

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK  
**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom  
**Band:** - (1926)  
**Heft:** 238  
  
**Rubrik:** Home news

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**Download PDF:** 27.12.2025

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# The Swiss Observer

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 6—No. 238

LONDON, FEBRUARY 20, 1926.

PRICE 3d.

## HOME NEWS

The indirect negotiations with Russia—initiated at the instance of the French Government—with a view to securing Russian participation in the proposed Disarmament Conference to be held at Geneva, have definitely broken down. The Federal Council has reiterated its willingness to express official regret in regard to the Worowski murder, but the bone of contention is the Russian demand for the payment of an unconditional indemnity to the daughter of the murdered diplomat—a demand which the Federal Council is only prepared to consider if, in principle, Swiss claims are admitted for the murder of the Chancellor of the Swiss Legation in St. Petersburg and other Swiss citizens, and for the looting of the Swiss Legation in the Russian capital and the confiscation of other Swiss property. \*\*\*

In a long speech in the National Council, Federal Councillor Motta justified the official attitude in the "Tonello" affair. An unbiased enquiry had shown that Angelo Tonello, a militant Italian Socialist who had taken refuge on Swiss territory, was the responsible editor of the Socialist Ticinese paper *Libera Stampa*, in the columns of which he had launched violent attacks in the most abusive language against the present Italian Government, and most particularly against its head. Whilst some of the articles had appeared over his own name, the majority of them were stated to emanate from correspondents who—it had since been proved—were fictitious and merely hid Tonello's authorship. Federal Councillor Motta affirmed that on no account could foreigners be allowed to abuse Swiss hospitality by prosecuting their political quarrels and propaganda to the detriment of peace at home and the good relations with neighbouring countries. Incidentally he censured Messrs. Canevascini and Cattori, members of the Ticinese Government, for not having wholeheartedly endorsed the attitude of the Federal Government, and for having questioned the admissibility and even legality of the measures ordained by the Federal Council. \*\*\*

The Federal Council has accepted a motion presented in the National Council to the effect that the sum of Frs. 160,000, originally earmarked for assisting repatriated Swiss, should be increased to half-a-million. \*\*\*

The "Auslandsschweizerstag," a conference supposed to represent and further the interests of Swiss residing abroad, is in future to be held once in three years only; ever since 1918 it has been a regular feature of the Basle Fair. The next gathering will, therefore, take place in 1928. \*\*\*

The Federal Tribunal has confirmed the judgment of the Solothurn courts, whereby the editor of the *Grenchener Tagblatt* was sentenced to a fine and the payment of an indemnity to a political opponent, a local judge, whose character and integrity were impugned in a recent election article. \*\*\*

Federal judge Dr. Fritz Ostertag (Basle) has been appointed director of the Bureau international pour le propriété intellectuelle in Berne, in succession to the late Prof. Röthlisberger. \*\*\*

The number of visitors during the last season (1st of May to 30th of September) to Interlaken shows an increase of nearly 20 per cent. as compared with the previous period; no less than 89,233 guests have stayed at the local hotels and pensions. \*\*\*

A pathetic scene was witnessed on Thursday (Feb. 11th) near L'Abbaye (Vaud) from the shore of the lake. A considerable distance from the bank a barge was frozen in, which Elias Perney, accompanied by his 16-year-old son, was anxious to reach. The ice gave way, and both disappeared, but came to the surface again, the father being held by the son, who vainly endeavoured with the other hand to secure a firm hold on the ice. Whilst ladders and boards were brought along, \*\*\*

Col. Franz Xaver von Moos died in Lucerne at the age of 74 from the after-effects of a stroke. young Perney became so exhausted that he was unable any longer to support his father, who sank and was drowned; the son was rescued in the nick of time in an unconscious condition. \*\*\*

**Die Flugplätze der Schweiz.** — Die Schweiz weist für den Passagierverkehr geeignete Flugplätze eigentlich nur in Genf, Lausanne, Zürich und Basel auf, wovon der Flugplatz La Blécherette-Lausanne sowie Dübendorf-Zürich auch noch dem militärischen Flugverkehr dienen. Die Stadt Genf hat

mit grossem Kostenaufwand (2,5 Millionen) den Flugplatz Cointrin herrichten lassen, dessen Anlagen zur Unterbringung der Flugzeuge leider nicht genügen und die deshalb jetzt durch den Bau einer modernen Halle verbessert werden. Der Platz besitzt ein Verwaltungsgebäude mit Bureaus, Restaurant und Sanitätsraum, sowie eine Radiostation mit Feileinrichtung. Lausanne-Blécherette weist, da es in erster Linie Militärflugplatz ist, keine Räumlichkeiten für die Reisenden auf; auch Verwaltungsgebäude und Schuppen entsprechen noch nicht den neuesten Anforderungen. Trotzdem hat Lausanne vor, in erster Linie sich für die Alpentransversalflüge zu qualifizieren. In Dübendorf-Zürich wird der bewilligte Kredit die Errichtung von modernen Hallen und Verwaltungsgebäuden mit Wart- und Bauraumlichkeiten gestatten, die einem dringenden Bedürfnis entsprechen. Basel hat in Birsfelden einen ausgezeichneten Flugplatz mit Hallen für Gross- und andere Flugzeuge, Verwaltungsgebäude mit Bureaus, Warteraum und Zollbureau. Eine Radiostation mit Feileinrichtung fehlt nicht; in diesem Winter sind ausserdem noch die Anlagen durch Errichtung einer neuen grossen Halle erweitert worden. Die Stadt Bern besitzt bisher noch keinen eigentlichen Flugplatz; die Kommission hat als solchen das sogen. Belpmoos in Aussicht genommen; die Kosten für Anlage des Platzes, der notwendigen Gebäude und der Radiostation werden 1,7 Millionen Franken betragen. Ebenso bemüht man sich in St. Gallen, einen passenden Flugplatz für den Dauerbetrieb zu schaffen, um den Anschluss an den internationalen Flugdienst nicht zu verpassen. Subventionen an die Luftverkehrsgesellschaften zum Betrieb der Linien zahlte nur Genf an die "Gren," die die Flüge nach Basel ausführt; der Ad-Astra wurde die kostenfreie Benützung des Flugplatzes zugestanden. Lausanne entrichtete die Landungssubvention an die Ad-Astra, so dass im letzten Jahre die Flugzeuge dieser Gesellschaft dort ständig landeten. Da die Schweiz im kommenden Flugplan eine bedeutende Rolle zu spielen berufen ist, indem die englisch-indische Verbindung sowie die Verbindung Deutschland-Spanien-Südamerika die Schweiz überqueren sollen, ist die Anlage von Flugplätzen seitens der interessierten Städte ein dringendes Erfordernis. (S.F.D.)

