

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 13 (1948)  
**Heft:** 7  
  
**Rubrik:** Sundry news

#### **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:** 16.01.2026

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

through sickness and neglect caused by war. Red Cross aid means aid to all, a practical application of man's responsibility toward man. The Red Cross breaks down walls which are blinding people to the reality of their mutual bonds. In the final analysis it means love for each individual who suffers, even for the enemy. The Red Cross has the task of finding, in the darkness of hate and destruction, the human being in need, to be truly charitable to the neighbour, whoever he may be.

We all owe allegiance to the history and to the requirements of the state to which we belong. It is not always easy to carry out impartially the Red Cross mandate of being one's brother's keeper. This is particularly true with regard to those who, in the pursuit of their enemies, have cast aside all human feeling. However, in what other way can we manifest our 'own' humanitarianism, than in the attempt to free our fellow-men from the bonds and guilt which darken their existence? We must look upon them, as did Henri Dumant, as being all brothers. The Red Cross must first of all be the servant and helper of the individual, before it can be the servant and helper of peoples, states and armies.

Responsibility towards the individual and neighbour is not limited to the battlefield, to suffering and death; it enters into human relations as a whole.

It is not enough to assist the weak and helpless; the strong and independent, too, must learn to bridge the gaps which divide men, to break down barriers, to overcome suspicion and strife. For the millions everywhere, who believe in the spirit and work of the Red Cross, it must be a sacred duty to foster unity among men, to enhance the spirit of understanding, to strive for the suppression of brute force. It must become our avowed task to serve humanity not only in time of war, after all semblance of order has broken down, but to work with all their might for the prevention of war.

The spirit of the Red Cross is the spirit of peace. Therefore the plea goes out to everyone. Let us take this spirit into our hearts and carry it into our families, schools, professions, parliaments, governments and into the relations between States.

Looking back over the past tragic years of world history, it is to be hoped that many will become inspired - like Dunant on the battlefield of Solferino - to help free mankind from fear and misery and to spare no sacrifice to help create a human and peaceful world.

SUNDRY NEWS.

## TEMPEST IN THE REGION OF HAUTEVILLE.

While the inhabitants of Hauteville took part in some religious service, a water hose of extraordinary violence devastated the region; rivers and torrents grew in an instant and broke their embankments. The waters covered the countryside and inundated many farms. The damage is estimated at several hundred thousand Swiss francs.

## GENEVA GETS A NEW HOTEL.

The Council of State has proposed to the Grand Council of Geneva the subscription of the amount of one million francs to the capital of the Building Society that is going to build the "Hotel du Rhone" and to grant to that same society a second mortgage in the amount of five million francs.

## ANOTHER WOLF IN THE WALLIS.

The region near Tourtemagne is again being plagued by a wolf. Hunters are trying to track the animal down.

1. August  
Ich schliefe mich im Firscheine auf  
Auf hoher Alp begraben,  
Ich schliefe mitten im Juchheinzen.  
Der wilden Hirtenknaben.  
Wo sonst ich lag im süßen Tag,  
Lag ich in dunkeln Decken,  
Der laue Krach und dumpfer Schlag,  
Er würde mich nicht wecken.  
Und käme schwarzer Sturm gerauscht  
Und schüttelte die Tannen,  
Er führe, von mir unbelauscht,  
Vorüber und von dannen.  
Doch klänge sanfter Glockenchor,  
Ich liesse wohl mich stören  
Und lauscht' ein Weilchen gern empor,  
Das Herdgeläut zu hören.

Conrad Ferdinand Meyer.

#### 1st OF AUGUST CELEBRATION IN MANAIA.

The Swiss in the Taranaki district have decided to commemorate the birthday of the Swiss Confederation on the 30th of July in the Town Hall at Manaia. The Consul of Switzerland, Mr. Theiler, and Mrs. Theiler, will be the Guests of Honour.

