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:	- (1950)
Heft:	1148
Artikel:	The Swiss Trades Union Movement and Communism
Autor:	Béguin, Pierre
DOI:	https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695243

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. <u>Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.</u>

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. <u>Voir Informations légales.</u>

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. <u>See Legal notice.</u>

Download PDF: 01.04.2025

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

·

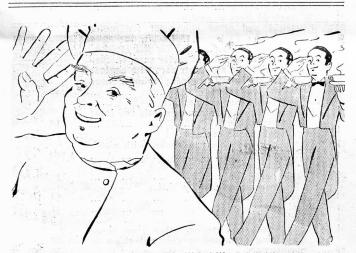
THE SWISS TRADES UNION MOVEMENT AND COMMUNISM.

By PIERRE BEGUIN.

The Swiss "Union of Syndicates" is a powerful body which represents the greater part of the working class movement in this country. There are indeed a number of Christian unions and unions of radical tendencies, but the vast majority of Swiss trade unionists belong to this single influential Union of Syndicates which is capable of bringing considerable influence to bear in political as well as professional life.

There has been no counterpart in Switzerland of the internal dissension which has occurred during the last few years in the trades unions movement of so many other western countries. In Switzerland the Communist leaders have been unsuccessful in capturing leading positions in the trades union movement, and there has been no breakaway under Communist inspiration, from the trades union movement. In this respect the situation in Switzerland is not very different from that in Great Britain.

This has been shown once again at the tri-annual congress of the Swiss Union of Syndicates which has just taken place in Lucerne, where the very important question came up for discussion whether the Syndicate should join the International Confederation of Free Trades Unions.



Four tablespoons makes a gallon of first rate soup!

Good beef stock makes a grand basis for soup; but when you haven't got it—and, in these days, that's all too often—you'll find Maggi^s Beef Bouillon a great help. It is a scientifically prepared Meat Extract, packed in tins of 5 lbs. net (enough to make approx. 40 gallons of soup at four level tablespoons per gallon) and can be used with great satisfaction to yourself and your patrons as a base to your own soup recipes both thick and clear.



In 1946 the Swiss Union of Syndicates joined the World Federation of Trades Unions, in obedience to the wish which the leaders in all countries of the trades union movement have always cherished, to preserve an international workers' united front. But even then doubts were expressed whether it was possible to organise fruitful and harmonious co-operation between the free western trades unions and the strictly government-controlled trades unions in the peoples' democracies of Eastern Europe. But all the same we joined; we took this risk. But as our trades unions leaders have just stated in Lucerne, the experiment was a complete failure. The Communists very soon succeeded in taking over a dominating part in the World Federation of Trades Unions and of making this body completely subservient to Soviet policy. And for this reason the free trades unions of the western countries decided to leave the World Federation and to set up a genuinely democratic supra-national trades union organisation.

This left Swiss trades unionists with the task of deciding whether their national organisation would join the new international body. This question was discussed at length and in great detail in Lucerne, and the Communists had ample opportunity to put forward their point of view. They cannot claim that the decision which was finally taken was arrived at without full investigation and complete objectivity.

The result was that the Swiss trades unions decided by 325 votes to only 22, to join the International Confederation of Free Trades Unions. This was not only a clear majority. It was a crushing one. A crushing victory of progressive thought over revolutionary tendencies. The Swiss working class have now shown by voting in this way that they think no more reforms are necessary; they have shown that they will have nothing to do with totalitarian methods.

The decision was taken in full freedom of mind, and it will strengthen the position of the socialist party and also the present position of the trades unions chiefs. On the other hand it will prevent the Communists from continuing their penetration of working class organisations, and so will reduce their influence. The Swiss working class movement is healthy and united, and we have good reason to be thankful that it is so.

