

# Switzerland - a country that shies at change

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

Objekttyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1936)**

Heft 740

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686969>

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posed of by simply pointing out that Switzerland's political neutrality in no wise implies moral neutrality. The great majority of the Swiss people applauded the Allied victory of 1918. For them it meant the end of four long years of anguish, privation, armed vigilance, and philanthropic effort. Neutrality for the Switzerland of the twentieth century is primarily a form of its independence. The Confederation, encircled by three or four Powers all of which on occasion try to draw it into its orbit, must remain friendly to ward each without binding itself to any of them.

"The voluntary neutrality practised by Switzerland is also essential to its system of equality. In this way only can there be an equilibrium of twenty-two Sovereign States, three races, and three or four linguistic communities. Each of these communities draws part of its spiritual strength from the larger communities to which it is outwardly attached. Switzerland, as a nation, would perish if it could not refresh itself at the living sources of the great cultural traditions which its diverse races and languages represent. The French-Swiss mind looks primarily towards France, the Italian-Swiss towards Italy, and the German-Swiss towards Germany. Each of them feels that in its Swiss association it represents its own cultural homeland, while neutrality becomes a form of tolerance and opens the way for the interpenetration of Switzerland's three minds and three cultures, which are otherwise perfectly independent.

The foregoing was enunciated before Sanctions. The trouble is that it might also have been enunciated before the League of Nations. Like others, Switzerland is apt conveniently to overlook that in 1919 she signed things — undertook without reserve to join in collective action in certain eventualities. That the Confederation stands in special case, no one would dream of denying, yet its special case was no different in 1919 from what it is to-day. It will be for the Swiss themselves to experience whether a truer and a safer "neutrality" may not have resided in stricter fidelity to the League; also time will show whether, having acted as turntable in so many things — international transport and in-

vestment, to name two notable examples — Switzerland can likewise aspire to be a turntable in tremendous political happenings, whether she can hope to have the best of three worlds, now by indulging Fascism, now the Nazis, now France. The last lost no time in firmly dissenting from the present comfortable reading of "neutrality." Since, of course, the logical deduction must be that the Confederation would similarly decline to fulfil its signature were Sanctions one day applied against a contiguous Germany.

The numerical picture of Switzerland's three cultural entities leaves no option but such deduction. In a population of 4,000,000, 71 per cent. of citizens are German-Swiss, 21 per cent. French, and a little over 6 per cent. Italian (the tiny balance is Romansch). M. Moffa justifies the non-application of full Sanctions by the presence in the Confederation of under 200,000 of Italian origin. How much more so would he be obliged to be lenient towards a sanctioned Germany, with well over 2,500,000 of German origin in the Confederation!

Over-simplification must be fought ever, yet it does seem that a searchlight can be successfully enough switched on to Switzerland, revealing a good deal of her present state, if one contemplates her current "neutrality" action as having been the outcome of three major influences. Firstly, a deep distaste for change of any kind. Secondly, the desire of a people *très commerçant* to remain "in" with all three client-neighbours of such high purchasing potentialities. Thirdly, Governmental disinclination to bear down on Fascism in view of specific domestic phenomena.

We all have our besetting sins. Ours, seemingly, is hypocrisy, France's, vanity. Germany's, bullying. Italy's, self-dramatization. Switzerland's may well be middle-class stogginess that declines all change. "As few jolts as possible." No jolting over Sanctions, for instance. "As we were!" You see this distaste for change all over the place. In manners and morals as well as in politics and economics, experimentation is avoided. Office-holders are mostly kept on till their deaths or voluntary retirement.

There is much to be said for a country of such levelling in all things as Switzerland shows, with its wide distribution of wealth, its civic discipline deriving from the play of a genuine class equality, its (late-come) religious tolerance, its fraternising institutions bringing all lavers together for patriotic, sporting and musical festivities, its unique mingling of race and language under the one flag. "No change" enthusiasts point to it all as the inheritance that must be shielded at every cost. Yet there is another side to the story.

