

# Franz Burri : late editor of Der Auslandschweizer

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## FRANZ BURRI.

Late Editor of DER AUSLANDSCHWEIZER.

In the May number of our contemporary, *Der Auslandschweizer*, which is published in Graz, our colleague Franz Burri, takes farewell from his readers; he does this in an excellent article, headed *Rückblick-Ausblick*, of which we give a few extracts.

We take this opportunity to express to our colleague across the sea, our deep admiration for his work, which he had so admirably done, in face of almost unsurmountable odds.

A fearless, clean fighter, a stout heart which warmly beat for his native land, has, we hope, only temporarily laid down his pen.

The Swiss Colony abroad can ill afford to lose a man of such outstanding qualities; may time heal some of the bitterness which he now feels towards those, who have through indifference and want of judgment, made him seek another field of activity, and may he, this is our fervent wish, before long once again take his pen up, the pen which has well served his country. We are proud to call Franz Burri, a colleague of ours.

ST.

“Das Schicksal will es so haben. Es ist nicht zum ersten Male, dass es für mich heisst, Abschiednehmen. Das ist mein Los seit zwei Jahrzehnten. Da war einmal der Abschied vom Elternhaus, brutal, lieblos, weil man ein Proletariatskind war, dessen Vater gar früh dahinschied und das Brot recht schmal war. Dann kam das Auswandern, weil die Heimat kein Brot geben konnte und für Männer eigener Kraft keinen Platz hat. Abschied von den schönen lieben Heimatbergen und blauen Seen, um in der Ferne und Fremde eine neue Welt zu bauen. Ich habe sie gebaut mit Zähigkeit und Ausdauer — aber sie fiel zusammen, Bitterniss und Not zurücklassend. Wiederum musste ich frisch beginnen, einen Boden schaffen, um zu arbeiten, vorwärtszukommen. Ich hatte nie Protektion; ich musste selbst meinen Weg suchen, mein Ziel erringen. Gehungert und gedurbt habe ich, durchgerungen durch eine Welt der Bosheit und des Neides hiess es — durchgerungen, recht mühsam und hart, habe ich mich.”

“Ich habe im ‘‘Auslandschweizer’’ keine

Frage aufgeworfen, ohne nach reiflicher Überlegung zu wissen, was ich wollte. Dem Dienste meiner Heimat und meiner Mitbürger im Ausland habe ich mich gewidmet — eine mühevollen, sorgenreiche, undankbare Arbeit.

Meinen Schicksalsgenossen im fremden Lande wollte ich helfen und raten, denn gerade in der gegenwärtigen Zeit der Krise und Not brauchen die Schweizer im Auslande nicht patriotische Vorträge und Kulturpredigten — sie brauchen reale Dinge, sie brauchen Existenzmöglichkeiten und einen Bissen tägliches Brot. Was nützen uns alle Vorträge über die Heimat, wenn wir dabei verhungern. Und das ist doch in der gegenwärtigen Zeit das Los des Grossteils der Auslandschweizer.

Um raten und helfen zu können, gründete ich die *Schweizer Heimat*, die dann später um ihren wahren Charakter auch nach aussen hin deutlicher zum Ausdruck zu bringen, in *Der Auslandschweizer* umtaufte. Ich wollte durch diese Blattgründung ein Sprachrohr schaffen, welches mit aller Energie die Interessen der Ausgewanderten wahr und schützt.”

Ich nehme Abschied von allen, den Freunden und Gegnern, den Gut — und Schlecht — Gesinnten. Die einen werden mein Scheiden bedauern, die andern werden es bejubeln. Abschied ist immer schwer. Wenn man einer Sache das ganze Herzblut gegeben hat, ist der Abschied doppelt schwer. Und doch, es muss sein! Ich habe auch für meine Familie zu sorgen und Patriotismus ist ein furchtbar schlechtes Geschäft.

Vor einiger Zeit weilte ich einige Tage in der steirischen Bergwelt, hoch oben, zweitausend Meter hoch. Dort habe ich alle Bitterniss begraben, die mich in den letzten Monaten begleitet hat. So vieles liegt in meinem Herzen drinnen in dieser Stunde des Abschiedes.

