

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: - (1940)
Heft: 951

Artikel: In the city of spies
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687861>

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Les conservateurs tessinois comptent-ils dans leurs rangs l'homme qui s'impose, — soulignons ce dernier mot, — c'est ce qu'il sied de considérer. Deux noms ont surtout été prononcés : ceux de M. Riccardo Rossi, conseiller national, et de M. Celio, conseiller d'Etat (qui a quitté le Conseil national, lors de son élection au Conseil d'Etat, ces fonctions étaient incompatibles au Tessin). M. Rossi est un député intelligent, un orateur clair et précis. Élégant et cultivé, M. Celio dirige fort bien son département cantonal. L'un de ces hommes politiques a-t-il des chances de l'emporter? Estimera-t-on qu'ils ont l'"étouffe" nécessaire pour entrer au gouvernement central? Nous l'ignorons, à vrai dire.

On a également prononcé le nom de M. Plinio Bolla, juge fédéral. Mais il est radical. Cette combinaison supposerait que le parti conservateur renoncât — provisoirement, bien entendu, — à son second siège. Et l'on ne saurait se dissimuler qu'une telle solution sera fortement compattue. Comme dirait M. Gottret, "un tiens vaut mieux que deux tu l'auras." Pour que cet échange entre partis devint possible, il faudrait que l'éventualité d'une deuxième vacance au gouvernement prît une probabilité plus accentuée.

Autre suggestion : certains augures envisageraient la possibilité de remplacer M. Motta par un conservateur romand. De la sorte, les revendications légitimes de la droite seraient satisfaites; et en outre, la Suisse de langue française récupérerait le second siège qu'elle a perdu en 1934 et qu'elle ne sut pas reprendre en 1935. En outre, une excellente candidature apparaîtrait : celle de M. Louis Python, juge fédéral, originaire de Fribourg, fils du fondateur de l'Université de cette ville. M. Python serait, il est vrai, handicapé par le fait qu'il n'a jamais siégé à l'Assemblée fédérale (et l'on sait que les parlementaires n'aiment pas beaucoup les candidats qui ne sont point des leurs). A cela, les partisans de M. Python — et il en compte un joli nombre, jusque chez les radicaux — rétorquent que M. Plinio Bolla est dans le même cas, qu'il y a eu des précédents, qu'un membre du Tribunal suprême, élu par l'Assemblée, est connu de celle-ci. Tout cela, on le voit, est encore très confus. Les positions ne sont pas prises. Mais, si l'on admettait cette façon de procéder, alors, en cas de nouvelle vacance, le Tessin pourrait reprendre sa place, en nous envoyant, cette fois, un radical.

Nous avons aussi entendu prononcer le nom, très sympathique en soi, d'un député conservateur de la Suisse alémanique. Il serait vraiment excessif que la majorité linguistique prétendit maintenant à un sixième siège sur sept. Espérons que les Romands auront assez d'énergie pour ne pas accepter un semblable accaparement. Mais qu'on y prenne garde : si l'on veut faire de bonne besogne, il s'agit de se mettre d'accord en temps utile! Que la leçon d'il y a cinq ans nous serve!

Quant à la participation socialiste, elle mérite également d'être discutée avec attention. Elle a l'appui de certains radicaux de la Suisse allemande et de plusieurs grands journaux. Ceux qui s'y montrent opposés font observer que le parti socialiste a perdu du terrain lors des dernières élections fédérales (il a cessé d'être le plus fort groupe du Conseil national), et, surtout, que la collaboration avec lui apparaît toujours fort malaisée sur le terrain gouvernemental.

Au contraire, les partisans d'une concession (qui, logiquement, devrait être suivie d'une deuxième, si l'on admet le principe de la proportionnelle au gouvernement) arguent de la nécessité morale d'accorder une représentation à l'extrême-gauche.

En Suisse romande, on n'a pas l'impression que ce soit le sentiment général, — tant s'en faut. Il est indubitable que l'union et la solidarité entre membres du Conseil fédéral seraient entamées par l'arrivée de deux collègues socialistes. Or l'harmonie de vues entre nos magistrats est d'une très grande importance — aujourd'hui plus que jamais.