Switzerland's vaunted "innate conservatism" can be fearfully injurious, as is being currently demonstrated in the case of two o'erspreeding national problems: remaining on gold and the railways.

Under the demand of the great banking corporations which sprang from the fat years, the Government must stick to its fetish, but in so doing it must needs order still further deflation to meet a Budget deficit of £4,000,000. (That may not sound much, but it is a quarter of the national income, the equivalent of £182,000,000 with ourselves.) New taxes, further compression of State salaries, further administrative cuts — the usual trio has just been ordered once again.

As for the railways, which are State controlled, there are losing £7 a minute. Their present debt is over £200,000,000, and it mounts daily to the tune one can imagine. The railways have long been a notorious scandal of over-staffing, duplication, unheard-of wages, and resultant sky-high fares that drive all who can on to the roads. But the sumptuous trains with their posh staffs run on, over the most expensive, electrified, and mountainous system in Europe. Largely empty.

One would think something might be done about those trains. Well, an opportunity occurred last September when a referendum was taken on the revision of the Constitution. The Revisionists wanted to do something about the railways but lost the day by 501,000 votes to 194,000. I was in Bâle that Sunday and watched the figures go up in the Marktplatz. Admittedly much else was under judgment: I am coming to that. But what other country would not have

## A YORKSHIREWOMAN IN SWITZERLAND A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

By MOLLIE GREEN.

(Continued).

Slept at Schaffhausen on the 30th, and proceeded to Constance on Sunday the 1st instant ... Wednesday the 4th inst. Strolled over the convent of Münsterlingen, drank some excellent wine in the cellar (the long vaulted cellars full of huge casks that hold 5 or 6,000 bottles, are worth seeing), and shook hands with the lady abbess ... mounted the hills (magnificent views of the lake) to the beautiful and romantically situated little town of St. Gall. The abbey church is the most beautiful Grecian (Corinthian) church we have ever seen — the view from the top of Freudenberg (immediately above the town of St. Gall) is magnificent. In fact we admire St. Gall exceedingly.

... Left Trogen for Rheineck, to see the junction of the Rhine with the Lake of Constance, and then came here (2 leagues further) to see this lively little capital of the lake, a pretty village — the emporium for corn from Suabia, and for all the traffic of the lake. We meant to have come from Rheineck by water, but the lake was too rough — 'tis literally like a sea — the waves splashed against the carriage as we drove along. The road from Trogen to Rheineck is so mountainous, we walked 5 miles out of the nine, the ascents and descents being really tremendous — but, literally, our eyes are always more tired than our legs — the scene changes at almost every step, that our visionary powers have, absolutely, no rest. ... The people seem to meet together, all hereabouts, to sing, in an evening and really sing, all in concert very well — they sing or gurgle the Tyroloese air — if you can imagine this beautiful air sung in a beautiful, *vox humana*, *turkey* — *cock-splutter*, perhaps you can have some idea of the Tyroloese air as executed by the throat of a German-Swiss peasant — quite little boys and girls do it alike well."

Miss Lister and her friends pursued their journey through the Valley of the Rhine to Coire, and were "on the tiptoe of expectation" to see the "celebrated baths of Pfaffers," as Miss Lister expressed it. "The frightful gorge leading to the source of these baths," she continued, "is said to be unique in Europe. You would have laughed to see us mounted — such horses! such saddles! We had a guide at each horse's head — not more than needful — I could not have believed that horses could climb such a road — in many places about a yard wide — steep, wooded rock on one side; a frightful precipice down to the foaming Tamina on the other — we passed through the valley of Valens, and, having ridden an hour and a quarter, could ride no farther — the mountains so steep, that, tho' the path was

