

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 10 (1944-1945)  
**Heft:** 5

**Artikel:** The 1944 Russo-Swiss affair  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942754>

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. 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. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

#### **Conditions d'utilisation**

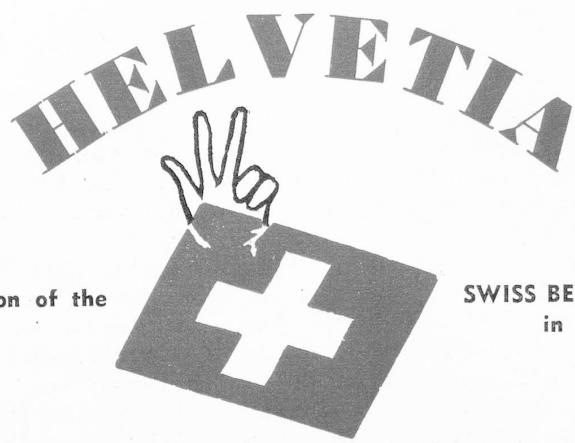
L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

#### **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. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 07.01.2026

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



Monthly Publication of the

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY  
in New Zealand

---

Group New Zealand of the N.H.G.

---

WELLINGTON.  
FEBRUARY, 1945.

VOL. 5, 10th YEAR.

SWITZERLAND'S PARTICIPATION IN POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION IN EUROPE.

The war which rages outside the Swiss borders, with its immeasurable suffering, privation and destruction, sets Switzerland two important tasks: Charitable first-aid to war-victims and economic participation in the reconstruction of devastated lands.

The first task, which is also the most urgent one, is to make available as soon as possible to the grievously afflicted peoples of Europe, food, medical supplies, clothing, temporary shelter, etc. If the Swiss people are spared the ravages of war, they will do their utmost, true to their humanitarian traditions, to help quickly and generously. A special committee under the chairmanship of the former Federal Councillor Dr. Wetter, with headquarters in Berne, has been set up to prepare and carry out this plan.

The second task which is completely different and independent from the first one, is the economic and financial participation of Switzerland in the reconstruction of the devastated European countries, and the re-equipment of factories, etc. Switzerland is also keen to share in this work, which is of a commercial nature in contrast to the above mentioned humanitarian activities. The "Swiss Committee for Economic Participation in the Post-War Reconstruction of Europe" which was founded in the autumn of 1943, has made preliminary investigations regarding the extent to which Swiss industry and trade, with the assistance of the Swiss Government, would be able to contribute to the solution of this task. The Committee proposes to co-ordinate and further the various private efforts in this direction. For this purpose it is planned to establish a central office to act as connecting link between Swiss producers, enterprises and technicians, and the different foreign countries. This central office will work on a non-profitmaking basis. The participation of Switzerland in post-war reconstruction will at the same time further her own exports and so keep Swiss economic life going and prevent unemployment in the post-war period. The Committee, whose activities have the approval of the Swiss Federal authorities, includes among its members well known personalities from the realm of industry and trade, technics and finance, as well as from different Federal Ministries. Its headquarters are in Baden, Switzerland.

THE 1944 RUSSO-SWISS AFFAIR.

In connection with the Russo-Swiss affair that is stirring up so much dust all reports published so far have been telling us part of the story only; even that part has not always been accurate. There were several incidents that can be briefly stated as follows:

In 1917, when the Bolsheviks took power, the Swiss Legation at the former capital of Petersburg was sacked by the revolutionary mob. The Swiss protested but no indemnity was ever paid nor was an apology offered by the Russian Government.

In 1918, at the time of the armistice and of the general strike that had been proclaimed in Switzerland by left extremists of the world revolutionary type, when the Swiss army had to be mobilized, a Russian mission in Bern, that had been rightly or wrongly accused of fostering the trouble, was arrested by the army authorities and expelled. That ended the semi-semblance of diplomatic relations that had existed between the Swiss and the Soviet Governments.

During the period of the general strike a violent flu epidemic broke out amongst the troops; whole units had to be hospitalized and hundreds of the boys died. This very unfortunate fact had a profound influence on Swiss public opinion; in conjunction with the 1917 affair it so alienated Swiss sympathy from the Russian regime that, even if the Government had wished, it could not for many years have re-established diplomatic relations with Russia. Public opinion against such a move would have been too strong.

In 1923 Worowsky, a Russian delegate to an International Conference, not accredited to the Swiss Government and for whose safety no Federal or Cantonal authority could be made responsible, was shot in a hotel at Lausanne by one Conradi, a White Russian, whose ancestors had come from Switzerland some three generations back. In accordance with the laws of the Canton of Vaud Conradi was tried by a jury and, as might have happened any country, he was acquitted. It was not a reactionary tribunal and it was not a miscarriage of justice that gave Conradi his liberty. He should have been condemned for manslaughter but popular sentiment and resentment freed him. It was that VOX POPULI-VOX DEI looked upon by so many people as the very essence of democracy that did it. Had Conradi been tried in his home Canton, the Grisons, that does not have trial by jury, the Cantonal Tribunal at Coire (a body of elected professional judges) would most decidedly have condemned him to a long term in jail, just as it condemned years later a young student named Frankfurter for the slaying of Nazi Gauleiter Gustloff. A jury on the other hand might have freed Frankfurter as it freed Conradi, for public opinion was just as anti-nazi as it had been anti-bolshevik.

With reference to the question of re-establishing diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Russia, let us by all means be open-minded and realistic, and let us wish and work for the resumption of normal relations. However, let us keep our dignity too. The Swiss Government acted all through in a correct way and it need not be criticized, the least by Swiss Colonies or individuals abroad that do not even know the facts. Neither does the Government have to apologize. My observation has been that the Russians themselves are very realistic and coolheaded; I believe they were amongst the first to have diplomatic relations with the Mussolini regime and they also were the first to recognize the new Italian Government headed by the King and Badoglio, at a time when the U.S. and the British Governments seemed to be hesitant. If the grief is that Switzerland suppressed communist groups and their papers in this conflict let the Russians remember that other Great Democracies acted in a similar manner and, incidentally let them tell us how Switzerland could possibly have suppressed the nazi groups and their press without applying the same rule to the extremists of the left.

Switzerland has a better record than the Russians themselves in persistently condemning fascist aggression. The geographic position of the country not less than tradition made it necessary for the Government to have correct relations with all other countries. It is more than a "businesslike policy" of recognizing other States, regardless of their domestic regimes, as the Russians now call their fundamental principle of foreign policy, and it qualifies the Swiss Government to discuss questions of recognition on a basis of equality and of mutual respect.

The incidents of a generation ago are forgotten, the war itself brought about a re-grouping and re-orientation, the very idea of communist regimes has undergone profound changes and does not have to scare us as it did in 1917. Switzerland has shown its willingness to go along; I do not believe that Russia has any bona fide reasons to stand back or to be untrue to its own proclaimed principles.