

# Comment

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Tel.: 01 - 253 2321

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EDITOR: Mrs. MARIANN MEIER

Advisory Council: R. J. KELLER (Chairman)  
GOTTFRIED KELLER (Vice-Chairman)  
O. F. BOEHRINGER, J. EUSEBIO, A. KUNZ,  
C. NATER, R. M. SUESS.

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# COMMENT

## ARE WE DOING ENOUGH?

The Constitutional Article 45bis with which the **Swiss abroad** have been honoured, states clearly that the Confederation not only has the *Befugnis* to further the relationship between Swiss abroad and their homeland, but that relations among the Swiss abroad themselves should be strengthened. That the latter cannot possibly be carried out by representatives of the Confederation abroad alone, should be clear. It is in the first place the Swiss living abroad themselves who should build the basis, who should show more mutual interest, more solidarity.

In some Swiss communities abroad, co-operation is excellent and large numbers of Swiss take an active part in deliberations and demonstrations of solidarity. Just one example: the *Groupe d'Etudes Helvétiques* in Paris have just sent a 40-page document on the total revision of the Federal Constitution to the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission, the former Federal Councillor Wahlen. The Group voices an opinion particularly in three fields, Switzerland in the world, the political rights of the Swiss abroad and the position of the foreigners in Switzerland. France, incidentally, has the largest Swiss Colony with 92,658 members, as compared with 14,000 in Great Britain.

Are we Swiss in this country pulling together everywhere we could? The number of members in the Solidarity Fund is still modest. The response to the Ambassador's appeal for financial support for the Cultural Forum at the Swiss Centre in London has apparently been quite good, but by no means as handsome as the size of the London community would warrant.

Nor have all the societies responded as briskly as was hoped. At the recent Annual General Meeting of an important London society, the debate regarding their contribution was, by all accounts, negative and sadly lacking in true patriotic spirit.

Of course, there are always exceptions, both individually and corporately. Fortunately, we have men like Dr. H. W. Egli, to mention just one, who has been working for decades to get the Swiss Cultural Centre going, in fact long before there was even a thought of the present Swiss Centre. And there are others, who, year after year, work quietly but loyally on committees and in welfare work, their names often hardly known or frequently passed over unnoticed in an annual report. They are links in the chain, and they all work for Switzerland directly or indirectly.

But, and it is a big but, so many claim they have no time and no money, no gifts to sit on committees, in short they use every excuse not to be part of that solidarity of which the *Auslandschweizerartikel* speaks.

At the end of August, the Swiss abroad meet at their special gathering, this year at Montreux, from 29th to 31st August. When the Commission of the Swiss Abroad met in Berne early in March (your community was represented by Mrs. M. Meier for the South and Dr. H. R. Bolliger for the North of G.B.), some fifty members from inside Switzerland and from many parts of the world discussed the theme. It is **The Swiss Abroad and Swiss Economy**.

The subject is sub-divided into four parts. The first is *Emigration: Gain or Loss for Switzerland?* A prominent expert will give a detailed talk on this matter.

The second is *How to use the potential of Swiss living abroad* in the interest of Swiss economy — mutual wishes. This will cover questions: 1) What do we think are the results of emigration for Switzerland? 2) Do we consider that they are taken into account sufficiently at home? 3) How can Swiss economy use representatives of the "Fifth Switzerland" increasingly for its purpose? 4) What support would the Swiss abroad expect from Swiss economy in return? A panel discussion will take place on this.

The third sector will cover *Training and further training* in Switzerland for the young Swiss abroad. Montreux should provide an opportunity for young Swiss and their parents to ask relevant questions and expect answers to burning problems in this connection.

Finally, the question of *Vocational re-integration into Swiss economy* of the Swiss returning to Switzerland will be given an airing. A discussion group will deal with the matter, consisting of former Swiss businessmen abroad and representatives from Swiss industry and commerce.

From past experience, I know that the U.K. delegation is a very small one,

at times positively embarrassing. Why not make an effort this year and attend the Assembly which always provides a marvellous meeting ground and offers a variety of interesting business and social events. The Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3000 Berne, will be pleased to give information.

Any contribution on any of the questions in particular or the theme in general should reach the President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom, Dr. H. W. Egli, 17 Corringham Road, London N.W.11, not later than *15th June*. Your two representatives on the Commission will also be pleased to accept contributions. A report will be forwarded to Berne, and individual points will be taken into account at the respective meetings during the Assembly.

There is a chance for many to air their grievances and to make constructive suggestions. Don't let it pass! And if you do decide to come to Montreux — you will never regret it.

MM

## RECENT APPOINTMENTS

The following appointments have been reported from Switzerland recently:

The Federal Council have chosen Dr. iur. Jacques-Michel Grossen, Professor of Law at Geneva University, as new Director of the **Federal Bureau of Justice**, Dr. Albert Gruebel (Federal Office of Industry, Trade and Labour — BIGA) as new President of the **Federal Labour Commission**, and National Councillor Dr. Edmond Wyss as President of the **Commission for Consumer Questions**.

The Government have confirmed two new appointments in the new **Section for Science and Research** of the Federal Department of the Interior, i.e. Dr. sc. techn. Eduard H. Freitag (general research) and Dr. phil. II Jean-Michel Pictet (atom research); both are graduates of the ETH in Zurich. The new **Press Chief** of the Federal Political Department is Mr. Theodor Sieber, deputy to the present Chief, Fürspreh Walter Jaeggi who has been appointed Ambassador to **Denmark**.

Ambassador Keel, hitherto in Poland, has been appointed Swiss Ambassador to **Norway** and **Iceland**. The new Ambassador to **Poland** is Dr. Pascal Frochoux (Dakar). Dr. Hartmann, Ambassador to **Thailand**, has also been accredited to **Burma**. The Swiss Military Attaché in Vienna and Belgrade, Colonel of General Staff Luciano Respini, has also been appointed Military Attaché to the Embassy in **Bucharest**. This was agreed when Federal Councillor Spuehler was in Bucharest; in return, Rumania is to open a Consulate General in Zurich.

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