

**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:** - (1936)  
**Heft:** 760  
  
**Artikel:** Pestalozzi, and the places where he worked  
**Autor:** Burgauer, A.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-692888>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. 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. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **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. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **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. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 11.05.2025

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

## PESTALOZZI, AND THE PLACES WHERE HE WORKED.

By Dr. A. Burgauer.

GIVER TO THE POOR AT NEUHOF,  
VOICE OF THE PEOPLE IN  
"LIENHARD UND GERTRUD,"  
AT STANS FATHER TO ORPHANS,  
AT BURGDORF AND MÜNCHENBUCHSEE  
FOUNDER OF SCHOOLS,  
IN YVERDON TEACHER TO HUMANITY,  
ALL FOR OTHERS! NOTHING FOR SELF!  
HIS NAME BE BLESSED!

So reads the epitaph at the Birr schoolhouse of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, famous Swiss educator of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This at least is one epitaph that does not overstate in its praise. Pestalozzi lives on in the memories of his countrymen, and the cities connected with his work still have evidences mutely testifying to the greatness of this man whose only concern was the welfare and happiness of others.

Pestalozzi was born on January 12th, 1746, in Zürich. The exact place of his birth is not known, but he was probably born either in the house of the Schwarzen Horn in Zurich Ruden, or in one of the houses of Obere Hirschengraben. Upon the death of his father, the family moved to that part of the city on the other side of the Limmat, probably in the Werdmühle quarter. Later they moved to the house of the Roten Gatter, Munstergasse 23, which is the first place historians are sure Pestalozzi lived. Here young Heinrich passed the greater part of his youth. At the College Carolinum he was significantly influenced by Bodmer and Breitinger, and he also became interested in political meetings. Rousseau's "Emile" influenced him a great deal, and he finally decided to make teaching his profession. He wrote of his ambition, and for a time lived with his uncle in Richterswil. Many of his letters back to Zurich went to Anna Schulthess, a merchant's daughter with whom he had fallen in love. About this time, when he was twenty-two years old, Pestalozzi worked with Lavater, who soon became the young man's trusted counsellor.

Fond memories of boyhood bound Pestalozzi to Hängg, where his grandfather was minister. The place back of the churchyard was the playground of the poor children, and when, as a boy, he visited his grandfather, Heinrich used to join them in their play. It happened that the city councillors had ordered a "beggar-chase" by the mounted police each month, apparently their method of trying to rid the country of poverty. Once, after having already been previously chased away, Pestalozzi bolted the churchyard gate in an effort to keep the police from entering. When his grandfather heard of this, instead of giving the boy the expected thrashing, he took the weeping lad in his arms and said, "There, there, you brave boy. I too wish the rich gentlemen from Zurich could find other means to deal with the poor than with police and beggar chases." When he grew to be a young man, Pestalozzi began to dream of his life ambition: the emancipating of the illiterate from their shackles of ignorance, the care of the homeless, and the rearing in home-like atmosphere of orphan children. But at this time he himself was so destitute that he abandoned, for the moment, his ambition to teach and do social work. In the autumn of 1768 he obtained a piece of land in Birr, Aargau, and began to earn his living as a farmer. The following year he married Anna Schulthess, and they began life together on the rocky, boggy, large rambling farm in Birr. Scraggly firs and elders clumped together in scattered groups, and close by raced the grey waters of the Reuss, swirling down from the looming mountains.

Already in these first days Pestalozzi came to know the bitterness of disappointment. After trying to enlist the aid of neighbouring farmers in his social projects, he had to postpone his ambitions for a second time. He was a failure as a farmer, and was going deeper and deeper into debt. Finally Anna lost patience, and told him that her brothers would take over the farm, as well as the most pressing debts. She would then set him up in business, and he would be head of this new venture. But there burned within him that inner flame. "I have a large house, and the poor have none," he said to Anna. "My hands fail me in my present work, and to you, labour is irksome. If we have poor ones with us, then we will be really rich. They can spin for their livelihood, and I will teach them. That will be real work. After all, I am not in your employ." Carrying out this noble idea, he took poor children into his home, and at one time had as many as fifty staying with him. He wrote of the conditions these poor young ones had been forced to live in, and took great pleasure in teaching them. But in 1780, five years after he had started this plan, he was forced by the authorities to send the children back to regular institutions.

