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# The 62nd Assembly of Swiss Abroad



The role of the Swiss abroad in the sphere of Swiss exports was the main theme of the annual gathering of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique's Organization of the Swiss Abroad in Basle from 10th to 13th May this year.

This 62nd Assembly meant, as in previous years, a meeting between Swiss living abroad and representatives of Swiss societies from all over the world and representatives of authorities and institutions in our country. Nearly 400 compatriots from 30 countries met in Basle in a rather unusual setting.

According to the wish of a number of Swiss from abroad, the gathering was organized in spring for a change and not at the end of the summer.

The premises of the Swiss Industries Fair are well known to many of our compatriots from abroad and offered a venue which was unusual; it did not lend itself quite so much to foster a feeling of belonging to the homeland as to give a picture of the most interesting and above all economic possibilities available to Switzerland.

In the general programme, too,



Our guest of honour, Federal Councillor Kurt Furgler.

there were changes. Instead of having the plenary session on Saturday, it took place already on Friday. It began with the official opening at which the Basle Municipal Band entertained the assembled participants. This meeting was the highlight of the whole congress.

On the basis of excellent talks (the texts are available in a brochure –

please use the order form), an impressive picture emerged of the present economic position of Switzerland and the role of the Swiss abroad in this field.

Three personalities spoke at the official opening, the President of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad, Prof. Walther Hofer, the representative of the Basle Government, Regierungsrat Dr. Peter Facklam, and the Director of the Swiss Industries Fair, Dr Frédéric Walthard. They all recalled the great importance of the Basle Region not only in the economic life of our country, but also in history and culture.

Then followed the Central President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Mr René Retornaz, who spoke of the immense importance of key posts held by Swiss abroad. They played the part of informal ambassadors today as much as in the past.

Prof. Hofer then introduced the main theme. He stressed the significance of the activities of Swiss abroad in education and social welfare, in science, technology and agriculture, but above all in the field of trade and industry. He reminded the audience of the way

Friday morning's plenary session.





View of the table of honour: l. to r.: Messrs. Jonneret, Arioli, Ludwig, Retornaz, Furgler, Hofer and Walthard.

the Swiss abroad created the equilibrium to the «natural poverty of the Swiss soil». Their achievements did not always get the right appreciation. It was the ties with world economy and the liberal policies regarding it that saved Switzerland from the worst effects of serious world crises.

The statement by the President of the Swiss societies in Paris, Mr

Pierre Jonneret, that our communities abroad were dying caused quite some concern. With this he meant that on one hand the number of dual nationals was on the increase and that of the other Swiss abroad on the decline, and on the other less involvement whilst abroad as their stay there often was only of a temporary character.

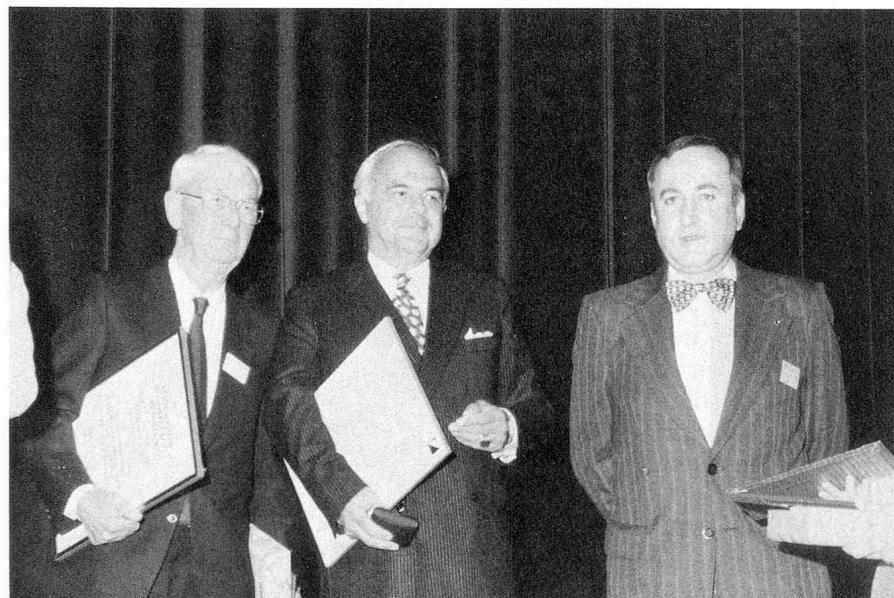
Mr Mario Ludwig, Director of the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade explained how an organization between State and economy could carry out its task. The SZH/OSEC was a private body with a membership of some 2300 export businesses, presenting some 70% of the total economic export volume. Their concern was above all to make publicity for Swiss industry and trade, participation at fairs, information regarding foreign markets, individual export advice and training in export marketing.

The Deputy Director of the Federal Office of Foreign Trade, Dr Silvio Arioli, stated that the efforts made to prevent overlarge interference in world markets had shown considerable success.

Messrs Charles Comte and Guy de Chambrier spoke in the name of the «Association of Social Interests of the Swiss in the Congo» and of the «Association of Former Swiss in Algeria and Overseas» respectively – both of their special worries concerning their compatriots.

