

Settlement by reason

Autor(en): **E.**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1934)**

Heft 641

PDF erstellt am: **13.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686155>

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SETTLEMENT BY REASON.

The opening of the year 1934 sees the end of the Savoy "Free Zones dispute," which had lasted since the war, and which, at times, had seriously embittered Franco-Swiss relations. The Haute Savoie and Pays de Gex Free Zones — created after 1603, reconstituted by the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, and extended to the greater part of Haute Savoie when that region was united to France in 1860 — formed a territory round Geneva which could freely trade with Switzerland. The French Customs line was set back about 25 miles from the Swiss political frontier. In case of war, and in order to defend her neutrality, Switzerland had the right of occupying Haute Savoie, but she renounced that right in 1928. On the ground that the war had completely altered the situation, France asked for the suppression of the Free Zones, and a paragraph to that effect was inserted in the Treaty of Versailles. Switzerland, being no party to that Treaty, made a reservation regarding the paragraph, and it was understood that the suppression could only be decided by agreement.

Long and delicate negotiations followed. A proposed agreement was rejected by the Swiss electorate, since it suppressed the Free Zones without giving sufficient economic compensation to Switzerland. But France, taking no notice of the Swiss refusal, moved her Customs without warning up to the political frontier, a *coup de force* which was much resented in Switzerland, and which rendered relations between the two countries decidedly strained. Negotiations were resumed some time after, and an agreement was reached, referring the legal points of the dispute to arbitration by the Hague Court. In 1929 the Hague Court, by nine votes against three, decided in favour of the Swiss that the Treaty of Versailles did not suppress the Free Zones, but left it to the two countries to negotiate a new régime. The Court further decided that the parties should come to an agreement by May 1, 1930. Fresh negotiations having failed, the question was once more referred to the Hague Court for a final decision. In December, 1930, the Court acknowledged the existence of the so-called Sardinian Zone (south of Geneva), the Pays de Gex (north of Geneva), and the St. Gingolph Zone (at the eastern end of the Lake of Geneva, and of the rights of Switzerland therein. At the same time the Court recognised the right of France to maintain an *octroi* and police cordon at the political frontier, but denied her the right of maintaining the Customs line which she had placed in 1923 at the political frontier. The Court further decided that the two countries should agree on the new economic régime to be set up between Switzerland and the Free Zones. If no settlement was arrived at, economic relations were to be ruled by the decision of three referees, who were later appointed: Sir John Baldwin (Great Britain), M. Uden (Sweden), and Senor Lopez-Olivan (Spain).

The two countries agreed on a number of points, but some remained unsettled, and finally the referees were called upon to take a decision which is now in force.

That decision regulates economic exchanges between Geneva — with an area of 140 square miles and a population of 180,000 — and the Free Zones, with an area of 280 square miles and a population of 35,000, mostly agriculturists. The new régime sets up free trade between these territories, with a few import quotas and restrictions on the Swiss side intended to minimise the competition of cheap products from the Zones in the Geneva and Swiss markets. It should be recalled that the cost of living, as well as the cost of production, is cheaper in France than in Switzerland. Some agricultural products from the Zones will be freely imported into the Canton of Geneva, provided they are brought by the peasants themselves. Some other products and goods will be freely imported, but are to be reduced by yearly quotas.

There is much discussion and grumbling, both in Geneva and in the Zones over the new régime. Trading between the Zones and France will be complicated by Customs and bureaucracy, and the economic frontier now cuts certain villages and communes in two, causing some dissatisfaction among their inhabitants. But, on the other hand, the population of the Zones is given a valuable opening for its products, and it can now buy sugar, coffee, tobacco and flour in Switzerland and purchase them cheaper than before. At first sight, the new régime seems less favourable to the Genevese. Geneva agriculturists will to some extent suffer from Free Zone competition, but, on the other hand, Geneva traders may benefit from the opening of the Zones market.

