

**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:** - (1927)

**Heft:** 320

**Rubrik:** Home news

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**Download PDF:** 16.05.2025

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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. 7—No. 320

LONDON, NOVEMBER 12, 1927.

PRICE 3d.

## PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	3/6
AND COLONIES	6 " " " "	6/6
	12 " " " "	12/-
SWITZERLAND	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	Frs. 7.50
	6 " " " "	14.-
	12 " " " "	28.-

(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postscheck-Konten Basle V 8718).

## HOME NEWS

Mr. Emil Montag, from Winterthur, who some months ago was appointed honorary Swiss Consul at Liverpool, has now taken up his official duties.

In the elections for the 100 members of the Genevese Grand Conseil the Socialists slightly increased their mandates and the parties of the left now control 54 seats against 52 in the previous Council; barely 60% of the electors recorded their votes.

Having been refused by the Basle authorities the necessary licence for constructing and opening a cinema opposite the municipal theatre, the Company concerned has appealed to the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne, which has now decided against the Basle authorities.

It is stated that during the ten days preceding Nov. 1st, when the new increased tariff came into force, about 2,000 motor cars were imported into Switzerland.

Sundry amounts totalling Frs. 107,000 have been bequeathed by the late Mrs. Schmidheny, of Heerbrugg (St. Gall) to local institutions, notably the Rheintal home for sufferers from tubercular diseases.

It is officially reported that in the wreck of the Principessa Mafalda four Swiss lost their lives; their names are: Frau Mimi Bucherer-Heeb from Altstetten, Edouard Grandjean from Buttles, Jacques Bille from Wavre, and Robert Meyerhofer from Zurich. Amongst the passengers saved is Mr. Ernst Roost from Zurich.

Through the bursting of a tyre one of the four occupants travelling in a car between Yverdon and Baulmes (Vaud) which turned a somersault, M. Collet, a 60-year-old retired schoolmaster from the latter place, succumbed to the injuries received.

Through his horse shying on approaching a reversing car, Gottfried Roos, a farmer from Emmen (Lucerne), fell from his dicky and died subsequently from a broken neck.

Edmond Delacoste, a well-known political personality in the canton Valais, died in Monthey at the age of 73.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Anti-Militarism.

Somewhat alarming statements are contained in the following report which the *Times* published on Nov. 3rd from its correspondent in Switzerland. We can forgive anybody for uttering his own opinion, however ridiculous and ill-informed it may be, but for a great contemporary like the *Times* to broadcast this piffle to its large circle of readers seems to be "infra dig." There has never been in our time any militarism in Switzerland and consequently no anti-militarism, and to state that "Socialists and Communists are organising armed workers' guards in the Swiss army" is a fantastic invention. The writer is evidently unable to differentiate between Socialists and Communists, and is blind to the events which occur in these two camps not only in Switzerland but all over the world.

"The Swiss Army, by its special character, is more a citizen force than any other army in Europe. It is a national militia, in which all citizens physically suitable must serve; it is not a standing army, for the *personnel* only undergoes annual periods of training ranging from 11 to 21 days—after recruit training, which varies between 65 and 90 days. Its only function would be that of defending Swiss territory in the event of a violation of Swiss neutrality, and, if necessary, of maintaining order in the country itself. The Swiss Army is the object of a strong anti-militarist campaign on the part of the Socialists and Communists, who are now organising armed "workers' guards," and of certain feminist-facile organisations which are practically under foreign control. This campaign is now being intensified; it no longer attempts only to produce "conscientious objectors" and to stimulate indi-

vidual resistance, but—what is far more serious—it is now fostering collective and organised resistance to military as well as to Government orders, and rousing in the public mind contempt and hatred for the Swiss citizen-soldiers, who have not taken part in a war since 1847, whom they describe as "sanguinary Helvetic brutes."

Recent events show that this movement is helped by the inaction of some Cantonal Governments and by the apathy of the *bourgeois* political parties. The Zurich Grand Council recently passed a Socialist proposal to stop, during their annual periods of training, the salaries of teachers in the State schools who are also officers in the Army. The object of this measure is to deter teachers from taking commissions, and thereby deprive the Army of some of its best officers. At Geneva the Socialist Chief of the Education Department has maintained at his post a teacher sentenced to imprisonment by a Military Court and deprived of his civic rights for a period of five years for having deserted his regiment during the annual manoeuvres.

Two secret circulars issued by a new anti-militarist organisation which calls itself the *Révolution Pacifique* have recently come to light. The leaders of this organisation aim at persuading Swiss citizens to refuse military service, to disobey military orders, and to refuse payment of the military tax levied on those who, being physically unfit, cannot serve. This organisation seeks to "enlist" all the would-be rebels and bring about mutiny. According to the circulars, this "direct action" against the Army is only to be started when a sufficient number of men have joined the movement and have pledged themselves openly to rebel without regard for the punishment that may be inflicted on them.

Swiss public opinion is by no means militarist, but it is firmly attached to the principles of law and order. It has been greatly impressed by the discovery of this anti-militarist campaign, and the general hope is that the Government will lose no time in taking the necessary measures to put an end to the activity of those organisations whose only aim is to create unrest in Switzerland with the help and direct patronage of foreign agents."

