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LA POLITIQUE.

Une leçon pour la Suisse.

La menace d'orage qui planait sur l'Europe est dissipée, du moins pour le moment. On voudrait qu'elle eût eu cette utilité, pour nous, de nous rendre plus conscients du devoir qui nous incombe, de ne pas laisser s'affaiblir le lien fédéral.

Des revendications territoriales telles que celles qui ont failli provoquer une guerre s'expliquent là où des populations, de langues et de mentalité différentes, vivent juxtaposées, sans qu'une véritable cohésion ait jamais pu s'opérer entre elles. En Suisse, l'irréductibilité est impossible, parce que la volonté d'indépendance, commune aux diverses régions du pays, va de pair avec le respect du particularisme de chacune de ces régions. Il n'y a donc pas de minorité opprimée, qui soit tentée de porter ses regards vers l'étranger afin d'y trouver un appui. Qu'il parle l'allemand, le français, l'italien ou le romanche, le Suisse n'a pas de motif d'admettre que ce serait un avantage pour lui d'être rattaché à l'un quelconque des Etats voisins. Au contraire, cette idée lui fait horreur. Certes, et quoi qu'on en ait pu dire — tout récemment encore, cette erreur énorme et funeste était proclamée par un parlementaire, journaliste à ses heures — le Suisse appartient, d'abord à son canton, entité géographique, historique, morale; mais son appartenance à la Confédération en découle tout naturellement, la Confédération n'étant point une création arbitraire, une sorte de moule où l'on aurait fait entrer de force des éléments hétérogènes, mais bien une institution lentement édifiée par les siècles, pour une plus sûre sauvegarde des intérêts communs à nos petites républiques.

Il s'ensuit que le fédéralisme est la forme normale du patriotisme helvétique. A la vérité, un Suisse instruit du passé de son pays ne saurait être que fédéraliste. Ceux-là l'oublient, qui voient dans le fédéralisme une doctrine politique parmi d'autres, également acceptables, également soutenables, ou qui même le soupçonnent d'être un prétexte pour combattre "ce qui vient de Berne." Le fédéralisme n'est pas, en devrait pas être, un article du programme d'un parti, ou de certains partis; il devrait être, pour tous les partis, pour tous les citoyens, le principe fondamental de l'Etat, le point de ralliement.

Nous avons eu, nous avons encore, nos "unitaires," dont l'idéal, plus ou moins précis, plus ou moins vague, parfois à peine formulé, mais qui, malheureusement, se traduit en actes, serait de faire de la Suisse un Etat centralisé, où les cantons subsisteraient, à titre de simples circonscriptions administratives, et où la vie nationale, au lieu de garder ses vingt-deux petits foyers, rayonnerait d'un centre unique. On ne professe pas ouvertement — aujourd'hui du moins — cette doctrine peu défendable; mais on agit souvent, trop souvent, en s'inspirant d'elle. C'est en son nom qu'on a imposé, contre le vœu de la majorité des cantons, un code pénal unifié. C'est en son nom qu'on enlève presque chaque année quelque attribution à la souveraineté des Etats fédérés, pour la transférer à la Confédération. C'est en son nom toujours qu'on propose de ravir aux uns pour le donner à l'autre le droit de percevoir des impôts. Et certes, on le sait bien, l'argent de la Confédération revient aux cantons, en partie, par plusieurs canaux. Mais ce n'en est pas moins une mainmise de l'Etat central, un moyen pour lui de tenir tout le monde sous sa dépendance. Il y a là un danger très sérieux.

De plus en plus, les esprits réfléchis en sont conscients et réclament avec énergie le retour à une conception plus juste et plus équilibrée des besoins vitaux de notre pays, le retour à une plus large autonomie cantonale, la Confédération ne devant assumer que les tâches qu'elle seule est capable de mener à chef. Des voix s'élèvent, pour demander cette restauration nationale, — c'en serait une, incontestablement — même dans des milieux qui, naguère encore, paraissaient fermés à une telle idée. Il est fort à souhaiter que celle-ci fasse son chemin, et que les fédéralistes s'unissent, dans le cadre des cantons, et entre cantons, pour lutter fermement contre l'esprit centralisateur.