It is too early to say whether the new Free Zones régime is good or not. Experience will show if the setting up of the experiment will prove equally satisfactory to the two populations concerned. Should it prove unsatisfactory, it can be considered again with the help of a Franco-Swiss commission, set up by decision of the referees, and modified according to the needs and interests of the two territories. In any case, a dispute of long-standing, which might have em-

bittered political relations between France and Switzerland, and which already rendered economic relations between them dangerously strained, has ended in an experiment, devised at the request of the disputants by an organ of international government. It points the moral that when both parties to a dispute are willing to accept a reasonable solution by a disinterested umpire, reason itself stands to achieve a better and more durable solution than either party acting alone in its own interests. As such, the Free Zone experiment will assuredly find many to wish it well.

E.

LES "FRONTISTS" SUISSES A L'ETRANGER.

Les initiatives brouillonnes de la "Heimwehr" du colonel Fonjallaz, à Milan, et de la "Ligue des Confédérés nationaux-socialistes" de M. Théodore Fischer, à Lœrrach et à Berlin, sans avoir obtenu de succès appréciables (on conviendra que 26 adhésions à Berlin, sur une communauté de deux mille adultes, représentant une quantité négligeable) portent en germe de sérieuses difficultés.

Elles sont d'abord de nature à diviser davantage encore nos "colonies" à l'étranger, véritables microcosmes d'une Confédération aux multiples aspects, et déjà souvent portées à s'émietter en petits clans. En deuxième lieu, l'adulation à outrance du nazisme en Allemagne et du fascisme en Italie exercera évidemment son influence la plus profonde sur ceux d'entre nos concitoyens qui sont déjà plus ou moins désassimilés; notamment sur ceux de la deuxième génération, qui, là où il ne se trouve pas d'écoles suisses pour les recevoir, subissent déjà, à l'école publique de leur pays de résidence, le culte de dieux étrangers au génie de notre pays.

A qui obéiront le plus volontiers ces Suisses plus ou moins désassimilés; au consul helvétique ou au groupement politique étranger pour lequel ils professent tant d'admiration? Ne seront-ils pas favorisés, au point de vue économique, par le pays de résidence, aux dépens des Suisses restés fidèles à l'idéal traditionnel? Ne voit-on pas déjà de nombreux Suisses d'Allemagne rentrer au pays, étant mis à l'index parce qu'ils ne font pas naturaliser leurs enfants?

Ainsi, tout le travail accompli depuis la guerre pour assurer plus de cohésion parmi les Suisses de l'étranger risque d'être anéanti en un tournemain. On assure que nos ministres à Berlin et à Rome vont entreprendre auprès des communautés qui leur sont assujetties une croisade patriotique. Cette tentative d'évangélisation patriotique vient un peu tard, alors qu'on a laissé, depuis trois mois, la ligne de M. Fischer prendre solidement pied à Lœrrach. Si nous en croyons le "Bund", il paraît que "au Palais fédéral, on est d'avis que l'incident de Berlin n'aurait pas mérité d'attirer beaucoup d'attention s'il n'avait pas coïncidé avec la constitution d'associations fascistes en Italie également."

Il sera permis à de simples citoyens d'estimer, au contraire, que le nazisme offre plus de dangers pour nos institutions que le fascisme, parce que plus "raciste" — et par conséquent irrédentiste —, et aussi parce que plus païen et imprégné du culte de la violence jusqu'aux moelles.

On a parlé également d'entreprendre des démarches auprès des gouvernements de Berlin et de Rome. Mais sied-il à la dignité nationale d'implorer en quelque sorte la protection de gouvernements voisins contre des concitoyens? En leur demandant en somme de porter atteinte au droit d'asile, à quelles revendications ne nous exposons-nous pas de leur part, aux dépens d'émigrés qui bénéficient de notre droit d'asile à nous?

Non: comme on l'a reconnu mardi au Conseil fédéral, c'est dans notre pays même que le mal plonge ses racines. Rappelons que nous avons sans que la tranquillité intérieure en ait été vécue près de dix ans à côté d'une Italie fasciste troublée le moins du monde. Qui donc sera assez naïf pour croire que c'est par un pur hasard que les fronts se soient instantanément multipliés, comme des champignons, au lendemain de la contre-révolution naziste?

Si les doctrines de violence se répandent dans certains milieux suisses, il faut avoir le courage d'y répondre par des mesures de répression appropriées: création d'une police politique, renforcement de la législation pénale. C'est ce qu'ont parfaitement compris les socialistes tessinois, qui poussent leurs autorités cantonales à appliquer d'urgence, par anticipation, la loi fédérale sur l'ordre public: M. Borella, député au Conseil national, va jusqu'à trouver cette nouvelle législation trop douce...