Begreifend, wenn man Jahre hindurch einer Sache diene und vom Schicksal genötigt wird, sich umzustellen. Den Bergen habe ich mein grosses Leid geklagt — und dabei Erleichterung gefunden.

Lebet wohl, liebe Landsleute rund um den *Auslandschweizer*. Ich scheide aus einer alten, lieben Welt, aus einer Welt, die mir bisher alles bedeutete, weil heimatische Klänge in ihr

lebten — ich ziehe in eine neue Welt, heimatfern und heimatfremd. In neuer Arbeit will ich vieles vergessen, vieles neu bauen vor allem eines: eine neue Heimat schaffen, weil ich die alte verlieren musste.”

## NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

## SWISS RALLY TO WHIPSNADE.

We are glad to report, that the idea of a Swiss Rally, which emanated from our Birmingham compatriots, has been very favourably received in the London Colony.

This is only as it ought to be, as our friends in the Midlands wish to get into closer touch with their brethren in the Metropolis; it is not only for social reasons, but there might arise in the future, problems which affect everyone of our compatriots, and to solve these, we must show a united front, and in order to affect this we must know each other.

We are informed that several of the London Societies have made, or are making arrangements to go to Whipsnade by char-a-banc, a good many will go by train, others again by motor car.

The contingent from Birmingham (about 130), will have luncheon at the Pavilion, and those who wish to join them are cordially invited; in order to facilitate the catering arrangements, it would be advisable, for those who wish to have lunch (3/6) to inform Mr. Brun, the President of the Swiss Club, Birmingham. (Address: Mr. P. Brun, 179, Heathfield Road, Handsworth, Birmingham). A good many of the London visitors will combine this outing with a pic-nic, but it is hoped that by 2 o'clock the participants should meet at a certain spot, which we shall mention in next week's issue.

So that we should know each other, this year's 1st of August badge will be worn. (1/-) There will be no speeches, which in itself adds to the attraction of the outing.

It is hoped that all the participants will take tea together for which a certain part of the Refreshment Pavilion will be reserved.

We therefore make a hearty Appeal to our readers, and their friends to attend this Rally, as we feel sure that it will be an enjoyable affair.

## REMINISCENCES.

## HOW I GOT INTO THE SERGEANT'S GOOD BOOKS.

(CONTINUED).

By ST.

There was not the slightest doubt that Sergeant Rösti was in dire distress; he had started his report with a perfectly new pencil, and after he had jotted only a few lines down, he kept on biting bits off it, thus reducing it to an infinitesimal size. Surely, I argued to myself, he can't be that hungry, especially as I have seen him doing full justice to his evening meal barely half an hour before. I could not watch this mental agony any longer; in spite of his having made the first few days of my soldiering career a perfect hell, a feeling of sympathy and pity took hold of me, and mustering all my courage, I asked him again to let me write the report for him. I could see a battle raging within him, on one hand he welcomed my offer, on the other hand he was afraid to lose some of his authority. He gave me a searching look, was I going to take advantage, should he submit to my entreaties, he no doubt turned over in his mind, but there I stood in all my humbleness, two large brown eyes filled with human understanding, with an expression of willingness to relieve him of this arduous task. Even a sergeant has a heart sometimes, — with a deep sigh he passed on his papers to me, saying, “Let me see what you can make of it,” after a few explanations I set to work. I put heart and soul into it, never before in my life have I racked my brain so much in order to make a good job of it.

Line after line, page after page followed each other, and when, on finishing, I passed it on to him, I eagerly watched him reading it. “Not so bad,” was his verdict, “I'll copy it,” and that night, I could perceive the silver lining on the dark clouds which overhung my young soldiering career. The next few days brought me some relief, I saw a slight improvement in the treatment towards me, his authoritative voice sounded to me less harsh, and once or twice he even had a word of praise, I began to think that even a soldier's life has its recompenses.—

