

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1938)
Heft: 844

Artikel: Emigration of Swiss industries [continued]
Autor: Wetzel, Oscar
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686298>

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: 05.04.2026

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

LA POLITIQUE.

En marge d'un petit incident.

Comme en janvier la politique fédérale, engourdie tant par les digestions festives que par le froid polaire, est au point mort, on eût pu craindre que la mince affaire du *Landbote* et du *Popolo d'Italia* ne fournît un aliment à des polémiques menacées d' inanition. Mais ce risque ne paraît pas trop redoutable; la paix de Noël règne encore; et soit du côté de la presse, soit dans les milieux officiels, on garde le sang-froid qu'il sied d'avoir dans cette atmosphère boréale.

Nos lecteurs savent de quoi il s'agit.

Un journal de Winterthur, le *Landbote*, a publié en décembre un article contenant des appréciations malveillantes sur l'Italie, sa population et les vertus militaires de ses soldats. Certains des termes employés par l'auteur de la diatribe — lequel est selon toute probabilité un correspondant de Berne, bien connu pour sa haine du fascisme — frisent l'absurdité et ne méritent, à notre avis, en guise de réponse, qu'un haussement d'épaules.

Cependant, la coupure en question est parvenue à Rome, et le *Popolo d'Italia*, organe du Duce, n'a pas jugé inutile de relever ces critiques et de riposter par de violentes attaques contre la presse suisse dans son ensemble. Ces attaques sont d'autant plus suprenantes qu'elles coïncident avec les déclarations bienveillantes de M. Mussolini, dans le même journal, au sujet de notre démocratie.

En effet, le chef du gouvernement italien a écrit que la Suisse, "démocratie petite, mais classique," est "l'unique pays au monde où ce mot mal famé représente une réalité compréhensible et respectable."

D'une part, donc, le Duce loue notre régime; d'autre part, il accuse notre presse entière d'être hostile à son pays et au pouvoir qu'il représente. Car, à Berne, on est persuadé que la réponse au *Landbote* est de la plume même de M. Mussolini.

Il semble à première vue qu'on s'est mépris, à Rome, sur l'importance et l'influence du journal où ont paru les appréciations incriminées. Le *Landbote* est l'organe de ces démocrates zurichois qui eurent jadis leur époque de gloire, ou du moins de notoriété, et qui se situent un peu plus à gauche que les radicaux orthodoxes. C'est le groupe auquel appartient M. le conseiller national Wettstein, personnalité politique, mais qui n'a plus guère autour de lui des comparses assez pâles. La *Zürcher Post*, où brillait autrefois un journaliste de talent, est morte de sa belle mort, et c'est le *Landbote* qui a pris sa succession, sans d'ailleurs l'égaliser. Il paraît à Winterthur, ville industrielle d'où partit le mouvement des démocrates et où il conserve quelque prestige.

Loïn de nous, on l'entend bien, l'idée de discréditer la feuille en cause. Mais vraiment, il est impossible de voir, dans un article publié là, l'expression des idées de la presse suisse en général. En signalant cette affaire à ses collègues, M. Motta n'a pas manqué de souligner le fait que, dans leur grande majorité, les journaux suisses n'ont pas une attitude hostile à l'égard de l'Italie et que l'on aurait grand tort de tirer des conclusions générales d'un incident en lui-même aussi insignifiant.

Le ministre d'Italie, sur l'ordre de son gouvernement, a fait une démarche auprès du département politique. Une nouvelle entrevue devait avoir lieu mercredi entre M. Motta et M. Tamara. Il est très probable que M. Motta en aura profité pour réduire le différend à ses justes proportions. Il n'y a pas de quoi fouetter un chat dans toute cette histoire.

Assurément, les publicistes suisses doivent se rappeler que les relations internationales étant basées sur la courtoisie réciproque, il est peu opportun de les troubler par des jugements empreints de partialité ou de malveillance. Mais nos voisins italiens ne peuvent ignorer qu'en général notre presse se garde, dans ce domaine, de tout excès. Certains organes d'extrême-gauche font exception, c'est indéniable. Mais nous vivons chez nous sous le régime de la liberté d'opinion. N'y a-t-il jamais eu, dans des journaux de la péninsule, pourtant contrôlés, des articles dont nous aurions pu nous émuover?