cut in traverses, it was almost impossible to walk steadily down it — after walking 25 minutes, came down upon the baths — the valley at the foot of the mountains which are, surely, seven or eight hundred feet high, almost perpendicular on each side — just broad enough for the narrow river and the line of buildings capable of accommodating two or three hundred persons, high and low, well packed above and below — no flat ground about the baths — the bare rock behind appears quite perpendicular ... In the long passages within the building, are shops ... But all was nothing to the frightful passage to the Tource — ten minutes' walk thro' this frightful gorge or cavern, over a couple of planks (very occasionally three planks in breadth), without any guard on the side next the water, wet and slippery with the dropping from the rock — deep below, the foaming rapids of the Tamina; — above a lofty cavern, (high as the highest point of Castleton cavern), feebly lighted by two or three little breaks — the light from above — one false step, and you are lost. Never in my life, did I see anything of the kind so appallingly fine ... We are off for the Splügen ... crossed the Splügen mountain (the much talked of new road into Italy, begun, as well as that over the St. Bernardino, in 1819, and finished in 1825) and descended by one of the most frightfully magnificent roads in Europe into the fine valley of Chiavenna. ... We had delicious figs, apricots, pears, gooseberries and cherries."

The three English travellers then went through the Tyrol and on to the Italian lakes. Then they returned to Geneva, stopping on the way at Clarens. "... we were much pleased with the village of Clarens, and sat an hour in the house where Lord Byron would be taken, and spent two or three days. A young lady who went the other day, kissed his bed twenty times. The house his lordship had at Cologne, near here, seems to have the loveliest situation hereabouts. Lady Byron went to the house at Clarens, but the old woman was from home, had taken the key of the room with her, and her ladyship could not see it. Lord Byron seems to have been much liked by the people around him. The old woman told us, she had cried like a child when she heard of his death. We were almost horrorstruck on taking up a Lausanne Gazette at Sion (on Wed. the 22nd inst.) to read the account of the death of Mr. Canning. All Switzerland (protestant Switzerland!) they told us, had wept over him as the best friend of Switzerland, of Europe, and of liberty!

September 11th, Berne. "... the people are civil — the shopkeepers take no advantage of strangers — persons and things are alike neat and clean — the city — the country — the cottages — the costumes — all are picturesque and charming ... We were at Hoffwyl yesterday, and

exceedingly interested. M. Fellenberg's second son showed us all over, and was most attentive. You remember what a noise was made by Mr. Brougham's letters on the subject of this school.

If you have any letters for me from Mariana, will you forward them to Geneva, post restante there. We shall be obliged to return here — stay a day, and then hurry to Geneva whence we shall take the diligence for Lyons — stay one day there, and then make the best of our way home."

Only seven years elapsed before the charm of Switzerland lured Miss Lister to Geneva again.

"1834, July 1st. Geneva. We are very comfortable, have a very good apartment, and have a beautiful view of the mountains — (the river, the handsome bridge, finished six weeks ago, the quai, so improved with large, good, arched, stone buildings, that I should not know the place again) — are just under our windows ... Our luxury is mountain strawberries of which we make half our breakfast and almost all our dessert ... Things are not very cheap here, as you will suppose from our strawberries at breakfast this morning, costing four francs! — the same would have (cost) 30 or 40 sols (1½ or 2 francs) in Paris ... Great particularity about passports here, too — they say it is in consequence of the late business at Lyons.

July 22nd ... These 17 days upon muleback, making what is called the grand tour of Mont Blanc, have quite cured us both. We have really done great things — people would hardly believe us if we told them. We made Chamoni our headquarters, and were quite sorry to leave them. We mounted George (i.e. their coachman) on the baggage mule and left Eugénie with the carriage at Sallenche, about twenty miles from Chamoni — large carriages not being able to get nearer. George did very well, and we enjoyed our mountain wanderings exceedingly. We traversed the principal passes immediately around Mt. Blanc, over snow and ice, and rock and precipices — such scrambling as nobody ever saw for four-footed animals in England. Of course, our hotels were not always magnificent. The friend who accompanied Miss Lister on this expedition then continues the letter, describing the places where they slept. "At Mottets we slept between the cows and the hayloft and at the village des Ferret there were two rooms, for us, guides, George, and the poor widow with eight children. We thought at first that George must sleep at the foot of our bed, but a bed was at last contrived for him in the room with the family ... (!!! Ed.) ... the people were very civil and attentive and we were really very tolerably comfortable, and I assure you these little adventures not only served us to laugh at, at the time, but they made us feel the comfort and value afterwards of a good hotel."