#### AUCKLAND CELEBRATION.

A gathering of the Swiss community of Auckland and surrounding districts will be held this year at the Comordore Rooms, Customs St., West, (opposite Point Chevalier tram stop) on Saturday, August 7th at 7.30 p.m. Owing to the position of Lighting Restrictions, we ask patrons to roll up early. As we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Republic of Neuchatel, and also the Constitution, we should like to see our patrons turn up in Good Numbers.

#### AUSTRALIAN SWISS CELEBRATION 1948.

From the 24th to the 26th of June, 1948, took place the so-called Parliament of the Swiss living abroad. A special meeting had been arranged for the evening of the 24th of June for the Swiss from overseas, in order to discuss various problems. On the agenda figures, the closer relationship between our compatriots living overseas and the Secretariat of the New Helvetic Society for the Swiss living abroad was included. The Swiss Benevolent Society of New Zealand was represented by Mr. & Mrs. Merz as delegates.

#### SCHILLER FOUNDATION.

The Schiller Foundation has just granted various recognitions to Swiss writers. Among the German speaking Swiss authors, Emil Balmer and Hans Roelli each received a premium of Sfr.1000. Other authors who also received Sfr.1000 are Alfred Fankhuser for "For they shall own the Earth"; Marcel Gero for "Berner Marsch"; Ernst Hirt for "Gallus Peter"; Gustav Keckeis for "Die fremde Zeit"; John F. Vuilleumier for "Die vom Berg" and Albert J. Welti for "Marta und die Niemandsöhne." Among the French Swiss authors Denis de Rougemont was awarded a prize of honour of Sfr.1000 and C.A. Cingria received Sfr.1000 for "La reine Berthe." The Italian Swiss author Vittore Frigerio of Lugano received a prize of honour of Sfr.700 and the two Romanche, Toni Halter and Gian Cadieli each received a prize of Sfr.500.

SWISS FOLKLORE GROUP AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

A folklore group from Switzerland gave a performance at Buckingham Palace in honour of the 81st anniversary of Queen Mary.

INTERNATIONAL FAIR IN TORONTO.

On the occasion of the official opening of the International Fair in Toronto on the 29th of May, the Governor-General of Canada was received in the Swiss Pavilion by the Swiss Minister to Canada, Mr. Victor Nef, also by Mr. E. Primeault, President of the Swiss Watch Chamber, and by Mr. Albert Masnata, Director of the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade. It seems that the Swiss Watch Pavilion is the main attraction at the Fair.

RED CROSS PRESIDENT IN THE NEAR EAST.

The former Swiss Minister to London, Mr. Paul Ruegger, now President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, went to the Near East in order to verify the alarming news that reached him regarding the position of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Palestine.

SWISS NURSE INJURED IN PALESTINE.

In the exercise of her duties as a nurse of the Red Cross, Miss Florence Cousin-Young from Lausanne was seriously injured under the fire of the Arabs.

PROTECTION FOR THE EAGLES.

Various civic groups in Eastern Switzerland have sent a petition to the Governments of the Cantons of St. Gallen and of both Appenzells, asking for the protection of the so-called stone eagle (Steinadler) by prohibiting its destruction. In that petition it is pointed out that today only eleven (11) eagles are nesting in the high mountains of Eastern Switzerland.

SCHOOLS IN THE CANTON OF ZUG.

With 47 against 8 votes, the Cantonal Council of Zug has voted the extension of compulsory education to eight years duration.

COMPTOIR SUISSE, LAUSANNE.

The Annual Comptoir Suisse, which is a national exhibition mainly concerned with rural displays, is being held this year from the 11th - 26th of September, in Lausanne.

GERMAN DEPOSITS IN SWITZERLAND.

The Reuter Agency issued the following communique from Brussels, Belgium:-

"The Inter-Allied Office for Reparations, in Brussels, has requested Switzerland to proceed with the liquidation of all the German property that is located in Switzerland. Furthermore, it has requested the Swiss Government to put at the disposal of the member Governments of the Office for Reparations, the sum of Sfr.1000,000 as a first instalment of the sum fixed in the Washington Agreement of May, 1946."