R. Bovet-Grisel.

SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR AT BASLE.

The annual Swiss Industries Fair will be held at Basle, its permanent headquarters, from April 7 to 19.

The first Swiss Industries Fair took place at Basle in 1916. From that initial venture a huge national industrial manifestation has been gradually developed, and the permanent new buildings which were erected in 1925-1926, after a conflagration destroyed the first premises, spell the last word in convenience and equipment, a feature appreciated by the exhibitors as well as by the buyers.

Over 1,000 exhibitors have participated annually in this Swiss Industries Fair in recent years, their products including the following groups: chemical and pharmaceutical products, household articles, kitchen utensils and appliances, brushware, glassware, heating and sanitary installations, house fittings, furniture, basket-work, musical instruments, sporting goods and toys, applied arts, pottery and china, watches, clocks and jewellery, office and business fittings and appliances, paper and paper goods, office and schoolroom supplies; advertising and propaganda, graphic arts, publication and printing, textile goods, clothing and outfitting, footwear and leather goods, accessories, etc.; technical articles (wood, metal, glass, cork, leather, rubber, etc.), patents and inventions, fine mechanical and precision instruments and apparatus, machinery and tools, means of transportation, raw materials and building materials, miscellaneous.

The management of the Fair and all Swiss Consulates will be pleased to furnish foreign buyers with full information and cards of introduction. These cards provide for special facilities for visitors from abroad, and likewise for reduced railroad fares. For the benefit of English-speaking visitors, it may be mentioned that interpreters will readily be placed at their service. The management of the Fair wishes to meet visitors in every way, so that their business transactions at Basle may be as pleasant and as profitable as possible.

The information office of the Swiss Industries Fair gives free information, either verbally or in writing, throughout the year regarding sources of supply of Swiss Goods. During the Fair, the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade maintains a special information bureau for visitors. Business men can obtain at the Fair any information desired regarding the production and sale of Swiss goods.

LONDON SWISS RIFLE TEAM.

Under this title a number of Swiss Riflemen have grouped themselves together, for the purpose of competing at the forthcoming Tir Fédéral at Fribourg. The necessary preliminaries were agreed to at a meeting held last Thursday, at the Swiss Hotel, 53, Old Compton Street, W., over which Monsieur de Bourg had kindly consented to preside. A guarantee fund, to cover initial expenses, was subscribed. So far the team consists of 14 members, and regular practice will take place at Bisley.

We hope to publish further particulars in a future issue.

D' BAERNER.

Mi cha fäsch hi cho wo me ma
So trifft me gwüss a Bärner a
Wo ire unter oder obere Schicht
So gwüsschaft erfüllt si Pflicht,
Mit Hände sig's, Kopf oder Bei
Es isch ihm alles eimerlei.
Bursche hets vo jeder Sorte,
Blondi, schwarzi u die Rote
D's plätz wis g'seh's chli chlobig dri
d'Härdöpfurösti ma schuld dra si
Oeppe die het's au a Löu
Däm's fällt im Gade a chli Oeu
Doch umhi mänte starche Ma
Dä ganz "Aemmetaler" lüpfte cha
Läse chönt si, rächn, schrybe
U mit Jasse, z'Zyt vertriebe.
Hornusse, ringe, tanze schwinde,
Hundert schön Lieder sinde
Doch leider tües si statt zum "Huuche"
No öfters d's Mu zum Flueche bruche.
De Bärner cha me göng vertraue
Si si a ernste, trene Schlag
Heimelig, guet mit de Fraue
U wärchet, was er wärche mag
Bärn Doctor, Profässer u Diräkter
Si gwüss, me weis jo, wältbekannt
Hei Ehr u Glanz u Ruhm erkore
Doch hassets jede Firlifanz
Au gits a mänte Biederma
Wod's Härz no het am rächte Fläck
U gärn möcht d'Wält derhinder la
Viel besser als ärs gfunde het
Drum blybet nume chrehaft
U b'haltet Eure guete Kärm
Gott b'huetet Eui alti Kraft
U Eures liebe, alte Bärn.

H. E.

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