Federal Councillor Dr Kurt Furgler, Head of the Federal Department of Public Economy, was the guest of honour. He began his address with a statement that the City of Basle, gateway to Switzerland, was particularly suitable as a venue for the Swiss abroad at the moment when their concern was

Messrs. Hofer, Ney and Paillard receiving diplomas and gifts from the Swiss Industries Fair.



## IMPORTANT

As a souvenir of the 62nd Assembly of Swiss Abroad in Basle, a brochure has been published which contains all the speeches made there in German and French. As long as stocks last, the document is available from the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3000 Bern 16. The price is Fr. 14.- including postage, and in Switzerland Fr. 10.-. Orders can only be carried out once the money has been received by the Secretariat.

Swiss foreign trade, for Basle was not only an old and important fair and trade centre, but also the seat of Swiss firms known the world over.

He pointed out that the short-term economic prospects in the OECD countries had improved and that the economic interdependence of Switzerland had by no means declined, and that the Swiss abroad had a particular and praiseworthy task within this framework.

A luncheon took place after this first session. In the afternoon, participants of the congress had a chance of witnessing the final discussions of the «New Vistas» symposium which had been dealing with the effect technological progress on foreign trade.

The evening of the first day was at the free disposal of the congress participants. The young



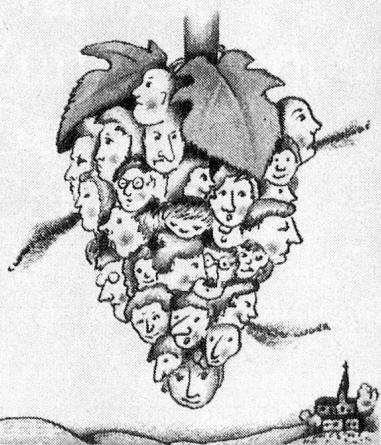
(Photos NADIA)

Swiss from abroad were offered a special dinner at which several young «recruits» were present, one of them from Zimbabwe

measuring 2 m 16 cm. The meal was followed by a visit to a discotheque.

There was a guided tour through

## Le Langage des Romands



Les Suisses romands n'ont pas, comme les Alémaniques, leurs dialectes. Et pourtant ils emploient quantité de mots qui ne figurent pas dans les dictionnaires de Paris. Des mots justes, savoureux, indispensables. De **baboler** à **picoulet**, de **cagnard** à **rebuse**, Edmond Pidoux en a retenu près de 600. Son ouvrage est désormais un classique suisse.

Par Edmond Pidoux.

Illustrations de Christine Berthoin

Un élégant volume «poche» en deux couleurs, édité par l'Association suisse des journalistes de langue française et l'Alliance culturelle romande.

### BULLETIN DE SOUSCRIPTION

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Alpenstrasse 26,  
3000 Berne 16**

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## 63rd Assembly of Swiss Abroad 1985

The 63rd annual get-together of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique's Organization of the Swiss Abroad will take place next year in

INTERLAKEN  
in the Bernese Oberland.

We are already looking forward to your participation at the Assembly

**from 30th August to 1st September 1985.**

The theme of the congress, detailed programme and application form will be published in this magazine in March 1985.

the MUBA on Saturday, and in the afternoon «Question Time» of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad. In the evening, there was a dinner at the MUBA «Festsaal», followed by entertainment of an interna-

tional character. Dancing went on well into the night.

Many thanks to our hosts, the Swiss Industries Fair.

SSA/I. Franzoni

## A well-known personality retires from the ASK



Dr Rolf Bühler was born in Bournemouth, England, in 1903. With a doctorate in political science, he took over the management of the family concern in Uzwil, founded by his grandfather. Still today, the company contributes considerably to the economic life of

Switzerland. From 1962 to this year's Assembly of Swiss Abroad in Basle, he was a member of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique's Commission of the Swiss Abroad, the ASK. Due to his many stays and journeys abroad, he has always shown a lively interest in foreign matters and great understanding of his compatriots resident abroad.

As a young man, he was elected to the Federal Parliament (1940 to 1947), and as National Councillor he championed actively the cause of the Swiss abroad. In this connection, we recall his efforts to exempt the Swiss abroad from having to get permission for the purchase of land and buildings in Switzerland. For a number of years, he was President of the Union of Swiss Chambers of Commerce, contributing largely to its development.

These few words cannot possibly do justice to the many activities of a man who has made a reputation

for himself as economic expert, politician and patron of the arts. All we can do is to thank him for the services he has rendered to Swiss public life in general and to the Swiss abroad in particular.

*The Editors*

## Youth skiing camp 1984/85

The skiing camp at Christmas/New Year for young Swiss abroad will take place at **Zweisimmen**.

**Date:** December 26, 1984 to January 5, 1985

**Fee:** **Sfr. 375.-**, voucher for ski lifts not included.

**Conditions:** Age: 15 to 25 years  
Either your father or your mother must be a Swiss passport holder.

If you want to participate in our skiing camp, write for more information and the necessary forms to our Secretariat.

**Our address:** Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad  
Youth Service  
Alpenstrasse 26  
CH-3000 Berne 16

**Deadline for enrolment:** December 7, 1984



Zweisimmen 1984/85

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Christian name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City and Country: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note the dates of the skiing camps at Les Crosets:

- I. 1st April–10th April 1985
- II. 11th April–20th April 1985