The End.



removed the catastrophic railways from constitutional referendums, have made of them a separate issue, either before or since? Not so the Swiss. No change. The railways have lost a further £35 since I began this paragraph.

From the above budgetary remarks it can be imagined that Switzerland wishes to cling like the ivy to each of her outside neighbours, Sanctions or no Sanctions. Owing to the falling away in the four chief Swiss export fields, tourism (invisible export), machinery and watches, lace and embroidery and milk and chocolate products, the trade balance is a sad affair. A further complication has to do with the increasing part industry now plays in a land that used to be three-parts agricultural. These industries, importing raw materials, must find markets abroad for their output, and the three big neighbours have ever been the principal recipients. How offend any one of them? Battered but stagnant Swiss banking is no less eager to find opportunities abroad. Again, how offend puissant neighbours?

To come lastly to the internal political situation as this may have influenced the "neutrality" policy.

As an islet of law and order set in a troubled sea of surrounding Fascism, Nazi-ism, French internecine strife, and ever-penetrating Sovietism, Switzerland is in a singularly vulnerable position, the more so if we bear in mind that she gives haven to no fewer than 400,000 aliens of all kinds, one-tenth of the whole population. Highly combustible material in all directions. Domestically, the country is split in three. On the right the Frontists. On the left the Communist-Socialists. In the centre the great broad No Change middle-class mass. At the recent referendum Frontists and Communist-Socialists went into the same urn. Not because they liked one another, but because each wanted to revise what they claimed to be the obsolescent 1874 Constitution. The Frontists wished to revise in the direction of reducing parliamentary power for more direct and efficient handling of modern problems. The Communist-Socialists desired, within the Constitution, representative bodies to deal with economic and social questions affecting the working man. But the great No Change Swiss middle class said to the former: "We fear you are concealing your true selves and that you would introduce Fascism," and to the latter: "We are certain that once given power of revision, you would run to all sorts of extremes." And the national urn did the rest: nearly a three to one victory for No Change.

A short while previously, and to the general surprise, there was very nearly no change in connection with a referendum extending military service. Switzerland is rearing on land and in the air, its fears of violation being real. Yet the new military service measure only scraped through by something like 500,000 to 450,000 votes. Once again Switzerland was chary in the extreme about decreeing change.

## LE NOEL DES ENFANTS DE LA COLONIE SUISSE DE LONDRES.

Une fois de plus et pour la ... vingt-septième! quelques membres dévoués de la Colonie suisse ont organisé la Fête de Noël pour les petits.

Messieurs René Hoffmann-de Visme et C. Campart, fort bien secondés, sont à la tâche, car tous tiennent à mettre sur pied cette grande fête, qui chaque année, demande un travail délicat et persévérant.

C'est ainsi que le 4 janvier, dans les vastes salles du Victoria Hall à Southampton Row, se réunirent près de 400 enfants avec leurs parents.

D'emblée, je remarque qu'il y règne une ambiance sympathique, et que les enfants s'impatientent, à juste raison, car pour eux c'est un événement marquant dans l'année. — Plus tard, dans nombre d'années — beaucoup se rappelleront de ce qu'ils ont vu et entendu autour de l'arbre de Noël traditionnel, de cette Suisse dont les aînés parlent, et qui pour eux est encore si lointaine.

Pendant ces quelques heures de présence, ces petits auront acquis un idéal de notre pays, un souvenir inoubliable de leur origine, même si les circonstances dans la vie les obligent à choisir ou à adopter une seconde patrie.

