

**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:** - (1941)

**Heft:** 985

**Rubrik:** News from the English press

### **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:** 04.12.2024

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

The Tourist Association in Switzerland met in Zurich on the 15th February to evolve a plan of procedure which takes into account present-day conditions in the Swiss Hotel Trade.

\* \* \*

Postal services between Italy and Switzerland have been interrupted.

\* \* \*

When Basle was bombed in the night of December 16th-17th, a woman was killed in a house on the Winkelriedplatz and some people injured. Several houses suffered heavy damage so that some of them have to be completely pulled down. The Güterstrasse, two railway tracks and some houses on the Zentralbahnstrasse have equally suffered.

Loss of life also occurred on the Höhenweg in Binningen, where three people were killed and several injured. In all twelve H.E. bombs were dropped as well as a number of incendiaries, the latter fortunately fell all in open fields round Binningen.

\* \* \*

On February 15th the British Government sent an answer to the protest of the Federal Council against the bombing of Basle and Zurich which resulted in some casualties and caused a great deal of damage. The British Government do not consider the proofs of responsibility of the R.A.F. as conclusive; however, in view of the friendly relations between England and Switzerland the British Government is prepared to admit that there are sufficient reasons for accepting the responsibility and making good the damage. The Federal Council have learned of this decision with satisfaction.

### NEWS FROM THE ENGLISH PRESS.

The chief item enlarged upon in the English papers since our last issue was the repatriation of the 300,000 French soldiers who crossed the frontier after the collapse of France, and who were interned in Switzerland; the arms and equipment were surrendered to Germany. In view of the comparatively small number of British soldiers being deprived of a similar treatment our conception of neutrality has been adversely criticised the more so as the German airmen who at different times crashed on Swiss soil have also been released. Nobody can maintain that under present economic conditions these "visitors" constitute a welcome source of revenue, but our English critics omit to enlighten us how the British contingent can be safely consigned to its destination.

\* \* \*

According to "*The Times*," February 7th, all passenger traffic with Italy has been stopped the frontier being practically closed. Later reports, however, seem to contradict or modify this statement in so far that applications for visas require an unduly long time for consideration by the Italian authorities.

\* \* \*

Our Minister, Monsieur W. Thurnheer, was the recipient — on behalf of a distinguished Swiss scientist — of the much coveted "James Watt" medal bestowed by the Institution of Mechanical

Engineers. It will be transmitted to Dr. Aurel Stodola of Zurich. We reprint from the "*Engineer*," January 31st, the following Appreciation which was delivered by Dr. Guy in the course of the ceremony on January 24th:

Professor Aurel Stodola, the Senior Honorary Member of this Institution, was born in 1859 in a small Slovakian village in the shadow of the Tatra Mountains. A brilliant scholar from his earliest days, he graduated with highest distinction at the Polytechnikum in Zurich. His practical training was obtained in the workshops of the Hungarian State Railways, followed at Berlin and Paris by further practical work and studies in technical, physiological, and economic subjects. After supervising the building of a leather belt factory for his father, he became a designer in the engineering department of Rustons, of Prague, who introduced the Corliss engine to Austria and enjoyed a considerable reputation as builders of the steam engine. With eight years of such practical work as a preparation, Stodola was in 1892 appointed Professor of Mechanical Engineering of the Swiss Polytechnikum at Zurich, where he has remained with such advantage to the land of his adoption that the eminent position occupied in engineering by so small a country as Switzerland, is due in no small measure to the skill and inspiration of his work and teaching.

Watt's vital improvement of the steam engine began with studies of the sources of loss in the engines of his day in the light of the scientific knowledge then available. Stodola, also endowed with great analytical ability and a capacity for sure and illuminating experiment, isolated and studied the losses and structural elements of steam turbines in the light of the accumulated knowledge of thermodynamics, of the flow of fluids and of heat, of elasticity and of stress analysis, and constructed a scientific basis for steam turbine design which directly and materially aided its development and improvement.

