

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: - (1931)
Heft: 501

Nachruf: R. Oberholzer †
Autor: [s.n.]

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 22.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

formation at Zurich had been singularly free from those collisions between the spiritual and the temporal authority which occurred elsewhere, and although this was in part due to the force which Zwingli's personality had exerted, it is also to be attributed to his teaching upon church and state and the relations of the one to the other.

Zwingli was born on January 1st, 1484, at Wildhaus in the Toggenburg of a family of well-to-do peasant proprietors. He received an excellent education, studying under Bünzli at Basle and Heinrich Wölflin (Lupulus) at Berne. He proceeded thence to the University of Vienna, and having completed his course he returned as a teacher to the school of St. Martin at Basle, where he came under the influence of the reformer, Wyttembach. In 1506 he took his degree and became parish priest at Glarus. He was at this time full of enthusiasm for Erasmus and for his programme of a "restitution of Christianity" through the "*philosophia Christi*." His relations with the great Dutch humanist were in later years clouded over, but at this time he declared that he never allowed a day to pass without reading some portion of his works. It was at Glarus that he laid the foundation of his knowledge of the Greek and Latin Fathers, and developed his predilection for St. Augustine whom, long after, in spite of serious differences upon the doctrine of original sin, he describes as *vir sanctissimus et orthodoxus*. To this period belong also his first writings—protests against the mercenary system of military service of which, even at this early date, he was the sworn enemy. But where the service of the Pope was concerned he seems to have had no scruples, and as chaplain to the Swiss contingent he was present at Novara (1513), and Marignano (1515). The French interest predominated, however, at Glarus; in 1516 Zurich denounced its alliance with the Pope, and Zwingli, who was in receipt of a papal pension, moved to the famous pilgrimage centre of Einsiedeln. He remained there for two years, and gained an insight into the corruption of the Catholic practice of the time. There it was that he began to "preach the Gospel" that is, to expound the Gospel of the day at Mass. But he was still a Catholic, and when in 1518 he was offered the position of acolyte chaplain to the Pope he accepted it. At the close of the year he was appointed "people's priest" at the Great Minster of Zurich where he began a regular exposition of St. Matthew and the Acts, which aroused the immediate opposition of the religious orders. In the summer of 1516 the city was attacked by the plague. Zwingli remained at his post and did good work among the sick till he himself fell a victim. There is little doubt that this experience led to a quickening of his spiritual consciousness and to a deepening of his sense of mission. He began to attack monasticism, purgatory, the invocation of the saints, and finally—and this caused serious trouble—the system of tithes. He had the advantage of a powerful ally. The printer Froeschauer, became one of his strongest supporters, established a press at Zurich, and placed it at his disposal. In 1520 Zwingli renounced his papal pension. He had by this time acquired the citizenship of Zurich, and so effectively did he attack the mercenary system that Francis I. was unable to obtain that alliance with the city which he desired. But his policy had brought him into conflict with many powerful interests. Feeling against him began to run high, and in 1520 the Council issued an order bidding the preachers limit themselves to that exposition of "the holy Gospels and the Epistles of the Apostles" which they felt to be compatible with Catholicism (*wie dieses auch die päpstliche Rechte zugeben*) and to avoid all "incidental innovations" (*zufälligen Neuerungen*) and matters of human devising (*menschen erfunden Sachen*). But Zwingli paid not the least regard to this admonition, and continued, as in the past, to advance his views upon matters religious, political, and social. He felt sure of his ground and events proved that he was right.