## THE TENTH ANNUAL SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR will be held at BASLE 17th to 27th April, 1926

For Information apply to:

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### Switzerland—The Soviets—The League of Nations.

Lest any of my readers think that I am shirking a reply to Col. Wildbolz's open letter in our last issue, I would inform them that immediately the Editor communicated that letter to me, I sat down and wrote a full explanation of my point of view to the Colonel, informing him at the same time that his letter would duly appear on the 13th inst., as it has done since. My chief reason for answering the gallant Colonel privately was that I wished to refute the charge of making "witzelnde Worte" anent the attitude of our Federal Council towards the Soviets. I did not think that that charge was made out, and I have since then received an open and welcome reply from the gallant Colonel, appreciating my point of view, while adhering in some respects to his own slightly different one. For that reply I wish

to thank Colonel Wildbolz here.

Most of my readers have probably heard of the great meeting which took place at Geneva in order to protest against any signs of a weakening in the Federal Council's attitude towards the Russian demands. No doubt, our perfidious confederates of Geneva felt extremely patriotic, and ready to shed their blood and sacrifice their goods and chattels rather than give in to those horrible Bolsheviks, or, as the resolution passed at the meeting so happily expressed it, "to live to feel the intense shame of seeing our Swiss President clasping the blood-stained hands of Soviet murderers!"—or words to that effect.

I know from experience what can be done by orators at such meetings and what can happen, once the "Herdengefühl" takes possession of men's wits. On the other hand, I am convinced, and state so freely, that, in my sincere belief, our Genevese confederates were quite honest, and that their feelings towards the Russian Soviets are really—and I am ready to admit even justifiably—such as stated at that meeting and as expressed in various newspapers in Switzerland—and in England and France.

And the latter fact is one which, in my humble opinion, ought to give our friends food for reflection.

Anyone can judge for himself whether what I am going to state is right or wrong by simply glancing, any day, through the columns of the respective newspapers.

I hardly think that the *Echo de Paris* (to name one Paris paper only) or the *Morning Post* or the *Daily Mail* have at any time stood for ideals and aspirations common to the democratic ideals animating Switzerland—officially at least. Yet, what do we find? It is precisely the papers named above which write in the same strain and express the same feelings as were so heartily subscribed to by our confederates at that meeting at Geneva.

Turning to seek proof negatively, we find that papers like *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Manchester Guardian*, etc., i.e., newspapers which have at least sympathy for Democracy and are not reactionary always—papers which at various times have understood Swiss Ideals and have helped others to understand (for instance, why Switzerland had to have special privileges in the League of Nations) are expressing *uneasiness* over the continuation of the Russo-Swiss quarrel—uneasiness not so much because the quarrel might affect Switzerland, but because it might, and probably must, affect the League of Nations.

Already the Disarmament Conference has had to be postponed. Already it is mentioned that, when it does take place, the venue will be Aix-les-Bains, possibly Brussels, because the Russians will not attend the conference held on Swiss soil.

The Geneva people, in their exalted patriotism, would rather that the seat of the League of Nations be taken away from Geneva, than that our Government should apologise to the Soviets for the miserable miscarriage of justice which resulted in Conradi's "not guilty" after he had confessed the murder! It may be *infra dignitate* for a Government to apologise for such a miscarriage of justice, because the miscarriage was due to the peculiar laws of one of the confederate cantons. But personally I think it much more *infra dignitate* for our Government *not* to apologise for such a crass example of juridical tomfoolery and incompetence.

Just as at the Conradi trial Conradi was not really on trial, but the Soviets, so, it seems to me, do our Geneva confederates mistake the issue.

Instead of inflaming passions already hot enough it seems to me much better to endeavour to find a way which would make it possible for Switzerland and Soviet Russia to resume diplomatic relations, and I do not think for a moment that this would sully our honour nor that of any single Swiss individual. After all, we have diplomatic relations with Italy—have we not?

Even in Switzerland, I know, there are enemies of the League of Nations, and others who, although feeling that there ought to be something like that League of Nations, belittle its scope, its usefulness and its painstaking work. They fail to understand why it is that the League of Nations, a child as yet with growing pains, cannot achieve this or do that, and why its authority can still be flouted, as it has been by Italy once or twice, and by other States, notably Poland.

### Towards International Solidarity.

My readers, instead of wading through Winter Sports news, which, as was said at a dinner recently, only tempt them away from their work, might perhaps read, with advantage to themselves,