Then came a period of literary activity. He wrote "Abendstunde eines Einsiedlers," and "Lienhard und Gertrud," a novel of country folk. During this time, too, he visited the surrounding business houses, and listened much to

the talk of farmers, learning always more of their philosophies, their mode of living.

Somewhat later Pestalozzi came again in contact with the business world. A foreigner named Notz needed a townsman as proprietor of his shop, or at least someone in whose name he could run the business. Pestalozzi, for a small consideration, allowed the man to use his name, and then went to the "Platte" in Zurich, where he started a shelter for the poor of the city. Then, in the middle period of his life, came the French invasion. Poverty increased, and halfstarved, homeless children roamed forlorn as lost puppies. At Stans, Pestalozzi became a father and a teacher to these young unfortunates. He did so much in educating and taking care of them that Michelet said, "He wants his school to not only teach and shelter them, but to become a mother of them as well." But the necessity of war time halted this work when the French turned the home into a military hospital.

Scarcely had Fate turned once more against him when new coloured threads were spun in his life pattern. Swiss authorities gave Pestalozzi an opportunity to continue his work in the rooms of the old castle in Burgdorf. His name was now becoming more and more famous, and educators and students came from all over the country to see him, and to learn the "Pestalozzi method." Later he worked for a time in Münchenbuchsee, where he also founded a school. But in this flat, plain-like country so different from the green hills of Burgdorf, Pestalozzi did not feel at home. He accepted an invitation from the mayor of Yverdon to continue his educational work in this small town, and started to write again of his theories.

These were the happiest years of Pestalozzi's life. He was doing, unhampered, that which he had always wanted to do, and for the first time he was able to work without being troubled by material worries. Once again he revived his old dream of helping the poor by founding a home in Clindry for indigent children, and in the following year, 1819, this was combined with a home in Yverdon. An old man now, his life ambitions were at last being realized. In 1826 he wrote some papers on his work in Burgdorf and Yverdon, and in his eightieth year, returned to Neuhoof where he spent his last days in contentment. He died on February 17th, 1827.

Pestalozzi lives on. Essentially an idealist and a dreamer, he was a dreamer who turned his dreams into realities. Time has erased much of the material evidence of his work, but the personality of this man who had such a boundless compassion for humanity can not die. His name will inspire through the ages.

### Swiss Schools To-day.

To-day, the excellent educational system in Switzerland owes much to the impetus that Pestalozzi gave it more than a hundred years ago. Primary school attendance is compulsory and free of charge. There are numerous secondary schools, high schools, schools of art and science, schools for engineers and commercial students, and in Zurich, the famous Federal Technical High School. Besides these, Switzerland has seven universities which draw students from all over the world. Each year the Federal Government, the Cantons and the local District Councils spend well over two hundred million francs — which is used only for public educational purposes. Swiss boarding schools, and the girls' Finishing Schools, especially those in French Switzerland, enjoy excellent reputations. In all Swiss schools, especially those for younger children, as much emphasis is placed on spiritual and physical development as the acquiring of factual knowledge.

## LA POLITIQUE.

### Deuxième étape.

L'assainissement des C. F. F., œuvre considérable, qui ne peut être celle d'un jour, est entré dans une nouvelle phase. Ce ne sera du reste pas la dernière.

D'abord, la direction générale et le conseil d'administration du réseau national ont donné leur avis; ce fut le rapport volumineux, que nous avons commenté en temps et lieu. Maintenant, le Conseil fédéral, depuis quelques séances, discute la question des C. F. F., et, plus généralement, celle des transports; et c'est précisément la deuxième phase, dont nous parlons plus haut. Enfin, plus tard, les Chambres seront saisies de propositions définitives; et l'on verra s'ouvrir alors la troisième phase, qui ne sera, il est permis de le conjecturer, ni la moins laborieuse ni la moins fertile en incidents.

Faut-il reprocher au Conseil fédéral de ne pas aller plus vite en besogne? Noms ne le croyons pas, malgré l'urgence évidente des mesures propres à tirer les C. F. F. de leur fâcheuse position. N'oublions pas que de multiples soucis pèsent actuellement sur les épaules des membres du directoire et qu'ils ne peuvent consacrer intégralement leurs séances bi-hédomadaires à un seul objet. En outre, les études faites par les organes des C.F.F. n'offrent pas au gouvernement une base de discussion suffisante,

car c'est sous un angle beaucoup plus large que celui-ci doit envisager ce qu'on appelle chez nous le "problème ferroviaire." Direction générale et conseil d'administration n'ont à se préoccuper que des besoins particuliers aux C. F. F., sans s'inquiéter, par exemple, du conflit du rail et de la route, ou des chemins de fer privés. Au contraire, il appartient au gouvernement d'étendre son examen à tout ce qui touche aux transports et de vouer une attention spéciale à l'aspect financier. De plus, il ne peut méconnaître les répercussions politiques et sociales de ses décisions.