Répetons-le: c'est grâce à notre structure fédérative que nous n'avons pas de problème des minorités. Le jour où de cette structure il ne resterait rien, on rien que le nom, nous verrions surgir de terribles difficultés, qui pourraient bel et bien mettre en cause l'existence même de la Suisse.

Ne vaut-il pas la peine d'y prendre garde? Ne se dégage-t-il pas, pour nous, de certains événements étrangers, des leçons qu'il faut comprendre?

Léon Savary.

(Tribune de Genève.)

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY
GOLDEN JUBILEE.

Friday, October 14th and 15th, 1938.

Now that the veil which had hung so depressingly over us all last week has lifted, we can once again go "about our business."

As we mentioned in a previous number of this paper, the Swiss Mercantile Society is celebrating next week its 50th birthday.

Great preparations have been made so that this event can be honoured in a befitting manner.

The Society will have as their guests, not only delegates from our home country, but also a large number of representatives of sister societies in London and the Provinces.

The Committee has made a personal Appeal to all members to give them their wholehearted support, and we gladly associate ourselves with them in their endeavours.

An Anniversary such as this of a Society, which has with great tenacity and high ideals worked for the common good, regardless of financial gains, is well worth celebrating, and should get unanimous support.

We would ask all those, who intend to be present, either on Friday or Saturday to get their tickets as early as possible, this would greatly facilitate the work of the committee, and might also save disappointments.

The Society informs us that on Sunday, October 16th an outing, especially arranged for the delegates from abroad, will take place to Windsor, to which all members are cordially invited.

The coaches or private cars will leave "Swiss House," 34/35, Fitzroy Square, at 12 noon, luncheon will be taken at the Myllet Arms, Western Avenue, Perivale, and tea at Windsor.

No extra tickets will be issued, and it is hoped that a good many will join; in order to make the necessary arrangements, it would be advisable to inform Mr. J. J. Schneider, Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1, before Friday next. The cost for the outing would be: Luncheon 3/6, Coach 2/6.

And now we sincerely hope that the next week-end will be a great success for the Swiss Mercantile Society, they deserve it, and it is everybody's duty to help them.

CITY SWISS CLUB MONTHLY MEETING.
4th October, 1938.

What a wonderful atmosphere at the last meeting which was held at Pagan's Restaurant under the chairmanship of our popular President Louis Chapuis.

Members rolled in in large numbers with smiling faces, and one could feel that the tension of the previous weeks had disappeared and the enthusiasts were convinced that we were now in for a good time. Pagan's went out of their way to please the most difficult epicureans which incidentally shows that if members turn up in sufficient numbers and give support not only to the committee but to their hosts "everything in the garden will be lovely."

Two new members were admitted, Mr. Messmer and Mr. Werner Gamper.

The Club is getting more lively than ever, and no doubt all good eligible Swiss will want to join the happy family without delay.

Our five guests were welcomed in a most cordial manner particularly Monsieur Maurice Thiery, membre de la Société des Auteurs, a personal friend of our Secretary, who had come for the first time. His presence had created such a happy atmosphere that not only were the toasts to H.M. The King and Switzerland honoured with enthusiasm but at the suggestion of our great Alexandre a friendly toast was drunk to Mr. Thiery's country "La France."

Mr. Sandilands, although a Scotsman, is one of the leading lights of the Institut Français. He was introduced by Mr. Boehringer and told us that his associations with Switzerland were amongst the greatest pleasures of his life.

Mr. Werner Gamper, introduced by our friend F. M. Gamper, was so enthused about the meeting that he asked to join the club and he was received with open arms.

Messrs. Pellett and Dick of the Swiss Orchestral Society must have to some extent been responsible for the "wonderful harmony" that reigned during the evening.

