

# Switzerland and democracy [ to be continued]

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By his death we have lost our pastor, and with him more than we can tell to-day. Do not let us forget his work, the lasting good he has done us. Let us remember!

And if it be found that his family is not well provided with the necessities of life, let us stand together again and show our appreciation in a thoughtful and practical manner. Each one of us has lost a friend of high ideals, but his orphans have not lost this only — they have lost both their parents and sole support.

#### A la mémoire du pasteur R. Hoffmann.

Un culte commémoratif a été célébré samedi à 15 heures en l'église luthérienne du Bourg-de-Four, pour honorer la mémoire du regretté pasteur René Hoffmann-de Visme. De nombreux amis du disparu avaient tenu à témoigner leur sympathie à la famille affligée et à s'associer à l'hommage rendu à ce fidèle serviteur de Dieu.

M. le pasteur Fiedler, de l'Eglise luthérienne de Genève, beau-frère du défunt, ouvrit la cérémonie par la lecture de paroles bibliques, puis rappela quelques souvenirs illustrant la joie rayonnante, le cœur aimant, la foi vaillante de celui dont la vie a enseigné ces deux choses en particulier : il fait bon être chrétien et il fait bon servir par le don total de la vie.

M. le professeur Ad. Keller, au nom du Conseil de la Fédération des Eglises protestantes de la Suisse et comme ami personnel du pasteur Hoffmann, souligna l'œuvre à la fois chrétienne et patriotique accomplie par celui-ci parmi les Suisses de Londres, dont les jeunes surtout ont trouvé en lui un véritable berger. Aussi est-ce non seulement l'Eglise, mais la Suisse tout entière qui est en deuil.

M. H.-L. Henriod, ancien membre du Consistoire de l'Eglise suisse de Londres, collègue de R. Hoffmann en divers conseils et son ami, donne lecture de deux télégrammes de sympathie, l'un de M. le ministre Paravicini et l'autre du Consistoire de l'Eglise suisse de Londres. Il dit ensuite à son tour ce qui a été le disparu, sa cordialité enjouée, son intérêt pour la cause de l'Eglise en général et pour le travail œcuménique, son œuvre admirable auprès des pasteurs étrangers de Londres qu'il groupa en association, son courage dans l'affliction et son désintéressement.

M. Relfs, au nom du Bureau international contre la traite des femmes et des enfants à Londres et au nom du Comité suisse contre la traite des blanches, rappela avec émotion la grande part prise par M. R. Hoffmann à cette croisade, le rôle prépondérant qu'il a joué dans les congrès internationaux où son influence savait orienter les débats vers des conclusions claires et nettes, les services qu'il a rendus à tant de jeunes qu'il a retenus sur la pente de la ruine physique et morale.

Enfin M. le pasteur R. Ostermann, camarade et ami de R. Hoffmann dès leur petite enfance, montra dans le caractère et dans la vie de celui-ci les traces bénies de ses parents qui l'ont véritablement formé pour servir et dont il a reçu cette admirable capacité d'enthousiasme pour la cause de la justice, cette belle et saine exubérance de vie, son amour passionné de la vie et de la nature en quoi il voyait l'œuvre de Dieu. Tous ces traits ont fait du pasteur René Hoffmann un incomparable entraîneur d'hommes, d'Eglise et de jeunesse.

Une prière, suivie de l'Oraison dominicale et de la bénédiction, terminèrent cette émouvante cérémonie.

Tribune de Genève.

#### Photograph of the late Pasteur René Hoffmann-de Visme.

Melles. Hoffmann and Matthay have received so many requests for a copy of Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme's photograph, that arrangements have been made for this to be on sale.

It is an actual print of post card size, finished and mounted with folder (7" x 11") by the photographer who took the original and of which a smaller reproduction appeared in the "Swiss Observer" of the 11th September last.

It will be on sale at 15, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1, where Mrs. E. Meylan will be pleased to receive enquiries and orders (Telephone MUSEUM 3100).

Price 2/6 each post free.

(Postal Orders accompanying requests, to be made out to Mrs. Meylan.)

A few copies only of cabinet size are also available at 3/6 each post free.

Photographs may also be obtained from the "Swiss Observer," 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2, against the respective remittance.

Any surplus which might arise out of the sale of this photograph will be handed over to the existing small fund of the Sunday School of the Eglise Suisse.

## SWITZERLAND AND DEMOCRACY.

By WILLIAM E. RAPPARD.

In the "Fortnightly Review."