Léon Savary.
(Tribune de Genève.)

PERSONAL

We extend our deep sympathy to Mlle. J. Matthey, on the death of her mother, which occurred at Woodbrige (Suffolk) at the age of 84.

SWISS CLUB BIRMINGHAM.

We are informed that the Annual Banquet and Ball of the Swiss Club Birmingham has been postponed from February 19th. to March 26th.

EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

January 11th, 1938.

To the Editor of the "S.O." and Dear Compatriots,

We know that "S.O." stands for "Swiss Observer," but when the "S.O." Editor finds it necessary to send out a special "S.O.S." — as he did in his "New Year's Thoughts and Wishes" — to try and save the "S.O." from an untimely death, then I do think it is also up to us subscribers and readers to make a mighty effort to prevent such a truly "Swiss-National-Calamity" from happening.

Being in possession of absolute reliable inside information, I know it to be a fact, that this "dear little rag" of ours — which, I am sure, failed to pay its way for the last few years, despite the fact that the Editor who sacrifices nearly four days a week in assembling its news, — gets very little for his services! And yet, who — I ask — would like to miss those personal "Notes and Gleanings" that week in week out he gives us and keeps us posted with of nearly everything that is going on in our "Swiss Colony" here in England? I say it without fear of contradiction: a more ardent patriot and unselfish servant of his compatriots than is our dear "Bernese" Editor, it would be difficult to find! Therefore do let us all pull together and this in the very near future — to give him all the support he asks for. He does not ask for "Money," all that he says is required is, that about 100 to 150 New Subscribers, occasional advertisements by a few more that are in a position to use the paper's columns, and this would suffice to keep the ship afloat! Considering we are about 12,000 Swiss Nationals here in England, and the present number of subscribers is much less than a thousand, it really should not require too strenuous a beating of the "covers" to find say a couple of hundred additional ones, especially if the "Swiss" that live in the provinces — about half the total number, — would come forward in anything like the same proportion that their compatriots in the London district subscribe? When I think how great, for instance, the response was at the time the Editor sent out an S.O.S. for the "Swiss in Spain," or even in support of the "Swiss-Henley-Regatta-team," then surely it must not come to pass that we leave him in the lurch now where his appeals are for nothing more than a somewhat increased support for our dear little "Swiss Observer" itself! So will you, — all of you dear readers and subscribers, help in the way indicated and thus instill the new life that the paper so badly needs. And thank you for listening to me!

I am Sir, and dear compatriots,
yours faithfully,
W. F. GATTIKER.

10th January, 1938.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

Dear Mr. Editor,

I think you may like to know that my father, Mr. George Forrer, will attain the ripe old age of 94 on the 18th inst. As you can see from the photo, your oldest reader, both as regards age and seniority as one of the "souscripteurs-fondateurs" of your paper, is still in harness and continues to scan your and other periodicals with gusto.



Nearly seventy years ago my father was on the Committee of the City Swiss Club, at that time of comparatively recent creation, and whereas the annual banquets are now held in the most luxurious surroundings, in those early days the venue was in the drab atmosphere of the City (Cannon St. Hotel). It would seem that not too much importance was attached to those functions either, for it is on record, that a former President of the C.S.C. once clean forgot all about the

arrangements for the dinner until, the morning of the fateful day!

On another occasion the Treasurer politely but firmly refused to take charge of the collection of about £30. Possibly he found it too weighty. Anyhow in the end my father obliged by shouldering the burden!

Yours truly,
F. FORRER.

We extend our heartiest birthday wishes to the Doyen of the Swiss Colony, hoping he will remain amongst us for many more years to come. Ed.

EMIGRATION OF SWISS INDUSTRIES.

By OSCAR WETZEL.
(Continuation).

Tinned Foods.

