

La Russie et nous

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very emphatic joint opinion on this question in 1919. "We are of opinion," they wrote, "that the action taken by the Government of the Gold Coast with reference to the property by means of the Ordinance of 1918 is entirely without justification according to international law."

Truth further points out that as long ago as October, 1921, the French Government revoked a similar confiscation referring to property of Swiss missionary enterprises situate in the former German Cameroons, and wonders how much longer the British Government will hesitate before it follows this example and puts matters right.

Switzerland and Russia.

In view of the resumption of diplomatic relations between these two countries the following somewhat fanciful reference published in the *Daily Herald* on April 9th (before the fact became known) is interesting:—

"Switzerland will not resume relations with Russia as long as the tension between England and Russia subsists," said a Swiss political leader when asked to comment on current rumours.

M. Motta, President of the Council of States and Minister for Foreign Affairs, is anxious above everything to please the Great Powers of the League—and the greatest of these is unquestionably England. He would never take the responsibility of a friendly move towards Russia in the present state of Anglo-Russian relations.

Certain Councillors from German Switzerland, on the other hand, would favour resumption. German Switzerland is highly industrial and desires Russian trade. In spite of the unsettled conditions, it carried on £1,600,000 of such trade last year. That is a small percentage of the total of Swiss foreign trade—roughly £64,000,000—but it is divided among a few very large houses, who have recently been exerting strong pressure for resumption.

French Switzerland, on the contrary, strongly opposes resumption. Its business is preponderantly banking, not industry, and its attitude is dictated by political fear of Russian propaganda. M. Motta is, of course, French Swiss.

To Commemorate the Pestalozzi Centenary.

An English biography just published (*Education and Social Welfare in Switzerland*, by A. J. Pressland, Harrap 3/6 net.) is sure to appeal to the residents in our Colony; the volume is thus reviewed by the *Times* (April 9th):—

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi died at the age of 76 on February 17th, 1827, and the centenary of his death is being celebrated in Germany, France, Italy and England by the publication of biographies that will recall to educational workers in those countries the man whose tireless labours have meant so much to children not only in respect to education and the amenities of life but in respect to their entrance into a workaday world.

These biographies are accompanied, as in this book, by some account of what Pestalozzi's native land has done in the realm of education. Mr. Pressland declares that "Switzerland is the educational laboratory of Europe: within her frontiers are 25 sovereign States, each administering its own educational system." The constitution of the Federal Republic has one important check on the public and, indeed, private school system. It declares that "the public school shall be open to all members of all religious sects without detriment to freedom of conscience and belief." After the Great War the little State of Liechtenstein sought admission to the Federation, but this was refused, since compliance would have increased the Roman Catholic vote. England has outgrown these prejudices, but Switzerland has problems of her own that are not ours.

The Federal Constitution provides for the establishment of a national polytechnic—which, in fact, was founded at Zurich—and a national university, which remains in abeyance. The seven universities have remained cantonal institutions. The Federal Government encourages educational rivalry between the cantons in somewhat the same way as our Board of Education encourages the activities of our various educational authorities. But unfortunately the Federal Government is in the same position as the Federal Government in America, and has no power to appoint inspectors of schools. Consequently there is not the same co-ordination as in England, but economic causes have made all the cantons strive to put all possible advantages at the disposal of the children.

It is obvious that we have something to learn from the Swiss experiments. Mr. Pressland says in his preface that Sir Robert Morant made an exhaustive study of the Swiss Schools before drafting the Education Bill that became law in 1902. No doubt that Act shows traces of this study, especially in the facilities that the Act of 1902 and the Act of 1918, now combined in the Education Act of 1921, offer for the development of means to deal with the social problems of child life and of adult education.

From the Swiss Legation in Madrid.

In reporting on a reception given in Madrid by Sir Horace and Lady Rumbold at the British

Embassy the *Morning Post* (April 5th) adds the following:—

On both days the delightful French comedy, "La belle aventure," by MM. Flers and Cailhac, was performed in the theatre salon of the Embassy by well-known persons in Madrid. Madame Stoutz, the wife of the Swiss Minister, was an outstanding success as Helene de Trevignac, while Countess Brauer and the other actors and actresses earned much applause for their clever and amusing representation.