Watt gave the centrifugal governor to the steam engine. Stodola's earliest scientific work was concerned with problems of the stability of governing by means of the servo motor which in steam turbine practice was added to Watt's governor.

If Watt by inventing the indicator enabled engineers to understand and measure what went on inside the cylinders of his engines, Stodola's investigations and researches enabled the designers of his day to picture, understand, and calculate the operation of steam in the nozzles and blades which in the turbine replaced Watt's piston and cylinder. He demonstrated experimentally the fallacy of the belief that velocities of steam higher than that of sound were associated with prohibitive loss. He established the correct principles for the design of divergent nozzles, and the moving blades which cooperate with them and explored and explained the significance of steam shock.

Watt experimented on latent heat and the properties of steam and discovered the importance of cylinder condensation. Stodola experimentally investigated Martin's suggestion that "under cooling" explains an anomaly of the expansion of steam in a turbine, and proved that with commercial steam

condensation begins at expansion ratios much less than the "Wilson line."

Watt was the first to employ a slide rule in engineering calculations. Stodola employed many intricate mathematical processes in the solution of engineering problems and was the first to apply the Lanchester-Prantl theory to the flow of air in centrifugal compressors.

The strength of the slow-moving parts of Watt's engines was determined by the loads they transmitted. In the fast-moving parts of the steam turbine such loads are small and the dimensions are controlled by stress arising from their own motion, or by their tendency to vibrate. In these new fields, Stodola, by his investigations and experiments on the critical speed of turbine shafts, of moving blades, and of loaded discs of practical form, and by his method of assessing stress in them, made straight the way of engineers engaged in developing turbines and high-speed machinery.

But Stodola's work has not been confined to the steam turbine. He has also followed and contributed to the development of the internal combustion engine. At an early date he introduced the gas entropy chart and the device of the kilogramme molecule in the solution of gas cycle problems. He produced analytical solutions to many of the problems arising in the theory and development of the gas turbine, and acted as consultant to Holzwarth for his development in that field.

Stodola's skill and integrity is such that the most eminent and competing manufacturers of many countries have not hesitated to seek his advice in their gravest and most intimate problems. Yet who, knowing Stodola, will not find a similarity in the characteristic modesty and meticulous caution in stating results which caused Watt, when soliciting the help of Dr. Small, to write: "Remember, also, I have no great experience and am not enterprising, seldom choosing to attempt things that are both great and new. I am not a man of regularity in business and have bad health. Take care not to give any better opinion of me than I deserve; it will hurt me in the end."

Watt set himself to learn German as a mental exercise, and so that he might read certain books of engineering interest. Stodola has added English to Slovak, German and French, that he may enjoy intercourse with us, study our scientific and technical work, and delight in the rich heritage of our literature. One pleasing memory is of an evening in a small hotel in Bohemia with Stodola expounding the subtlety and wit of Samuel Butler to some score of engineers of a dozen different countries.

Watt was tone deaf, for it is said that "he did not know one musical note from another"; yet as a boy he made a model "barrel organ," and in later life mastered the theory of music so that he might pipe organs for Scotch churches. Stodola acquired considerable proficiency in playing such organs, and throughout his life found solace and refreshment in his beloved music. They are alike, too, in that the vast total of work covered in their long life is a triumph of intense mental activity over physical frailty.

In the name and memory of James Watt, we unite to do honour to Aurel Stodola, a great great engineer, a great teacher, and a great gentleman.

\* \* \*

"Much ado about nothing" might be the appropriate heading of an article that appeared in "The Star," February 6th, under a prominently displayed title; the two Bernese dabblers in politics must feel flattered over the wide publicity accorded to them by our contemporary.

Two down-at-heel would-be Fuehrers have discovered that Switzerland does not want "Nazifying."

They were:

Oberli, formerly a lawyer in Lucerne, who had to close his office because he could no longer afford to heat it, and

Gfeller, a former railway worker, whose chief occupation in later years has been dodging his creditors.