Friend René Marchand who believes in efficient training starting young, had brought his son Roy. I believe it was his first attendance at a monthly meeting, and hope he will induce father to bring him again as well as himself.

The tedious work of the official meeting was carried through in record time, and in proper order. Even all my pals of the unruly left managed to keep very quiet, and as far as the "anständige right" were concerned one could see that they were anxiously awaiting the "regal de l'esprit" which had been promised them, to follow the "regal de Pagan." The usual important "matters of state" were discussed and unanimous decisions arrived at particularly where action was to be postponed.

After the official part, Mr. M. Thiery rose amidst great applause. The gathering was now ready to listen to a most interesting and subtle talk by Mr. Thiery — "L'esprit et l'humour Français." Mr. Thiery in expressing his great pleasure of attending a Swiss function for the first time, at the invitation of his friend Binggely, remarked "La Suisse a toujours été chère à ma bourse, maintenant que je vous connais, elle est très chère à mon cœur."

For an hour Mr. Thiery kept his audience in a state of great merriment due to the inimitable way in which he treated his subject. French literature, of course, is so full of treasures and Mr. Thiery so full of knowledge that he could give us a full and pleasing demonstration of the differences between "l'esprit et l'humour" using some piquant quotations.

"L'homme n'est pas fait pour le travail et la preuve c'est que ça le fatigue."

Other quotations in connection with Madame Pompadour and "Vous avez fait une croute de ma mie" also the poets epigram "Les vers se vengent" were particularly enjoyed by members.

Mr. Thiery's remarks about Switzerland were very much appreciated and he gave us some interesting stories concerning our famous scientist de Haller.

It would take a proper critic far more versed in literature than the writer to really do justice to the interesting, amusing and very instructive talk of Mr. Thiery. When he finished there was unanimous cheering; all those who had the privilege of hearing him expressed their gratitude for his enchanting way of recounting stories of wit and humour.

The President said just a few words; Mr. Thiery nous a regalés mais pas rassasiés. We, therefore, hope to see him again at an early date. Mr. Thiery has promised to come frequently. Bravo, et avis aux amateurs.

A "ban cantonal" followed by a "ban fédéral" were rendered by the assembly in honour of Mr. Thiery.

All good boys went home about 11, avec le cœur rajeuni et l'esprit rafraîchi.

We look forward to still larger attendances at our forthcoming meetings and the Secretary will be pleased to receive any suggestions which he can place before the committee to make monthly meetings ever so successful. H.B.

"DANZA FAMILIARE."

The closing days of the month of September have brought with them events that now belong to history. Although attending throughout to our daily tasks we could not help feeling deep in our souls, the terrible anxiety caused by the ugly turn in the political situation, and the overpowering sense of relief brought by the news that Mr. Neville Chamberlain's persistent efforts to save the peace had been crowned with success. We too wish to pay our modest tribute to the British Prime Minister; a great gentleman worthy of the high tradition of this hospitable country.

The universal sense of relief to which the good news from Munich gave rise considerably heightened the gaiety of the company that gathered at the "Schweizerbund" (Swiss Club) on the evening of Thursday, September 29th, for the "festa familiare," organized by the "Unione Ticinese."

Over a hundred strong, the party danced to the strains of the music provided by the Swiss Accordeon Club. The members of the latter were attired in picturesque costumes — splashes of edelweiss on the men's tightly fitting waistcoats, and a map of our Homeland, complete with railway connections, on the blouses of the lady accordeonists. Geography has its uses!

The evening provided M. Gandon with a "tour de force," as he not only directed his enthusiastic charges, but also played a number of "solos" and duets, with Miss Niggli.

At an interval during the dance Mme. Rossier and sister "yodelled" the love idyll of the "Gretl" and "Franz." Community singing there was too; a group of youthful enthusiasts broke the ice with our rather nostalgic folksongs, and what they lacked in harmony they made up by their zest.