The Basle Fair.

Several—mostly trade—papers have published lengthy reports about the Basle Fair; the following is taken from the *Carpenter and Builder* (April 15th):—

The eleventh annual Swiss Industries Fair was opened at Basle on Saturday, April 2nd, by Dr. W. Meile, the Director.

The Fair, which is in direct descent from one held in Basle in the fifteenth century, is the most completely representative of Swiss national industries that has yet been held. It is housed in the new permanent Fair Buildings, which are among the finest in Europe, consisting of six exhibition halls, a restaurant, post and telegraph offices, and private offices for the use of buyers.

There are some 1,100 exhibitors. Every branch of Swiss industry and craftsmanship is included in the exhibits—from the delicate work of the peasant wood carver, done in remote mountain chalets in the winter evenings, to the massive machinery products of the manufacturing centres.

Progress made by the Fair during the past six years is illustrated by the following figures, showing the number of *bona fide* buyers 1921, 30,000; 1922, 36,000; 1923, 36,306; 1924, 49,974; 1925, 55,368; 1926, 65,000.

This year it is thought that between 80,000 and 100,000 buyers' tickets will be issued, as buyers are coming from thirty countries.

Switzerland is a greater factor in the trade of the world than is generally realised. For a small country of less than four millions, the output of goods is astonishing. In 1924 the three main industries exported goods to the value of 1,760 million francs, divided as follows: Textile, 857 million francs; Metallurgical, 746 million francs; Foodstuffs, 153 million francs.

The income derived from the tourist traffic is greatly over-estimated abroad. Actually it does not amount to more than 5 per cent. of the total national income.

Basle Fair is of especial interest to British producers of raw materials and the rapid extension of Swiss industries cannot do otherwise than open up new markets for them. For Switzerland has no coal and no raw materials. She can become a great producer only being a great importer. One of the chief hindrances to the importation of British materials has been removed by the opening of the new port of Basle with direct water communication by way of the Rhine to the North Sea. Previously the excessive cost of long overland transport and of transshipment was often prohibitive.

The exhibits are divided into 19 groups.

I had a brief interview after the opening ceremony with Dr. Meile, who expressed his great satisfaction at the interest in the Fair which was being taken in England. He stressed particularly the value of the Fair to British manufacturers and British exporters of raw materials as a means of bringing them into direct contact with Swiss importers. Swiss national industries were increasing in scope at a rapid rate. It was her aim to become a considerable manufacturing nation, but she could produce much only by importing much.

Dr. Meile recalled that imports from Great Britain into Switzerland in 1925 totalled in value 277,543,000 Swiss francs. Even that high figure could be increased. In 1925 Swiss exports to England were valued at 420,068,000 Swiss francs.

An interesting participant in the Fair is the tiny Principality of Liechtenstein, the smallest independent State in Europe with the exception of Monaco and San Marino. It is included because it lies within the same economic area as Switzerland, has a Swiss currency, and follows Swiss customs and regulations. It is twelve miles long and about sixty square miles in area.

Liechtenstein lies south of Lake Constance, along the right bank of the Rhine. Swiss, Austrian and Liechtenstein frontiers meet on the summit of the Rothe Wand, 8,445ft. high.

LA RUSSIE ET NOUS.

De Romanshorn à Genève, de Bâle au Tessin, des Verrières aux Grisons, on ne parle depuis hier que d'une chose; tous les journaux y consacrent de longs articles et de nombreuses colonnes; le public suit avec avidité les moindres renseignements qui nous arrivent de Berne et de Berlin, prend parti, juge, réplique avec plus ou moins d'aigreur, congratule on se fâche; car l'opinion de la Mère-Patrie est complètement divisée sur ce brûlant sujet. L'affaire en question, comme vous

l'avez deviné, c'est le récent accord russo-suisse, qui vient d'être passé en la capitale de Germanie.