For most members of the English-speaking community throughout the world, no doubt, Switzerland is primarily a playground. What interests them most about the Alpine republic is the state of the weather in summer, of the snow in winter and, in all seasons, the cost of transportation, the price of hotels and the rate of exchange between the pound sterling and the dollar on the one hand, and the Swiss franc on the other.

For the more thoughtful, however, Switzerland is also the home of a nation. And certain characteristics of that small, but peculiar, nation have struck the foreign traveller ever since the beginnings of the tourist traffic in the eighteenth century. The general standard of living seemed higher than in the surrounding countries, which was all the more surprising as it was obviously not based on any natural advantages of climate, soil or sub-soil. Furthermore, the people appeared to enjoy an appreciable degree of education, which seemed to account for the discrimination and independence they displayed in judging local and foreign events and institutions. To these features must be added the multi-lingual character of the population and the ancient republican tradition, which has been maintained uninterruptedly ever since the end of the Middle Ages. The question is whether Switzerland deserves the title of traditional home of democracy — the honour freely bestowed upon her by her politicians on all festive occasions. That claim needs to be examined, explained and qualified.

If, by democracy, we mean a régime in which the people rule, that is, in which the majority of the people freely choose and dismiss their rulers and approve or condemn the policies proposed by them, then Switzerland was certainly not a democracy prior to 1830.

Until then, the Swiss people had never been their own masters in the modern democratic sense of the term. To be sure, they were neither, as a national whole, under foreign rule nor, as local units, particularly dissatisfied with their traditional masters. But prior to 1798, large districts had for centuries been administered as subject provinces by some or all of the thirteen sovereign cantons. Moreover, in the latter, the countryside was generally governed by the capital cities, in which public authority was vested in a small number of privileged families. These families together enjoyed powers wider on the whole than those of an absolute monarch, since, by right of birth, their members possessed not only executive and legislative, but also complete judicial authority. The whole political structure, built up on a basis of military and economic power, rested on a tradition which, even if seldom challenged and though never supported by much actual force, was certainly not synonymous with expressed consent.

How is it, then, that, even before the nineteenth century, the Swiss should have been looked upon, if not as a democratic nation, at least as a body of particularly free citizens?

The fact is undoubted, and its explanation is not difficult to discover:

In the first place, Switzerland owes her national independence to the successful resistance which the free peasants of the valleys surrounding the Lake of Lucerne offered the authority and the encroachments of the Hapsburgs at the end of the thirteenth century. Thus, from their very origin, national independence and civic freedom were, in Switzerland, closely related, even if not undistinguishable, ideals.

The reputation of the Swiss as a free, self-governing people, has, in the second place, been enhanced in the opinion of Europe by the fact that from the beginnings of their history the first three cantons which constituted the primitive nucleus of the Confederation, enjoyed institutions which were called democratic and which may truly be so considered. They have recognized no authority superior to their *Landsgemeinde*, the periodic gathering of all male citizens, in which each has an equal vote. As for over five centuries, in these cantons, all magistrates have been annually elected and all laws regularly approved by the *Landsgemeinde*, they may well be held to be the cradle of European democracy.

To be sure, the political importance of the small and poor rural *Landsgemeinde* cantons was soon overshadowed by that of the aristocratic city states of Lucerne, Zurich and Berne, with whom they allied themselves in the course of the fourteenth century. To be sure also, the *Landsgemeinde* cantons themselves, by refusing full citizenship to the immigrants into their territory, by accepting the authority of a limited number of powerful families, whose control was facilitated by the lack of all secrecy inherent in the constitution itself, and by long opposing all progressive measures within their own territory as well as in the Confederation, have displayed a spirit very unlike, and indeed often consciously opposed to, that of modern democracy. But

these facts, however, significant in themselves, did not prevent the ideas of Switzerland and democratic government from becoming and from remaining associated in the minds of most political observers.

Now in the eighteenth century, before the French Revolution, the ideas of republicanism and democracy were commonly identified. Most progressive reformers of the age were critical of the monarchical despotism which prevailed in the surrounding countries. Switzerland, although far from democratic, had never recognized the supreme authority of any kings. The plurality of her rulers, however autocratic, oligarchical and illiberal, made of her a republic or a confederacy of republics which, as such, was acclaimed as a more popular form of government than monarchy. Nor was this entirely an illusion. On the very eve of the French Revolution, when the urban aristocracies which ruled over the greater part of Switzerland had become more exclusive in composition and less liberal in spirit, than ever before, there obtained a far greater measure of local self-government in the cantons than in almost all other parts of Europe.

Then, again, the neutrality which Switzerland had been able to maintain throughout most of the wars of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the state of internal contentment which prevailed throughout the country had allowed her to do without any standing armies. This also made her governments appear less oppressive to critics of the institutions of that time.