On ne pourra jamais assez louer le dévouement des membres de notre Colonie, qui cherchent à maintenir un contact constant entre le pays et les exilés. Il est juste de mentionner ici l'effort que font les Suisses d'Angleterre année après année pour réunir leurs enfants, car Noël c'est bien la fête des jeunes. Ce succès annuel est un geste d'autant plus vibrant qu'il se déroule dans le cadre d'amitiés anglo-suisse.

La fête débute par des chants de Noël exécutés par les enfants, puis M. le Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme rappelle à tous, le motif de la fête Noël, l'histoire de la nativité que l'assistance écoute avec recueillement. Succèdent Messieurs Steiner et Joss qui ont l'art de créer une atmosphère de gaieté, et entraînent avec eux cette innombrable famille, dont les chansons remplissent de joie parents et enfants. Pendant ce temps, le grand arbre s'est allumé, et l'on sent ... le sapin brûlé. La joie augmente, lorsque M. von Bergen se présente sur l'estrade et "jodle" quelques unes de nos chansons bien connues. Là, j'ai remarqué des coeurs émus de mères, tenant par la main leurs enfants; ces dames devaient être de là-bas ..., des marionnettes très adroitement présentées rehaussent l'entrain; le tout se déroule avec grande dextérité et surtout d'une manière expressive, chose toujours difficile à réaliser auprès des enfants. Le coup d'oeil est charmant d'observer ce monde d'enfants, où reflètent dans leurs yeux les multiples petites flammes de l'arbre; la scène est décorée aux couleurs nationales des deux pays, à remarquer quelques plantes vertes. L'arbre "brûle" encore quand les enfants sont appelés dans une salle voisine. Là, thé et gâteaux, tout y est appétissant, et bientôt, tous sont coiffés d'un bonnet de papier trouvé dans des "surprises"; les tables sont abondamment garnies de friandises gracieusement offertes par nos maisons suisses au geste large, citons Nestlé à Londres et Kunzle à Birmingham. Un "Père Noël" dans sa longue pélerine rouge à capuchon, apparaît soudainement. Il est bien accueilli, car dans un instant chacun aura son cadeau, il en est remercié d'avance et d'une manière déjà bien "anglo-saxonne," ce double "Hip, hip, hurrah!" des enfants. Le copieux "goûter" se termine, chaque enfant défile devant l'arbre de Noël, afin de recevoir le petit sac si bien préparé et patiemment attendu, joie bien légitime même du plus petit, car il rentrera à la maison heureux d'avoir passé une charmante après-midi où il se sentait libre et choyé, ne pensant guère à l'admirable et longue préparation qu'exige à Londres une réunion de cette ampleur.

Il n'est pas possible ici de remercier individuellement toutes les aimables organisatrices, cependant, l'on ne saurait trop apprécier l'inépuisable cheville ouvrière qu'est Mlle. Matthey, Mme. Joss toujours sur la brèche, Mesdames Sidler, Simmen, Muller, Jobin, Campart, Hahn, Meylan, Chapuis, Reber et d'autres encore, qui ne ménagent pas leurs peines; que dire à tous ceux qui font bon accueil au "carnet noir," lorsque dès l'automne, il va frapper aux portes, si ce n'est que leur encouragement est des plus précieux — ce n'est plus un secret!

Les bougies s'éteignent une à une, la salle se vide et l'on songe déjà à ce que sera le Noël prochain.

Roger Ceinturier.

## SWITZERLAND HAS BEAUTIFUL STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.

Swiss churches are renowned for their beautiful stained glass windows, many of which are masterpieces preserved since the Middle Ages. Many glorious specimens are also to be found in Swiss museums, and may be classified among the finest and most valuable works of art that the country possesses. Particularly handsome is the early Gothic rosette in Lausanne Cathedral, consisting of 105 pieces. Important 14th century work may be admired in the former monastery church of Kappel am Albis (Canton Zurich), in the churchyard chapel at Frauenfeld-Oberkirch (Canton Thurgovie), Kôniz Church (Canton Berne), and above all in the churches of Münchenbuchsee (Canton Berne) and Blumenstein, near Thun (Canton Berne). Exceptional style and beauty are combined in the famous 14th century choir windows in the former monastery church at Königsfelden (Canton Argovie). These windows, masterpieces of their period, were presented to the Memorial Church for King Albrecht, of the Austrian House of Habsburg.