Nous n'avons jamais eu de grandes sympathies pour la dictature du prolétariat et ceci, quelle que soit la force des partis socialiste et communiste chez nous. Les relations diplomatiques d'avant-guerre n'avaient donc jamais été renouées; nous vivions sur une situation de fait comme tant d'autres pays d'Europe, lorsque soudain éclate le drame de Lausanne. En plein Palace-Hôtel, un Suisse échappé de l'enfer soviétique tire sur le plénipotentiaire russe Worowsky, le tue et blesse deux personnes de sa suite, Messieurs Ahrens et Divilkowsky: arrestation et jugement; toute l'Europe emplit la vieille Maison de justice vaudoise et bientôt, à la satisfaction des uns, à la réprobation des autres, c'est l'acquiescement de l'assassin. Aussitôt la Russie des Soviets rompt unilatéralement avec nous et nous boycotté au sens le plus strict du mot.

Vers fin 1925 les Puissances sous les auspices de la Société des Nations décident de réunir une conférence préparatoire du désarmement. Il leur faut la participation de la Russie. En ce qui la concerne cette dernière ne tient nullement à se rendre à Genève. C'est le moment où l'accord de non-agression avec la Pologne n'est pas encore conclu, et c'est à Moscou une période de cerveaux échauffés et de difficultés intérieures. Pour ne pas aller discuter il faut un prétexte; l'affaire Worowsky s'y prête admirablement; la Société des Nations ayant son siège en Suisse on entend un petit chantage politique qui de toutes façons ne peut qu'être utile aux Soviets et nuisible à l'institution wilsonienne. Si les Puissances acceptent de se réunir ailleurs, c'est un affront sans précédent et grave par ses conséquences pour ce peuple de libres paysans qui eut le courage d'affirmer sa totale indépendance en libérant Conradi; si elles refusent, les bolchévistes restent chez eux et en sont entièrement satisfaits. Mais la France tient à la présence des Russes, elle s'entremet entre les deux pays. Elle cherche un compromis, elle parvient à la mettre sur pied, la Suisse l'accepte, au dernier moment la Russie le rejette, et resse chez elle. La raison? Les excuses ne sont pas assez accentuées; ce n'est pas une note diplomatique que l'on cherche c'est l'humiliation de la Suisse. Les négociations sont rompues et le temps passe...

Comme un coup de foudre la presse suisse apprend vendredi dernier qu'un accord a été conclu la veille par l'entremise de notre Légation à Berlin entre nous et Moscou. A trois mois près, ce sont les mêmes bases et les mêmes formules qu'en 1925. Réservant l'avenir et l'indemnité à verser à la fille de Worowsky notre Conseil Fédéral se laisse aller à de plus ou moins plates excuses, et ouvre ainsi la porte de Genève aux Représentants de l'Union des Républiques socialistes et soviétiques.

En situant cet accord dans le temps on en devine fort bien la portée et l'utilité. Il va s'ouvrir le mois prochain à Genève sous les auspices de la Société des Nations cette fameuse conférence économique qui doit apporter au monde un remède propre à tous ses maux. Pour réussir ce reconstituant universel il faut la présence du médecin russe. De ce premier contact on attend même plus. Les diplomates, plus que quiconque, savent bien que le bras suit toujours la main et que les Russes une fois à Genève il sera beaucoup plus facile de les retenir que de les appeler. La Suisse n'apparaît plus que comme un pion sur le vaste échiquier des Chancelleries. "On" l'a mis en mouvement. Si ce mouvement répond à une nécessité internationale il n'est nullement prouvé qu'il soit du cadre national. Car les Russes, une fois établis à Genève, ne se contentent nullement des quatre murs du Secrétariat; leur activité se dédoublera bien vite et suivant une habitude qui leur est chère. L'opinion publique proteste. Elle réproche cette courbette trop basse devant ceux qui massacrèrent tant de vies suisses, qui ruinèrent tant de citoyens helvétiques, qui violèrent notre légation pour la piller, et qui assassinèrent notre Chancelier, dont la femme paralysée par la terreur et le chagrin, vient de s'éteindre dans la plus grande misère à l'hôpital d'une de nos grandes villes. Les citoyens estiment en outre pour le moins inopportun de permettre à un des agents provocateurs de venir librement s'installer chez nous et de mener à bien un nouvel essai de communisme intégral.

Voilà où nous en sommes et l'incident n'est pas près d'être clos!

Un citoyen.

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