Finally — and as a result of all these conditions — there prevailed among the Swiss people a spirit of independence which impressed most foreign observers. Thus, one of the most intelligent of these observers, William Coxe, M.A., Rector of Bemerton, who had travelled extensively in Switzerland at the end of the *ancien régime*, wrote, after referring to the recent pacific history of the country:

"The felicity of Switzerland, however, does not consist merely in this peculiar exemption from the miseries of war; as there is no country in which happiness and content more universally prevails among the people. For, whether the government is aristocratical, democratical, or mixed; a general spirit of liberty pervades and actuates the several constitutions: even the oligarchical states, which are usually the most tyrannical, are here peculiarly mild, and the property of the subject is in general securely guarded against every kind of violation."

That, in spite of all these traits, Switzerland was not a modern democracy at the end of the eighteenth century was clearly shown by the attitude she adopted towards the French Revolution. Not her aristocratic governors only and the Swiss regiments which protected Louis XVI, against his revolted subjects, but the vast bulk of the Swiss people were bitterly critical and suspicious of the happenings in Paris long before the French armies invaded the country in 1798, to free them from their alleged tyrants. The moral and material sufferings which Switzerland endured during the dark period of French domination which followed have not yet been forgotten. Although rarely mentioned in public discussions to-day, their memory may perhaps help to explain the present attitude of the majority of the Swiss people towards Soviet Russia, the Spanish civil war and even the French Popular Front.

All revolutions abroad, when accompanied by active propaganda in Switzerland, arouse profound distrust in a people that has never forgotten the imposition by foreign force at the end of the eighteenth century of a system of representative democratic government very similar to that which they have developed of their own free will in the course of the nineteenth century.

After the collapse of the Napoleonic régime in 1815, the traditional Swiss aristocracies, which had been overthrown by French revolutionary armies, were restored under the reactionary auspices of the Allied Governments. The beginnings of the national movement towards modern democracy in Switzerland date back to this period. The people, having tasted of liberty and equality, even though in the poisoned cups of foreign invasion, no longer submitted in passive contentment to the oligarchical rule of the privileged classes, whom they had for centuries obeyed.

From 1815 until 1830, the substitution of modern democratic for the existing traditional institutions became the goal of all popular leaders. Speaking, in the spring of 1830, at the annual gathering of the Helvetic Society, then one of the most active organs of public opinion, Judge Schinz, of Zurich, employing what was to become President Lincoln's famous formula of democracy, declared: "All Swiss governments must recognize that they are but governments of the people, by the people and for the people."

When the liberal revolutions broke out in Paris and in Brussels, in the Summer of the same year, and when it became apparent that the Powers of the Holy Alliance regarded as the guardians of the régime of the Restoration, were

either unwilling or unable to defend it, the majority of the Swiss people also raised their voice in protest. In the course of a few months, in one canton after another, they demanded and peacefully obtained the abdication of their governments. All the former aristocracies and oligarchies were transformed into representative liberal democracies.

From then on until the present day, the evolution of democracy in Switzerland may be said to have gone through three successive stages, roughly dated as from 1830 to 1848, from 1848 to 1874, and from 1874 until to-day.

After 1830, the democratic spirit spread like wild-fire all over Switzerland, until, after a brief civil war, its main principles were firmly embedded in the first federal Constitution, adopted in 1848. According to that Constitution, supreme authority, to be exercised by the federal legislative Assembly, was vested in the people and the cantons. No cantonal constitution was to be tolerated which did not provide for "representative or democratic" institutions, which meant democracy in its representative or direct — *Landsgemeinde* — form. No constitution, federal or cantonal, was to be held valid unless expressly approved by the people at the polls. All the Swiss were declared to be equal before the law and all hereditary and other privileges were abolished. Freedom of trade, residence, conscience and worship, of the press, of association and of petition were guaranteed to all.

The belief in the virtues of democracy, i.e., of political freedom and equality, was so absolute in 1848 that all forms of protectionism were condemned as being contrary not only to the constitutional provisions relating to the customs régime, but also to the fundamental principle of equality before the law.

After 1860, the initiative and referendum, i.e. direct democracy, exercised at the polls, were introduced first into several cantonal constitutions, and then, in 1874, in the revised federal Constitution as well. The adoption of this Constitution may be said to have marked the climax of democratic enthusiasm in the country. At the time of its drafting, the prevailing opinion was unreservedly favourable to the extension of the rights of the citizen. The broader and the more radical these rights, the more powerful and more immediate the influence of the people, it was felt, the better not only for all individuals, but also for the state as a whole.