(*La Tribune de Genève.*)

IN THE CITY OF SPIES.

(*"Sunday Mercury," 4.2.40.*)

There are many English people to whom the ancient city of Basle appears only as a sort of international railway station, a place where at four or five o'clock in the morning the fitful sleep of the traveller is broken by the sudden noise of banging doors, the blowing-off of steam, and the babel of many tongues.

The whole of France has rushed past the traveller during the night. He has been rocked crazily over points; wakened by the light from platform lamps flashed in his eyes, and soothed to sleep again by the rhythmic beat of the wheels on the rails and the faint blue light of the compartment.

In the first grey of dawn he arrives in Basle. "Basle arr. 5.35, dep. 6.5." — there is time for a snack at the excellent station restaurant and to stretch one's legs in a short platform walk.

Then, as the grey of dawn turns to a pearly white in the sky, the traveller is once more entrained, and the brief stay at Basle is forgotten in the beauty of the Swiss countryside and anticipation of the Alps which lie ahead.

Actually there are three stations in Basle — the Schweizerische Bundesbahnhof (Swiss station), the Elsasser Bahnhof (French station), and the Badische Bahnhof (German station).

The two foreign stations represent small islands of their nationalities lying in Swiss territory. Thus, until a few days ago, in travelling from Freiburg to towns in the Wiesental by train one crossed the German-Swiss frontier into Switzerland without any formalities. One changed in the German station and returned to Germany by way of Lorrach at the lower end of the Wiesental, having re-crossed the frontier into Germany without even showing a passport.

The question of frontiers, even in peace-time is, I think, always intriguing to English people, to whom they must ever seem very artificial.

If I take a No. 6 car of the green single-deck trams in Basle (there is usually a leading trolley-car with one or two following cars coupled behind) I arrive suddenly, without warning, in a street lined either side with houses and gardens, at the frontier post between Switzerland and Germany.

An officer in grey walks through the car and looks at passports if he feels so inclined. The tram moves on a few yards and stops again. This time an officer in green walks through the car, looks at passports and inside an occasional parcel or bag, and the tram moves on once more. I am in Germany, but there is no difference in the street or the houses and gardens lining

either side. It is similar when one crosses the other frontier in Basle, that between Switzerland and France at St. Louis.

This is in peace-time. But now the ancient and cultured city of Basle, with its red stone cathedral, its old university where Jacob Burkhardt and Nietzsche taught, and its narrow lanes where Holbein lived and painted, has had to take measures for its defence.

Barricades of barbed wire and anti-tank traps cross the streets that lead to the frontiers; the bridges across the Rhine are mined; soldiers are everywhere. Most of the young men have been called up to guard the frontiers, for the Swiss are an intensely patriotic people, and things to-day are rather different from what they were during the last war.

Then the Germans could cross the frontier into Switzerland and buy food which they could not procure in their own country. Then the majority of the Swiss people were friendly to Germans. Now the people of Basle feel very differently towards their neighbours across the frontier. Only those who have relatives or friends in Germany send occasionally small presents of butter, cheese, or sausages.

In peace-time hundreds of Basle people drive their cars or go by train every Sunday up the Wiesental to the Black Forest, just as people in Birmingham drive to Stratford or the Cotswolds. Now all this custom is removed from Germany. Indeed, it had become markedly less even before the war, since Basle is a city of rumours, and many of its inhabitants were nervous of going into Germany even as much as a year ago.

The policy of Adolf Hitler has succeeded in making the Swiss very anti-German, and this antipathy is based on a very real fear.

There are constant rumours in Basle that Hitler,

prevented by the strength of the Maginot Line from entering France by way of the Franco-German frontier, will try to get through the Burgunder Pforte (Burgundy Gate), which is a narrow plain running between the Vosges and the Jura. In doing this his only way would lie through Basle.

This fear is not one of the last few months, but has been ever present in Swiss minds since the aggressive and warlike intentions of Germany's Fuhrer began to manifest themselves before the seizing of Austria.