The manufacture of tinned foods was started in Switzerland towards the end of the 19th century, but only developed into a big industry after 1900. The fact that this industry was specially meant for supplying the Swiss market did, however, not prevent some of the factories starting to manufacture on the other side of the frontiers. In 1899, Lenzbourg established the Helvetia Conserve factory at Gross-Geramy to avoid the very great import duties in Germany which really were so high as to exclude any business on a substantial scale. In 1912, the same Company started La Société Franco-Suisse des Conserves Lenzbourg at Lyons. In 1920 a factory was established in Holland, and one in Spain. Another factory was in 1923 built at Kulmbach (Bavaria), under the name of "Hero" Conserve Co.

The Maggi Concern started their first factory abroad in Singen in 1899. Successively, other foreign factories were added — Maggi, Bregenz and Vienna, Société Industrielle des spéciales alimentaires, Paris.

Other Food and Tobacco Industries.

The movement of emigration is also found in other industries. The Company of Dr. Wander of Bern, founded in 1865, which is making patent foods with the malt base (Ovaline) started factories in England, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, France, Italy and the United States. The foreign factories surpassed by far the importance of the Swiss establishments. The Franco-Suisse Malt Works at Basle are proprietors of different factories abroad — at Neutra (Czecho-Slovakia), France and Germany.

We find one after another of the Swiss industries being forced by circumstances to start working abroad. There are naturally other directions of our Swiss industries that would come under the same heading — the Chemical Industry of Switzerland which has subsidiary companies all over the world — the Paper-Making Industry — the production of bricks and tiles, an addition to the list as there is a newly built factory at Uxbridge which will soon commence operations.

After giving in the past some definite information about the different interests of Swiss firms abroad, we come now to an analysis of the reasons for such movement.

Before the French Revolution, one really cannot talk of big industries, as most of the work was done in very small enterprises, the biggest generally being a family of a certain number working together and making the same article. Later on, we find certain firms starting to give work out to home workers, as for instance in the textile industry, where a so-called manufacturer, who was the owner of, let us say, 50 looms out to 50 different families who worked them in a shed on their own ground, in a cellar or even in the living room, and delivered the final product to the manufacturer after having received all the necessary raw material from the same source.

REAL BARGAIN

HOUSE FOR SALE owing to departure, containing good size entrance hall, two large reception rooms, two large and two small bedrooms, glass covered verandah, bathroom and separate lavatory, separate kitchen and scullery. Large cellar and "Sulzer" combined central heating and domestic hot water supply system.

The property is semi-detached, leasehold, gross ground rent £8.0.0 per annum. All floors covered with lino, in good state of repair throughout, and is equipped with modern labour saving devices. Apply to: W.K. 68, Brookside Road, Golders Green. (Tel: Speedwell 4303). Any reasonable offer considered.

This kind of industry developed to quite a substantial size, so that in later years we find employers with 1,000 and more people working for them, but mostly in their own homes.

Already in 1760, we find, for instance, a Basle manufacturer by the name of Thurneisen starting a Spinning factory for silk just across the frontier in the Black Forest regions and employing 5,000 people working in their own houses.

The Napoleonic Wars brought with them an interruption of commercial relations between Switzerland and quite a number of surrounding countries, especially Germany, and Swiss exporters were forced to start production in the respective countries or lose contact with their clients abroad.

Regarding our Export industries, we find the following position just before the War. The textile industry with the exception of embroidery, had already taken a definite step in the direction of emigration. This, because the surrounding other countries had, for decades, increased their duties on imported goods in order to help their own industries.

During the last decades of the 19th century, the cotton industry especially emigrated to Italy, Germany and Austria, and the silk industry to Germany, France, Italy and the United States, but even in these industries the movement was not at a standstill because during the last 10-12 years before the War we find continuous increase in the importance of these foreign establishments, and also an increase in the number of factories being started.

The machine and metal industry, the Electrical and furniture industries, in which the movement of emigration was still in its initial stage, tried to find a footing on foreign markets by the creation of local establishments. If one considers the variety of articles manufactured in these different industries, one comes to the conclusion that the whole did not have the characteristic of mass emigration.