The Federal Political Department comments as follows on this communique:

"The resolution made by the allied agency for reparations has been brought to the knowledge of the Federal Council as an appendix to the notes of the French Embassy and of the Ministers of Britain and of the U.S.A. dated 11/13 May, 1948. Through the Washington Agreement, Switzerland is under contractual obligations with France, England and the United States of America, but not with the Inter-Allied Agency for Reparations in Brussels."

It has been made known officially, and on several occasions, that the Federal Council will not be able to take up its position in regard to the notes of the three allied great powers until such time as it has received a reply to an important enquiry that it made in the meantime. The agency in Brussels is labouring under apprehension inasmuch as it assumes that German

property in Switzerland could, and should, be liquidated before the question of an adequate compensation has been settled. Since it does not seem possible that an agreement will be reached on this very important question, the case will probably have to be submitted to an international Court of Arbitration, which possibility is provided for in the Washington Agreement.

The liquidation of the German holdings in Switzerland has been the object of a complaint in the British Parliament by a speaker of the Foreign Office; also the middle and lower press and some radio commentators of a similar category in the United States, accused Switzerland of not carrying out her obligations under the Agreement of Washington. Experts in Bern pointed out that all these accusations are unjustified.

On the occasion of the ratification of the Washington Agreement, voices were raised in the Swiss Federal Parliament against said Agreement, because it was in contradiction to the Swiss Federal Constitution and to Swiss law, inasmuch as force was applied against the property of third parties. On the 8th of October, 1947, the Federal Council, in a note to the Allied Governments, explained its legal point of view; in Switzerland people can only be expropriated of their property if a complete compensation is made thereof. In order to be able to assess such compensation a certain relation must be established between the Swiss and the German currencies; Switzerland has requested the Allies to fix such a rate of exchange corresponding exactly to the parity between the dollar and the reichsmark in Germany. The Allies made a proposition according to which a German from whom 100 frs. would be taken away would receive in compensation only 56 reichsmarks. It is to be noted that, without a doubt, the value of the Swiss franc exceeds by far that of the reichsmark. Switzerland could not therefore, accept the proposition because it is in contradiction to the principle to give to expropriated owners a compensation representing the true counter-value of the goods or holdings involved. The acceptance of said proposal would constitute too heavy a burden for our country. To its note of the 8th of October, 1947, the Federal Council received the answer of the Allies only on the 8th of May, 1948. The Political Department saw itself compelled to request further explanations in connection with an important point in that note. An answer by the Allies to this request is still outstanding. The Federal Council regrets that a delay has occurred in the execution of the Washington Agreement - it points out however, that it cannot be made responsible for this delay.

The Swiss refuse to believe in the principle that "might makes right." They have resisted the Nazis whenever they tried to impose conditions in utter disregard of the law and the Swiss are determined to resist such impositions, no matter from what quarter they might come. Switzerland is, and will always remain, a State built strictly upon law and justice and under no circumstances will she deviate from her line of conduct.

---

SWITZERLAND'S ROLE IN EUROPE.  
(continued)

But obviously, Switzerland's success story is due to more than tourists and electric power. Even her agriculture, the well-known cows and yodelling alpheads - are far less important than her highly developed industries and the products of skilled labour. Today, industry absorbs 45% of the nation's workers, agriculture only 22%. Best known of Switzerland's many exports are, of course, her watches. Twenty million are exported annually, mostly to the United States, Great Britain and South American nations. Swiss textiles find ready markets, and so do the delicate embroideries and lace-work of the so-called "home-industries." The Swiss chemical and pharmaceutical concerns boast a long record of achievement, including the famous DDT formula. Swiss marine turbines, heavy machinery and precision instruments are in enormous demand. Her graphic arts are superlative. Atomic research is in full swing. And, although landlocked, Switzerland has built up an amazing mechanism of banking and international trade which functions as precisely as a chronometer. The Swiss franc is the only currency comparable to the dollar in stability.