Thus we may hear more of Basle. Yet, even if its name should not appear before the gaze of a speculating international public, its international importance will be equally, if secretly, sustained. For the beautiful city has doubtless, as in the last war, become a hot-bed of spies and counter-spies.

It is strange for me now, in the seclusion of England, to think of the quaint streets and alleys of Basle being walked by men who, if they chanced to cross the frontiers into Lorrach or St. Louis, would be instantly arrested. Stranger still to think that other men who do cross in seeming safety do so only to penetrate the secrets behind the lines of Germany and of France.

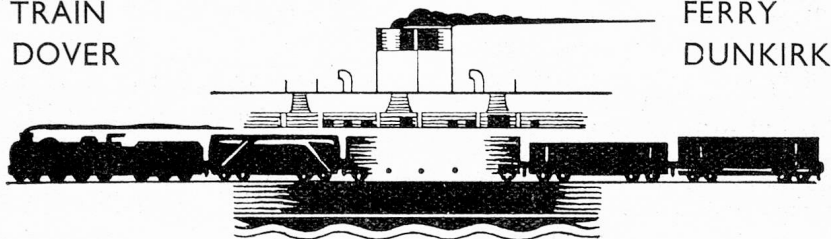
What a contrast must these men find between the black, unlighted streets across the frontiers and the gay, brilliant lights of Basle! Sometimes, doubtless, they stand in the street and watch the battles between their own and enemy aircraft waged almost on the outskirts of the city. Perhaps they meet other men in the Zoological Garten, in the wooded Lange Erlen, or in one of the many narrow flagged alleys of old Basle! A few words or even papers may be exchanged. Nobody would notice it, if they did they could do nothing to prevent it.

The Rhine flows slowly on under the mined

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bridges The Swiss people pray for peace as much as any one of us here in England; for who knows what a continuation of the war may bring for them?

All around and within the City of Spies are people praying for a cessation of the horror and unhappiness into which one man has plunged the Western World.

RICORDANDO GIUSEPPE MOTTA.

Da ogni campanile dell'abbrunato Ticino, scendono, gravi, lenti rintocchi; ogni rintocco ha eco dolorosa negli animi afflitti. Giuseppe Motta non è più. Il cuore generoso, infinitamente grande dello statista universalmente conosciuto, più non pulsa. La Sua vita si è logorata lentamente, sacrificandosi tutta alla patria, alla Sua gente, al bene del mondo intero.

E mentre le campane del Suo cantone lo piangono, suonando a lutto, passa Giuseppe Motta per l'ultima volta nelle strade di Berna, tra una folla muta, lagrimante. Immenso dolore, immensa perdita, immenso cordoglio. Lui, così umile e schivo da ogni pubblicità in vita, ora, morto, riceve omaggi che dicono più d'ogni altra cosa, quanto era stimato ed amato, quanto la Sua opera altamente riconosciuta ed apprezzata, non dalla Svizzera solo, ma dall'Europa tutta, da tutto il mondo intero, chè da ogni angolo di terra, anche remoto, pervengono alla famiglia sua, al Consiglio Federale, innumerevoli attestazioni per il grande scomparso.

Lento sfila il mesto corteo, nella grigia mattina del 26 gennaio. Semplice il carro che Lo porta al riposo eterno. Così Lui volle. Tre sole corone sono appese al carro: a sinistra quella del comune di Airolo, a destra quella del Card. Maglione, Segretario di Stato del Vaticano, la terza dei colleghi del Consiglio Federale, con il nastro bianco e rosso. Tre sole corone: tre simboli rispecchianti la Sua vita: l'attaccamento alla terra natia, la sincera fede in Dio, la completa dedizione alla patria.

Entra per l'ultima volta nella Chiesa della S. Trinità. La Sua chiesa, chè ogni domenica ivi veniva ad ascoltare reverente la Santa Messa, ad accostarsi alla Sacra Mensa, primo di tutta la Sua famiglia.