Numerous examples of 15th century late Gothic work are contained in the churches at Stauffberg, near Lenzburg (Canton Argovie), Zofingen (Canton Argovie), Bienne (Canton Berne) and Zweisimmen (Canton Berne). The late Gothic style reached its climax in the monumental choir windows of the Berne Münster, which are veritable marvels of light and colour.

In the 16th century it was the custom in Switzerland to exchange stained-glass coats of arms and other symbols; it was therefore in this period that this art reached its zenith. A unique cycle of windows, ranging from the 13th to the 17th centuries, is to be found in the Stations of the Cross in the former monastery at Wettingen (Canton Argovie). The group of windows from the Rathausen Monastery as preserved in the Swiss National Museum at Zurich; that from Muri Church in the Aarau Museum.

Further excellent groups are to be seen in the Town Hall at Stein am Rhein, the communal Hall at Unterstammheim (Canton Zurich), Jegenstorf Church (Canton Berne) and Lausanne Town Hall.

## THE ACADEMY CINEMA, 165, Oxford Street, W.1.

After a successful and well-merited run, Episode has been replaced at this Cinema by "Sans Famille" featuring Robert Lynen, who will be remembered for his remarkable performance in "Poil de Carotte."

The title explains the story, and although it makes a good entertainment for the young, is rather poor stuff after "Episode."

Robert Lynen plays the part of a boy who joins a troupe of strolling players, makes friends with an ancient and rather decrepit opera-singer and finally becomes reunited to his mother from whom he has been separated. The story is rather banal and finishes on a note of classic sentimentality. M. Vanni-Marcoux plays the part of the ancient vocalist and sings several songs in a manner mostly of an opera singer with M. Vanni-Marcoux's reputation.

The photography is pleasing without being sensational and there are some scenes in which a troupe of performing dogs and a monkey make their appearance, which will cause joy to the younger members of the audience.

Robert Lynen is as attractive as ever, in spite of the fact that his part is not so powerful as the one he played in Poil de Carotte.

"Sans Famille" is a safe film for the children and will not cause them to pass sleepless nights.

ok.

## AFFENLIEBE.

Affenliebe ist jene für Liebende und Geliebte gleichmässig anstrengende Verirrung des Herzens, die man zu Unrecht den Affen zuschreibt. Die Affen sind nie solche Affen; der Mensch missbraucht ihren guten Namen zur Kennzeichnung einer menschlichen Verstandesschwäche, die er als unmenschlich erkannt hat. Keine Gattung der Tierwelt scheint ihm besser geeignet als Darsteller einer so lächerlichen Gefühlsvariante, und dieser Irrtum ist durchaus verzeihlich, denn das Geschlecht der Affen ist in Gestalt und in urtümlicher Wesensausserung unsere beste Karikatur.

Es sind meistens junge Mütter, die so unmenschlich lieben, wessen Herz aber ist hart genug, dass er dem rührenden Unsinn, den eine Mutter, das quälende Halbmenschen vor den Augen, sagt oder stammelt, mit nüchternem Widerspruch begegnen könnte? Eine Mutter die ihren grundhässlichen Säugling entzückend nennt, soll es ungestört tun, wir wollen es ihr lächelnd bestätigen und unser besseres Wissen verhehlen. Der mütterliche Irrtum ist nämlich, und das entscheidet, ihr und uns durchaus ungefährlich. Der Säugling schadet der Menschheit nicht oder doch höchstens nur dadurch, dass er die Legion der Ueberflüssigen vermehrt, aber das

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