Who had hitherto opposed the extension of democracy?

First, the privileged classes. They had been overwhelmed in 1830, and their exclusion from power had been accompanied by various social reforms which, even if they brought with them heavier taxation, had improved the lot of the common people.

Secondly, the Catholic clergy. The Constitution of 1848 had been adopted in the face of their bitter opposition. But the people had fully enjoyed the freedom of thought and of action with which it had endowed them.

Thirdly, the advocates of cantonal sovereignty. The Constitution of 1848, while emancipating the individual, had submitted the cantons to the will of the whole nation. This also was generally looked upon not only as intelligently progressive but also as truly patriotic.

Fourthly, and finally, the class of highly educated liberals, whose belief in government for the people was exclusive of any faith in government by the people. This *clite* of the *bourgeoisie* had done much to ensure the success of the Constitution of 1848, but they had not escaped the reputation of haughty condescension, the suspicion of partiality in favour of capitalistic interests and therefore the jealousy, envy and often the hostility of the masses.

As all the foes of democracy were consequently, in 1874, looked upon as the enemies of the people, the people demanded and obtained an extension of their democratic rights at the expense of their opponents. However, since 1874 and especially since the World War, a gradual change may be noted in the evolution towards ever greater democracy in Switzerland. Possibly, in the course of the last generation, a slight and hesitating reaction may even be said to have set in.

(To be continued).

#### CONCERT NEWS.

The Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Swiss Orchestral Society have arranged for a special Concert to be given in the large Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, on Tuesday, October 19th, at 8.30 p.m.

The two Societies have combined their efforts in securing some really fine Swiss talent and under the title "La Suisse qui chante" are presenting to you Marietta and Martha Amstad singing their Swiss songs, and Idy Frei, a jodelling lass, — a new discovery! — The Orchestra will, of course, do its bit as well and we may look forward to a really artistic as well as amusing evening. — Would you please note the date and reserve it? Thank you. You will find full details in these columns next week.

#### FOOTBALL.

26th September, 1937.

##### NATIONAL LEAGUE.

Lugano	.....3	Young Fellows	.....1
Nordstern	.....4	Basel	.....2
Biel	.....2	Young Boys	.....0
Bern	.....1	Servette	.....1
Lausanne	.....2	Luzern	.....1
Grasshoppers	.....2	Grenchen	.....1

By their narrow win over Grenchen, whose team does not look like being up to National League standard, Grasshoppers maintained their 100 per cent. record intact and have now a clean lead of 2 points over Servette and Basel, 6 points each, the latter losing decisively in the local derby game against Nordstern. There follow Lugano and Lausanne with 5 points each and a bunch of three (Young Boys, Luzern, Nordstern) having 4 points in their lockers. Ninth ranks Bern with 3 drawn games and one defeat. They cannot score goals, exactly 4 in 4 games and 5 against. Biel creep up to tenth place, thanks to their smart if somewhat unexpected win against their cantonal rivals, the Young Boys. Then follows Grenchen with 1 point and last are Young Fellows with the dismal record of: Played 4, Lost 4, Goals for 2, against 11, Points 0, a sorry start indeed.

M.G.

P.S. Auent that change of address reported in another column and in answer to some kind enquiries: No, there will be no house-warming. But I am game for any suitably arranged bottle parties, any evening, any day!

#### CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

##### L'ASSEMBLÉE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi 5 Octobre au Restaurant PAGANI, 42, Great Portland Street, W.1. et sera précédée d'un souper à 7h. 15 précises (prix 5/-).

##### ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Démissions.
Admissions.	Banquet Annuel
	Divers.

Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 9595).

Le Comité.

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#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Tuesday, October 5th — City Swiss Club Monthly Meeting at Pagan's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

Wednesday, October 6th at 8 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — First meeting of the Philatelic section, at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.

Friday, October 15th — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting, at the "Foyer Suisse," 15, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1. Supper at 3/- to be served at 6.30 sharp, to be followed by a causerie by Henry C. Balsler, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, on: "The Inns of Court."

Saturday, October 16th — Annual Banquet — Swiss Mercantile Society — at the Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly, W.

Tuesday, October 19th, at 8.30 p.m. — "La Suisse qui chante." Special Concert arranged by the New Helvetic Society and the Swiss Orchestral Society, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

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#### SCHWEIZERKIRCHE (Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2  
(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 3. Oktober 1937.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst.  
7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.  
8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

Dienstag, den 5. Oktober 1937.

3 Uhr nachm., Nähverein im "Foyer Suisse."

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