Then came the great day, which proved to be the turning of the tide. Sergeant Rösti asked me to meet him later in the evening at a certain Restaurant in the vicinity of the barracks, this request completely unnerved me for the rest of the day; I was at a loss to understand what the reason of this unexpected meeting could be. Punctual to the minute I turned up at the appointed place, he was awaiting me. He greeted me rather cordially, saying that he had turned over things in his own mind, and that he had

come to the conclusion, that I was after all quite a decent fellow to which I replied that I never had any doubts about it. This reply was perhaps a bit unfortunate as it seemed to put a slight doubt into his head whether I was really congenial. Anyhow, after much fidgeting and coughing, which betrayed a certain nervousness, which I had never noticed before, he acquainted me with the fact that he suffered from a complaint, which is commonly called “love-sickness.” — As an explanatory remark I ought to mention that sergeant Rösti was a member of the worthy guild of bakers. — The cause of this not unfrequent disease, was apparently the daughter of a well-to-do miller, from whom the sergeant bought his flour. “Oh you artful devil,” I thought to myself, he bargained no doubt not only for the sacks of flour but also for the daughter of his supplier, this man had an eye for business. To cut a long story short he asked me point blank whether I would be agreeable to compose the letters to his heart's desire, as he was not very handy with his pen, and considering the report which I had written previously for him, he thought I would be the very man for this job. This request put me somehow in a quandry, first of all I had but little experience in this kind of work, secondly the person to whom I had to address myself in the most endearing terms, was a complete stranger to me. — An undertaking of this kind was certainly not as easy as it looked, was it an honest thing to do, I asked myself, but after sergeant Rösti assured me with a faltering voice (so different to the one I used to hear) that Rösti was awfully fond of him, and asked him, before taking a tender farewell, behind the garden wall, to write to her, I made my mind up to accept his proposal. To enable me to execute this task in an efficient manner, I had to cross examine the sergeant rather thoroughly, a task in which I found a certain delight, his stammering answers to some of my searching questions made up for a few of the humiliations I had undergone previously.

I explained to him, that, as he did not possess a photograph of Rösti he must give me an accurate description of her appearance, as I could hardly talk in my letters of heavenly blue eyes, when in reality they were green or black, nor could I write about a dainty little rosy mouth, when this organ was rather an outsize, or again about the sweet little ears, in case they were like cabbage leaves. Then the colour of the hair would be of great importance, in case I alluded to golden locks, when in reality they were straight and ginger.

I also wanted to know approximately the size of Rösti, explaining that I could hardly write about her tender, slight appearance, in case she should weigh over 12 stones, also the size of

her boots would be required, as I had visions of bringing in the “fairy feet which had stepped into a lonely soldier's life.”

These questions were very embarrassing to sergeant Rösti, and also to me, he blushed violently on several occasions, but when I, as a final shot, asked him with a piercing look whether he had ever before kissed his Rösti, he simply went purple; he flatly refused to answer, but after I had explained in so many words, that this was a most important matter, as sooner or later that would have to appear in the letters, he admitted that he had tried, but somehow had missed the mark, I looked at him in a sort of “how could you sergeant” way. I also found out, that Rösti was fond of dancing, and could play the piano with one finger; also that she was rather sentimental, the latter fact was important, I made my mind up to rub it in thickly.—

After having devoured a bottle of Neuchâtel in honour of Rösti, and the future happiness of the two lovers, I was told to depart, the sergeant explaining to me, that it would not do for us to be seen together, this rather hurt my pride a little, here was I asked to collaborate in paying the way to eternal bliss, and yet I must not be seen with the one for whom I was willing to expose some of my tenderest and innermost feelings; but with a click of my heels and a brave military salute I drowned those feelings, and went back to the place which harboured so many disappointments. That night I could not sleep for a long time, visions of Rösti kept me awake, from the description received that night, she answered many of my longings, was I in love with Rösti too? I asked myself, what a disaster that would be, and for the first time since I slept with 36 of my comrades in the same *sanctuary* I did not mind the awful snoring of some of them, it sounded like music, it was like a symphony of love, and the last words which I whispered into a hard pillow were, — Good night, Rösti dear.—

The following evening instead of going out, I stayed behind in order to compose the first letter to the unknown one. It was, what I considered short and sweet, not too much to the point, and yet intimating that an aching heart was filled with a great longing, it was so to say the opening chapter to life's greatest drama. When I showed it that night to sergeant Rösti, it met with his approval, although he thought that a sign depicting a kiss, or a mark intimating a falling tear might have conveniently been inserted, but I strongly objected to this, as I thought it wiser to play the big guns later on, when the signs of her affection would be more apparent. That letter was copied the same night by the sergeant on pink paper, the envelope bore a stamp rather