At the time of the advent of Zwingli, Zurich enjoyed a reputation in the Confederation second only to Berne, and its alliance was courted by the rulers of Europe. At the same time there were not wanting signs of demoralisation in all sections of society. The magistrates were corrupted by the pensions offered to them as bribes by foreign princes, while in increasing numbers of poorer classes were abandoning agriculture to take service as mercenaries in quarrels in which their country had no concern. Within the church there was a corresponding degeneration. Immorality was rampant, and the Bishop of Constance derived an annual income of 4,000 guilders from a capitation tax levied upon the illegitimate children of his clergy. But the success of Luther in Germany had provided a stimulus towards reform which was likely to be effective not only in the religious, but also in the social sphere, while the democratic constitution of the city made it possible for a reformer

to advance his views with a freedom which would not have been tolerated elsewhere. At Zurich, moreover, the relations between church and state had long been settled in a manner very little favourable to the former. The so-called Waldmannsche Concordat (c 1510) very fairly represents the position at the outset of the Reformation. The clergy were compelled to pay taxes; they were amenable to the jurisdiction of the civil courts and were in all matters subject to the law of the land. The Council held itself responsible for public morals, and with the concurrence of the ecclesiastical authorities, issued such ordinances with regard to swearing, blasphemy, dancing, and witchcraft as it deemed fitting, and enforced them with appropriate penalties. Zwingli took full advantage of this situation.

TO BE CONTINUED.

SWITZERLAND AND PROTECTIONISM.

Before the War, Switzerland, as well as a number of European States, ranked among the nations professing free trade tendencies. Customs duties on imported goods averaged very low, thus influencing favourably the general cost of living. Then came the Great War and the post-war period determining far-reaching modifications of international exchanges, and many others as well. The most important economic changes took place during the years immediately following the War, resulting in a new orientation of international tariff policies. The long duration of the War and the sacrifices demanded of the Powers, gave rise to two parallel manifestations; nationalism in political life and protectionism in the economic sphere.

Since that time, practically all nations gradually adopted these new lines of action and it may be stated that the present tariff regime of the majority of States is far stricter than was the case before the war.

The evolution of the United States of America is particularly characteristic of the above. No one can deny but what last year's tariff revision entailed a serious tightening of the screw, strongly compromising imports of certain foreign products.

The gradual development of protectionism throughout the world, as has already been pointed out, is due, on one hand, to a period of chauvinism experienced by certain nations, and, on the other, to the fact that during the war countries were obliged to create or develop intensively certain industries, intended to make up for deficient foreign importation. In order to expand, these industries required the protection tariff rates, without which they could not compete with foreign countries, better equipped and producing under more satisfactory natural conditions than they. Switzerland followed the general trend of events to a certain extent, although, as an exporting country, it did not go so far as many other European States.

What is the exact situation of Switzerland to-day? At the beginning of 1931, Mr. Stucki, Director of the Commercial Division of the Federal Department of Public Economy, addressed a restricted commission, in terms which found an echo in our information press, revealing a certain apprehension, "an official pessimism," as was stated in certain circles. Mr. Stucki has been trying to modify the impression created by his statements. In his opinion, Switzerland should pursue in the field of international commerce, a policy of co-operation with other nations willing to reciprocate. But Mr. Stucki has doubtless observed, as all others having approached the question, that every attempt made during the past years to obtain a tariff agreement between the nations of the world was doomed to failure. To-day Switzerland finds its export trade checked by increasingly high tariffs barriers. A new factor of recent origin increases further the anxiety of those responsible for the country's commercial prosperity. Certain branches of our export industry, formerly strong partisans of free trade, having noticed that a number of foreign markets are gradually slipping away from them, are now beginning to wonder whether it might not prove wiser for them to concentrate their activity on the home market and to protect themselves against foreign competition by increased custome duties.

In the meantime and in spite of a divergency of opinion, our tariff system, under the temporary regime of 1921 which has been but slightly modified since that date, has, on the whole, maintained its liberal character.

