M. Ador est retourné le 1er mars.

Le Gouvernement britannique a invité officiellement les personnes suivantes à venir visiter la "British Industries Fair" à Londres, Birmingham et Glasgow:

1. Colonel Dietrich Schindler, de Zurich, Directeur des Ateliers de construction d'Oerlikon et Vice-Président de l'Union Suisse du Commerce et de l'Industrie.
2. M. J. H. Hermann Bühler, de Winterthur, Président de l'Association Suisse des Maîtres Filateurs, Doubleurs et Tisserands de coton.
3. Dr. Robert Forrer, de St. Gall, Conseiller National.
4. M. Henri Grobet, de Vallorbe, Conseiller National et ancien Directeur général de la Société Suisse de Surveillance économique.