### Honegger's "King David."

Those who have been able—and determined enough—to listen through the recent broadcast of Honegger's "King David" will be interested in the following appreciation from the *Morning Post* (Nov. 2nd):—

"First, let me express my admiration of the Choir for tackling so exacting a work, instead of remaining content with the more familiar stalking horses favoured by the average Choral Society. The neglect of "King David" in England by our most important choirs strikes me as something of a scandal. This work has been acclaimed by musicians and public alike in France, Switzerland and Italy as the most interesting choral adventure of recent years.

It was left to the B.B.C. to introduce it to London at one of their mammoth concerts in the Albert Hall last season, when, speaking generally, the public loved and the critics damned it. But now it makes its first appearance in what may be called the ordinary repertory. *Quod faustum felixque sit.*

At any rate the Civil Service Choir deserve the encouragement of every progressive music-lover, and, if later I am forced to find fault with the performance, they will realise, I hope, that criticism, however severe, is not incompatible with goodwill.

Honegger was born in 1892 at Le Havre, of Swiss parents, and the fact has something of more than academic interest for it explains many of the characteristics of his music. By accident, as well as by choice, a Frenchman as regards nearly the whole of his musical education and the whole of the musical environment of his adolescence, there is in him a Teutonic strain that will not be denied. I doubt if an out-and-out Frenchman could have written "King David" any more than could an out-and-out German.

That useful country, Switzerland, with three native languages and at least two cultures, provided just the blend to make such a product possible. It is an achievement which, from the

## ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

Nov. 14th, 1832.—Establishment of the Sarnerbund. Rising of the Conservative Cantons against the new order, especially of Schwyz and Baselstadt, against representatives being sent from Outer-Schwyz and Baselland. These two Cantons armed themselves to defend their rights; they were, however, subdued by the Confederate troops who occupied their territory. Outer and Inner Schwyz reconciled their differences, while Baselstadt refused equal rights to Baselland. The National Assembly of 1833, therefore, gave its sanction to the formation of two half cantons.

Nov. 15th, 1315.—Battle at Morgarten, on the lake of Aegeri, crushing victory obtained over Leopold of Austria and his knights.

Nov. 19th, 1343.—Alliance of Berne and Fribourg.

Nov. 20th 1815.—Recognition of Swiss neutrality.

musical point of view, she might with advantage attempted more often.

Doubtless, too, the Swiss part of him must bear some responsibility for Honegger's break with the most advanced school of young French composers, formerly known collectively as "Les Six," but now, following the familiar example of the little nigger boys of our childhood, progressively diminished in numbers.

Still the influence of that school remains strong in him. The reader need only think of "Pastorale d'été," almost Baudelairean in its "order and beauty," or even of the famous "Pacific 231" which could not possibly be anything but a French steam engine.

"King David," however, represents essentially the Swiss Honegger. The careful listener can trace here two, *not* three, distinct styles. For instance, the Psalm "All Praise to Him" might almost be by Bach or Handel, the last chorus of Angels (and David's song before it) might have been conceived by a French Humperdinck, while all the Witch of Endor music and many other portions of the score that I have no space to indicate remain the absolute property of the Honegger who wrote the incidental music to "The Tempest."

The work is christened by the composer a "Symphonic Psalm," but to the English musician it will inevitably fall into the category of an oratorio on the theme of Saul and David. This is justifiable enough if such a one be not misled by terminology. "King David" has almost as little in common with the English oratorio of Handel, Mendelssohn, or Elgar as it has with the French oratorio of Gounod or Massenet.

Essentially the music is a lyrical or realistic comment on the drama unfolded by the narrator, who incidentally makes use of the spoken, not the sung word. I fear so greatly to be misunderstood that I hesitate to write that the music should be approached as music to a cinema play. Yet, divorced from that derogatory sense, which has so wantonly and stupidly become associated with the term "cinema music," I still think that this describes the general character of it better than any other.

I feel fairly confident that if the reader approaches "King David" with unprejudiced ears and a determination to let the music speak for itself without reference to previous conventions, he will find much pleasure in this very interesting work.

As befits modern music it is highly coloured and there is much dissonance, as, indeed, was the effect of Wagner's music on our fathers and Monteverdi's (I suppose) on our ancestors. The score is, I think, undeniably unequal, but, taken as a whole, it is, I am sure, the product of a very imaginative and musical mind."

### Aerial Highways.

If the anticipations of the United British Press correspondent as reproduced in the *Referee* (Oct. 30th) prove correct, Switzerland is in a fair way to become the central junction for Continental air traffic; this is what he says:—

"Switzerland is steadily becoming the Grand Central Station for all the aerial highways of Europe.

Under the programme of aerial routes established for 1928, virtually every important passenger, mail and goods carrying line will enter, terminate in, or pass through Switzerland. The schedule of routes available for tourists in the coming year is as follows:

Please reserve FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25th,  
for the BANQUET and BALL of the  
CITY SWISS CLUB.