Oberli and Gfeller decided that they needed new jobs and Switzerland needed a new totalitarian party, so they founded the "Swiss Unity Party."

Gfeller called himself "Chief Fuehrer," and, says the A.P., Oberli was his prophet.

The new party was advertised widely by pamphlets circulated in the streets of Berne and dropped into letter-boxes in working-class districts by street urchins.

Seven hundred Bernese workers crowded into a hall for the first meeting, and it looked like a big evening and a big start for the new party.

Brushing aside preliminary formalities, Gfeller mounted the platform and started to lay down the Dogma of his party.

The workers then chose a chairman from their own ranks and Gfeller was permitted to continue.

When he finished his attack on Swiss democracy, and his eulogy of authoritarianism, the audience began to speak.

Almost all the speakers attacked the new party and its founders in plain and rough language. They used the word "traitors" frequently.

## SWISS BANK CORPORATION,

(A Company limited by Shares incorporated in Switzerland)

99, GRESHAM STREET, E.C.2.  
and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W. 1.

Capital Paid up s.f. 160,000,000  
Reserves - - s.f. 32,000,000  
Deposits - - s.f. 1,218,000,000

NEW YORK AGENCY  
15 NASSAU STREET.

All Descriptions of Banking and  
Foreign Exchange Business Transacted

The "Fuehrer" was asked if his party was backed with foreign capital, and this brought the comment that if foreigners were backing Gfeller and Oberli the foreigners were being robbed.

Gfeller made much of being a worker himself, but his former workmates voted the following resolution:

"We, the workers of the Gurten Railway, firmly and publicly resolve to have nothing whatever to do with Gfeller and his movement and point with pride to the fact that he no longer works on the Gurten Railway."

The best laugh of the evening came when one of the audience said that Gfeller's ideas had spread over the border from Germany along with the foot-and-mouth disease which has been causing so much trouble among Swiss cattle.

The last speech of the evening was made by a teacher, Herr Althaus, who expressed the loyalty of the Swiss to their country and their abhorrence of "foreign growths." His words met with great applause.

The meeting closed with the resolution to reject Gfeller's new "Unity Party," and to adopt the motto expressed in the Swiss-German dialect:—

"Not to yield, but to be on guard; not to crawl, but to walk upright."

The vote went 700 to 5 against Gfeller. The only votes for him and his party were cast by himself and his henchmen.

### BROADCASTS FROM SWITZERLAND.

We have received the following telegram from Berne:

"Swiss Shortwave Service Daily 12.00 to 13.45 — 19.00 to 22.30 Swiss time — Wavelength 48.66 Frequency 6165 kc. News 12.30 to 13.00, 19.00 to 19.25, 22.15 to 22.30. Comments of the day 21.50 to 22.00 Swiss time. Please advise listeners — RADIF.

It would appear that the first part of the wire refers to the Schwarzenburg sender (48.66m) and the remainder to the broadcasts from Beromünster (531m.)

### SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

P. C. Meister, A. F. Frikart, E. Schumacher, G. F. Adam, A. M. Pfenninger, F. C. Brunner, W. Gradmann, J. A. Seiffert, M. E. Du Bois, H. G. Kung, M. Bardet, F. Conrad, M. D. de Salis, M. L. Dupuis, J. Weber, E. Boudry, J. Heimerdinger, G. Miller, W. P. Weibel, M. Wintsch, A. Steiner, J. H. Speich, J. Senn, Dr. H. Fritsche, R. Wavre, F. Delaloye G. Hafner, E. Brodbeck, F. Kreis, Keller & Co., W. Beckmann, O. Muller, N. H. Leuzinger, A. Isler, A. Strittmatter, H. Hafner, J. D. Bernoulli, L. Audemars, C. Gysin, J. S. Becker, Swiss Legation, L. Jobin, R. A. Strahl, G. M. Wirz, H. W. Schneider, J. Graf, A. Meier, G. Zingg, Mlle A. Flury, J. H. Ungricht, W. Lehman, G. E. Suter, John Lanz, A. Saager, A. Pluss.