Switzerland has proved its desire to persevere in the old tradition of commercial agreements, tending to reduce tariff barriers. It was for this reason that the federal government strongly supported the proposal of a more liberal tariff policy at the International Economic Conference of Geneva in 1927. Switzerland sets the example, for, contrarily to what may be observed in other

States, it does not practise protectionism under the veil of high consumption taxation, so-called luxury taxes, etc.... But by adopting the suggestions brought to the attention of the Powers, tariff rate have been kept down to a comparatively low level. As was recently demonstrated by an objective comparison made by several international organizations (League of Nations, Austrian Group of the International Chamber of Commerce, Sir Clive Morrison Bell), Swiss custom duties are among the lowest in Europe. The tariff rates of Great Britain, Belgium and Holland only show a lower average. In this connection, the fact should not be overlooked that the three nations above-mentioned are maritime countries and that their marine and international traffic are far more important than those of the Swiss Confederation, for the latter having no direct access to the sea and being poor in raw materials, is almost entirely dependent upon its agricultural and industrial production. Considering the above conditions, Switzerland's anti-protectionist attitude and willingness to open its market to foreign products is all the more striking. It would appear, however, that Switzerland has a right to demand that, by virtue of reciprocity, foreign markets should not be systematically closed to Swiss exports.

Swiss Industry & Trade.

Le 12ème Rapport du Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger de la N.S.H.

Le Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger vient de publier son 12ème rapport annuel. L'activité si multiple de cette institution s'est intensifiée dans tous les domaines: conférences toujours plus nombreuses, organisées dans presque tous les pays d'Europe et jusqu'en Amérique, avec le concours de représentants éminents de notre culture, tournées de films, octroi d'abonnements gratuits ou à prix réduit aux journaux du pays, aux colonies trop pauvres pour se les procurer, alimentation des bibliothèques des colonies, distribution de l'almanach Pestalozzi aux enfants, aide morale et matérielle aux recrues qui viennent de l'étranger faire leur service au pays, échange de correspondance très suivie avec des groupes dont le nombre ne cesse d'augmenter, défense des intérêts des Suisses à l'étranger dans la question des dommages de guerre et de la taxe militaire, bref, efforts dans tous les sens pour faire sentir à nos exilés que la patrie pense à eux, qu'elle est vraiment la "mère-patrie." A côté de ses tâches courantes, le Secrétariat ent à s'occuper de la propagande en faveur de la dernière collecte du 1er août; il a mené également à bien la collecte en faveur d'un pavillon suisse dans la Cité Universitaire de Paris; il a organisé, à Bâle, la 11ème Journée des Suisses à l'Etranger, la landsgemeinde de nos compatriotes de l'extérieur.

Signalons une ombre au tableau: si le Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger est mis à réquisition pour répondre à des besoins toujours plus pressants et plus nombreux, ses ressources n'ont pas augmenté pour autant. La campagne financière qu'il a entreprise en 1930 fut loin d'obtenir le résultat désiré. C'est pourquoi l'on a décidé la fondation d'une "Union des Amis des Suisses à l'Etranger," dont les membres, par le versement d'une cotisation annuelle, contribueront à consolider la base financière de l'oeuvre confiée au Secrétariat. Ceux qui comprennent l'importance qu'il y a, à conserver au pays les ressources intellectuelles, morales et économiques que représentent nos colonies, tiendront certainement à faire partie de cette "Union."

PERSONAL.

"M. Louis H. Micheli wishes to extend his sincerest thanks to the S.O., the Societies and members of the Swiss Colony in London, who have sent him messages of sympathy in his great bereavement."

R. OBERHOLZER.†

We have much pleasure to acquaint our readers, that a subscription list has been opened in order to perpetuate the memory of our compatriot M. R. Oberholzer, who was at one time one of the finest all round athletes Switzerland ever produced, in the form of a Memorial.

We recommend this appeal especially to all the members of the colony, who have at one time witnessed the glorious ascent of our compatriot to fame in the sporting community. He has been a true and faithful son to our land, and the least we can do now, is to make his resting place a sanctuary to which he was fully entitled. Subscriptions will be received at the office of the Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2, and by Mr. E. A. Nussle, Hon. Secretary, Swiss Club, Schweizerbund, 74, Charlotte Street, W.