

Geneva and the English press

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1932)**

Heft 580

PDF erstellt am: **26.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696340>

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GENEVA AND THE ENGLISH PRESS.

We have before us a large bundle of Press cuttings from English papers relating to the recent troubles at Geneva, most of the comments, we are sorry to say, are not only unfair but highly exaggerated, some are bordering almost on stupidity.

As an example of how this regrettable incident, has been dished up to the English Public, we publish below an article, which appeared in the "Economist" on November 19th, under the heading: *Butchery at Geneva.*—

We are informed that the Swiss Minister has received innumerable letters from Switzerland, protesting against the way in which the Geneva troubles have been reported and commented upon in the English Press. Letters from Switzerland, addressed directly to the Editors of several London and Provincial papers have been published, some of which certainly achieved exactly the opposite of what was intended, and it would have been far better, if these, no doubt well intended communications would have been suppressed.

It might interest our readers to learn that the Swiss Minister has written both to the *Times* and to the *Daily Express*, the former published the letter immediately *in extenso*, whilst the latter, after the lapse of three days, inserted an *extract* from the afore mentioned document, which by leaving out certain relevant facts, was unsatisfactory. We therefore published the communication of the Swiss Minister to the Editor of the *Daily Express* in full.

The *démarches* of our Minister in London, with regard to his letters to the above mentioned papers, have received universal approval at home, both by the public and the press.

Butchery at Geneva.

The "Economist," Nov. 19th.

If the Conseil d'Etat at Geneva has laid the seeds of a dangerous revolutionary movement in Switzerland, it will only have itself to blame; for the horrible events which occurred on Wednesday of last week seem fairly attributable to an inexcusable combination of hysterical alarm and military incapacity. Let us grant that the course of the municipal election had seen tempers running high, and that Switzerland is no more free than any other country from a sprinkling of subversive Left Wing elements; let us grant that the authorities, having sanctioned a Fascist meeting in a public hall, were under an obligation to protect the meeting from Socialist aggression, and that the demonstration, which was organised outside the hall, was at once ill-considered and provocative. The fact remains that all the evidence from unbiassed witnesses is to the effect that the crowd which assembled — including, as always on such occasions, a large proportion of merely curious spectators — was in no sense dangerous; was armed with nothing more deadly than bags of pepper; and was never beyond the control of firm shepherding by the police. To use a company of raw recruits for police purposes in the circumstances was technically rash; and to adopt tactics whereby these troops in single file mingled with, and were swallowed up by, the crowd was a blunder for which a raw subaltern could not hope to be forgiven. To follow up this incompetence by machine-gun fire, turned on the crowd with no more warning than a bugle call, was an act of indefensible butchery. The sequel has been an attempt to whitewash those responsible for the massacre by such wild talk of Communist plots, and by the arrest of the Socialist leader, M. Nicole, on a charge of conspiring to overthrow the State. These patent exaggerations of the "Red Menace" do little to palliate the bungling brutality of the authorities; nor do we imagine that foreign investors with liquid funds lodged in Switzerland will be favourably impressed by the somewhat ridiculous mobilisation of regiments, the constant parading of armed forces through the streets of Geneva, or the hysterical attitude which led to placing the Assembly Hall of the Disarmament Conference in such a state of defence that it was deemed necessary to keep a machine-gun trained on the foreign correspondents' Press room.

To the Editor of the "Daily Express,"
8, Shoe Lane, E.C.4.

Sir,
The "Daily Express," without a doubt, fully merits the general praise of its readers for having promptly exposed the "Foolish canard" of an American paper, which had spread, in words and pictures, sensational reports about storming mobs in London. Exactly the same unpleasant treatment — in general aspect, if not in detail — has recently befallen Geneva, in a certain section of the American Press. I am not even sure that, in their descriptions and comments upon the recent disturbances in London and Geneva, England was "let off" somewhat lighter than Switzerland. It is quite certain that in both instances the exagger-

ations, distortions and misrepresentations indulged in by the Press correspondents call for some sort of protest.

Unfortunately the American Press is not the only one which, during these last weeks, seemed to make a point of publishing disquietening and alarming reports on Switzerland. The tendency can be traced, curiously enough, in articles written by representatives of some of the London and Manchester daily newspapers, both in regard to the Geneva riots and in reports upon the general economic situation in Switzerland.

This, I feel to be acting in keeping with the spirit of your leader "A foolish canard" (November 21st), when I say that the exaggerations and certain mis-statements of your Lausanne Correspondent in his article "SWITZERLAND TOO RICH — CHOKING TRADE WITH GOLD" (November 16th), should not be left unrectified.

I feel bound to explain that the very difficult situation in which my country finds itself to-day is due to the world crisis, to the restraints on international trade and travel, to the heavy costs of production in Switzerland, and not to our adherence to the gold standard. The Swiss Federal Council and their financial advisers are fully satisfied that gold is the best monetary policy for Switzerland, which point of view, by the way, finds full support in the Majority Report (dated June 1932) of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations.

With regard to the hotel industry, there are, I am happy to say, distinct signs of a revival in the tourist traffic, and in the meantime the assistance granted to the hotels by the Government will help them to weather the storm.

It is only natural that there should be some dissatisfaction in Switzerland at the present state of affairs, but to say that "dissatisfaction" is wide-spread would be mere fantasy. The incidents at Geneva and Lausanne have no connection whatever with the economic crisis, but are the work of Communist agitators (mostly of alien origin), whose activities have too long been tolerated by the Authorities. Assistance to the unemployed is organised by the Cantonal and Local Authorities, and no unemployed Swiss citizen need suffer the pangs of hunger.

This is not the first crisis in the history of my country and it may not be the last, but the Swiss are a patriotic and level-headed race who can be relied upon to overcome their difficulties, no matter what sacrifices may be necessary to that end.

I am, Sir,
Yours truly,
C. R. Paravicini.

Swiss Legation,
November 22nd, 1932.

FIFTY YEARS IN HARNESS.



E. SPLEISS.

We have the great pleasure to inform our readers that Mr. E. Spleiss, the Founder of the reputed firm, "The West End Fancy Bakery Co.," has recently retired, after having spent half a century in the confectionery trade.

M. Spleiss was born in 1868 at Schaffhausen; when he reached the age of 15 he said valet to his parental home, in order to serve his apprenticeship as a Pastrycook at Neuchâtel. Having become a fullblown Pastrycook, the "Wanderlust" took hold of the young and energetic man; he wished to see the world; we see him first looking around his own country; he occupied positions at Geneva, Montreux, Lausanne, Zurich and Engelberg. Then the wish to go further afield took him to the sunny south, to Nice and later on to Cannes, Paris and London were next on the programme. In 1893 he decided to invest his savings into a trip to Chicago, where at that time the famous Exhibition was held; those were happy days he spent there, but the moment arrived when the funds began to dwindle, and the young globe trotter had to look out for work. He was not too particular what job he had to accept, as long as it proved to be an honest living. Four years were spent in the States during which time he stayed at Chicago, Philadelphia and New York. Then one day he

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