C'est ainsi que le Conseil fédéral doit se prononcer actuellement sur des questions de principe, dont les principales sont: la situation des transports en général et la révision éventuelle de la législation sur les chemins de fer pour en faire une législation des transports; la constitution juridique des C. F. F., à propos de laquelle reviendra sur le tapis l'initiative tendant à soustraire le réseau national aux influences politiques; enfin, l'assainissement et la réorganisation proprement dite des C. F. F., avec leurs corollaires: couverture financière, statut du personnel, etc.

Pour le moment, le Conseil fédéral, comme on le sait, a fait connaître son avis sur deux de ces points. D'une part, il estime indispensable de résoudre, par arrêté urgent, le conflit toujours existant entre le rail et l'automobile et de ne pas le séparer de l'assainissement des C. F. F., les deux choses étant connexes et interdépendantes. Il sied de noter, à ce propos, que l'A.S. P.A. (Association des propriétaires d'autocamions) réclame l'aide fédérale, en vue d'une meilleure réglementation de la branche économique importante qu'elle représente. N'est-ce pas un signe des temps? En second lieu, le Conseil fédéral juge opportun de modifier le statut des agents des C. F. F. Il relève, à ce sujet, le fait que le réseau national ne peut pas être assimilé aux autres services de la Confédération, tels que les douanes, les postes, etc. Les C. F. F. constituent une régie industrielle, sans monopole, sans protection spéciale, exposée par conséquent à la concurrence et qui doit jouir à ce titre d'une large liberté d'adaptation aux circonstances. Aussi la rémunération du personnel ainsi que les retraites et pensions pourront-elles faire l'objet de décisions spéciales, dérogeant au statut actuel des fonctionnaires fédéraux. Mais, sur ce point, il faut s'attendre à une levée de boucliers aux Chambres fédérales, où les cheminots ont de puissants avocats.

Le Conseil fédéral n'a pas été plus avant dans la discussion du rapport de M. Pilet-Golaz. On peut s'attendre à ce qu'il se prononce pour le maintien du réseau d'Etat. Quant à la question financière, il est inutile d'en souligner l'importance, ni de rappeler que le programme intercalaire, qui prévoit des ressources réservées aux chemins de fer, ne comporte pas une solution suffisante, sa durée étant limitée.

La session de juin aura un ordre du jour très chargé, à tel point même qu'on se demande si quatre semaines suffiront et s'il n'en faudra pas cinq. Or, durant les sessions des Chambres, le Conseil fédéral ne peut guère qu'expédier les affaires courantes. Ce n'est donc qu'en juillet que M. Pilet-Golaz pourra condenser, en un rapport définitif, les décisions du gouvernement, qui pourraient être, si tout va bien, présentées au parlement en septembre.

Léon Savary.  
(Tribune de Genève).

## THE STOCK EXCHANGE OF ZURICH.

(By Leu and Co.'s Bank Limited, Zurich).

Zurich, 2nd June, 1936.

Those people who counted with somewhat dramatic developments on the stock exchange were not mistaken. Already the unexpectedly big swing to the left in the French elections at the beginning of May was a signal that things are going to happen in France. And it did. A steady efflux of gold from that country was only temporarily stopped by some calming words of the coming socialist Prime-Minister. The more the time for a governmental change approached the more nervously the French capital market turned, and now that the revolutionary elements seem to have the upperhand, the situation is wildly drifting to a climax. Under these circumstances it would have been almost impossible for any Swiss market not to get affected at all, but it is to be said, that everything was met here with a certain reserve and poise. Generally business was transacted in a not more than animated atmosphere, which was reasonably lighter for most domestic bonds and accordingly higher for stocks. The bonds that suffered most were naturally French ones, where losses between 5 and 10% were customary, while other foreign bonds sold irregularly. A weaker market found German securities on account of new transfer problems between Switzerland and her neighbour. With regard to Swiss Federal Railways and governmental issues their average yield has been calculated at 4.75% approximately.

Similar to the bonds the stocks found a wider market in the second part of the month and some