Riposa ora in un loculo del cimitero del Bremgarten, ed una semplice croce indica ove giace il grande ticinese: "Dott. Giuseppe Motta consigliere federale, 1871-1940" Volle restare a Berna fino a tanto che vi risiederà la Sua famiglia, poi ritornerà alla Sua Airolo. Ritornerà ai piedi del massiccio del San Gottardo, il candore delle cui nevi si rispecchiava nella Sua anima cristallina; la cui maestà e snellezza si erano in Lui, mutati in maestà e snellezza di pensiero, di agire... La dura graua del San Gottardo era in Lui diventata fulgida gemma preziosa...

Reclinò il capo, sorpreso dal male che lo portò alla tomba, mentre stava leggendo ai suoi famigliari, come era solito fare dopo una giornata attiva ed intensa di lavoro, la poesia semplice ma infinitamente umana "La cieca." Quando giunse al verso "Sia fatto o Signor il tuo voler" lo colpì l'attacco di apoplezia. Venne premurosamente accompagnato di sopra, nella sua camera; appoggiato al braccio dei suoi figli ancora ebbe la forza di salire le scale, ripetendo diverse volte: "Sia fatto o Signor il tuo voler." E furono questa le ultime parole pronunciate da questo uomo superiore, da questo grande cristiano.

Passa per l'ultima volta questo Grande che fu, e

soprattutto, tanto umile. Per le strade di Berna Egli soleva andare, umile tra gli umili, senza ostentazione alcuna. Pochi i passanti che si accorgevano della presenza Sua. I più non badavano a Lui. Altri lo riconoscevano... gli sorridevano, ed era tutto. Era per tutti, semplicemente: "Motta," così come qui nel Ticino era: "al nost Peppin" — e Lui, in questa frase sentiva il popolo suo che lo amava, e ne gioiva.

Quando a Ginevra, nel Palazzo della Società delle Nazioni, le laboriose sedute erano tolte ed i membri di quella Società ne uscivano, aspettati da sontuose limosine soffici ed eleganti, per ultimo si soleva scorgere una figura semplice di uomo, che avrebbe potuto essere anche un impiegato qualsiasi, avviarsi a piedi... era il Presidente della Società, il Presidente della Confederazione Elvetica, on. Motta!

Quando, nei suoi rari viaggi all'estero, lo si attendeva alle stazioni per ossequiarlo, era da un modesto vagone di terza classe che, meravigliando tutti, scendeva!

Per oltre trent'anni lo si vide fare, a piedi, quattro volte al giorno, la strada dal suo domicilio, una modesta villa del Kirchenfeld, al suo ufficio a Palazzo Federale. Il più delle volte restava nel suo ufficio ben oltre mezzogiorno, rientrava spesso a casa, per il pranzo, mentre gli altri ne uscivano per recarsi di nuovo al lavoro! E succedeva; anni fa, quando la sua famiglia di dieci figli era adolescente ancora, che uno dei figli veniva mandato fuori, sulla via, per affrettare il ritardatario, chè il pranzo aspettava da un pezzo!

Questo l'Uomo che ora è rientrato nella pace dei Giusti. Lui che della pace fu l'apostolo in questa travagliata Europa e che più di una volta si fece l'artefice della giustizia. L'Uomo che tutti trascinava nella foga delle sue orazioni, sia parlando in italiano, sua lingua materna, sia in francese o tedesco che conosceva alla perfezione, come pochi. L'Uomo che seppe, in numerose occasioni, distrigare complessi, delicati problemi. Abile e chiaroveggenente. Giusto e sereno. Energico, elevato...

"Sia fatto o Signor il tuo voler."

Lugano, gennaio 1940.

E. G. L.

THE REQUIEM MASS FOR THE LATE FEDERAL COUNCILLOR MOTTA.

The early hours of Thursday, February 1st, found a large number of our compatriots at the Westminster Cathedral when a mass was said for the repose of the soul of the late Dr. Giuseppe Motta, Federal Councillor; the service took place at the Holy Soul Chapel and the Rev. A. Lanfranchi officiated.

The Swiss Minister and Madame Thurnheer were present and were supported by practically the whole of the personnel of the Swiss Legation. Most of the Swiss societies were officially represented at this memorable gathering.

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