### DIE SCHWEIZ IM KRIEGSJAHR 1940.

VON DR. HERMANN BÜCHLI.

In ihrer Stimmung wie in ihrem Verhalten reflektierte die Schweiz immer sehr stark, auf die internationale Situation und die internationalen Ereignisse. Das hängt zusammen mit der Lage und der ausgesprochenen internationalen Verbundenheit unseres Landes in wirtschaftlicher und geistiger Hinsicht. Ist das schon in gewöhnlichen Zeiten der Fall, so ist die Schweiz im Kriegsjahr 1940 geradezu ein klassisches Beispiel für diesen Zusammenhang so sehr, dass das schweizerische Geschehen bis in die Einzelheiten ohne Kenntnis der allgemeinen Vorgänge völlig unverständlich bliebe.

Ganz besonders gilt das für die grosse Cäsar, welche sich für die schweizerische Entwicklung ungefähr um die Mitte des Jahres ergab und welche das Jahr 1940 in zwei, in ihrem Geist recht verschiedene Hälften teilte. Bekanntlich hatten sich Viele den neuen Krieg militärisch und wirtschaftlich als Fortsetzung des letzten Weltkrieges gedacht, und im Ganzen hatte sich auch das Land entsprechend eingerichtet, in der militärischen Bereitschaft, in der wirtschaftlichen Vorsorge und in der politisch-geistigen Einstellung. Die Rechnung erwies sich als richtig — bis zu dem gewaltigen Umschwung, der im Mai und Juni eintrat und mit der unbestrittenen kontinentalen Machtstellung und Vorherrschaft der Achsenmächte abschloss.

So trägt das schweizerische Geschehen in der ersten Jahreshälfte mehr den Charakter der ruhigen Steigerung der bisherigen Vorbereitungsarbeit in militärischer, wirtschaftlicher und geistiger Hinsicht zu voller Bereitschaft. Angesichts der unbewegten Kampffronten, hinter dem Vorhang der militärischen Grenzsicherung und der Freilegung der Zufahrtswege vom Meer her ging unser privates und öffentliches Leben einen gegenüber der Friedenszeit nur wenig veränderten Gang. Die Rationierung von Lebensmitteln stand in den Anfängen und beschränkte sich, mit largen Quoten, auf einige wenige Nahrungs- und Gebrauchsartikel. Die Arbeitslosigkeit war unbedeutend und mehr ein Gespenst für die Zukunft. In politischer Hinsicht wurden die Zügel ziemlich locker gelassen. Man stritt sich um die Frage der Beteiligung der Sozialisten an der Regierung und über die Verteilung der Steuern zur Deckung der Wehrauslagen. Auf 1. Februar und 1. Juli trat das grosse Sozialwerk des Lohnersatzes für die Dienstpflichtigen, Arbeitnehmer und Selbständigerwerbende, ins Leben. Der politisch-parlamentarische Apparat spielte mit wenig Einschränkungen wie in der Vorkriegszeit. Das Bundesgesetz über den obligatorischen militärischen Vorunterricht, das legislativ das bisherige militärische Rüstungsprogramm abschliessen sollte und die neuen Finanzlasten wurden noch im normalen parlamentarischen Verfahren im April und Juni von den eidgenössischen Räten durchberaten und letzteres der Gefahr des Referendums ausgesetzt. Manchmal schien es, als ob die schweizerische Mentalität ganz auf die Erwartung eingesellt sei, es könne der Schweiz wie im letzten Krieg nichts Schweres passieren. Nur ein Ereignis dieses ersten Jahresabschnittes warf einen ernsten Schatten auf diese erstaunlich optimistische Haltung: Der Tod unseres ausgezeichneten Aussenministers, Bundesrat Mottas, am 25. Januar. Doch