From the very beginning, we find that emigration has been considered more as a necessary evil, which would force sooner or later all the different export industries into its arms. During the War, we find a continuation of this same phenom, but now we have to distinguish between two sections. One group consists of the big Swiss Societies that had already started with foreign establishments and were continuing on the same road in the hope that as soon as hostilities were over the different countries would go to the extreme as regards protection of home industries. The second group consists of firms which found themselves only during the World War bound to start factories abroad.

To the first group belongs the Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company who had to try and find a substitute for the failing supplies from their European Condenseries, and therefore made arrangements in the United States for the production of milk. We find P.C.K. starting with factories in England; Sulzer and Winterthur with manufacturing concerns in Italy and France; Gardy starting a factory in Spain; Tobler starting a factory in Italy.

Under the second group we find the foundation in France, namely, Works for Central Heating installations and a factory for Ball-bearings. In Italy a factory for biscuits and similar articles.

The Period after the War.

The crisis which came after the War hit Switzerland particularly hard. The extreme depreciation of foreign exchanges and the high cost of production on the other hand built up in Switzerland nearly insurmountable difficulties for our Exporters. If one adds to this the increased customs duties and restrictions of importation, one can understand the critical position in which Swiss industries found themselves during these years. Therefore, we find a number of manufacturers who had to choose between closing up entirely and facing ruin or transferring part or the whole of their installations abroad.

On one side, a great number of firms found it really better to continue for the support of their production abroad, and others let themselves be drawn along by the desire, which was naturally understandable, to profit from the advantageous conditions in other countries.

The after-War crisis has often been called "The Crisis of Confidence." One can say that this has found its expression in Switzerland in an absence of confidence for the future of our enterprises, and this naturally produced a general feeling very much in favour of the emigration of our Swiss industries.

This crisis brought with it the most dangerous of all kinds of emigration, viz., the entire expatriation of whole establishments. This movement we find especially towards the surrounding States and particularly in France. Then followed Austria, Hungary, Holland, North America, South America, Australia, etc.

Since the end of the war, we find that it is France who has taken the majority of Swiss firms

establishing factories abroad. This is explained by the position of its exchange, as well as in the great market of France itself, its different

FACTS WHICH PROMOTE EMIGRATION OF SWISS INDUSTRIES.

1) General Considerations.

We have already found in previous chapters that certain facts of economic or juridical importance are at the bottom of this movement. We will now go more into the details of this reason.

From the beginning it must be understood that individual facts can only be "part reasons" for the movement of emigration. There is no individual reason for it, but the Swiss national economy at a given moment is the basis for such movement.

Factors in connection with Production. Death of Raw Materials.

The fact that Switzerland is blotted out of the greater part of the necessary raw materials for its industries is naturally detrimental to their development. This inconvenience has certainly been a good reason for the establishment of Swiss factories abroad. In most of the cases which we have reviewed this was one of the reasons for emigration. The following will show a few special cases.

The charge of raw materials, and their high cost in Switzerland may be:—

- one of the reasons which one takes into consideration when starting a factory abroad, or —
- a principal reason for this decision.

In the latter case, a new enterprise is generally started with a view to the acquisition of raw materials at the place where they are naturally found, and that this new acquisition shall serve to supply all the other Swiss or foreign factories of the same firm.

We can all very well understand the great importance of this point when we take into consideration the distance of our country from the sea and its lack of raw materials. For instance, for the Machine Industry which uses raw materials of heavy weight, the price of these is a vital question. Already long before the War, one noticed that this kind of factory would be one of the first ones who, sooner or later, would have to transfer a part of their production to foreign countries.

In the dye-stuff industry, where coal and its counterparts are indispensable, the problem is put in a very similar way. That is why the starting of Swiss factories of this line on German ground had first of all as a basis the production of raw materials and intermediate materials which afterwards were transferred to the Swiss establishments.

When the Zurich Silk manufacturers started factories in the north of Italy, they had to follow considerations of the same kind. As regards the manufacture of conserves by Swiss industrialists in foreign countries, producing tinned fruits, vegetables, etc., in great quantities, the same principle was adhered to.

In the case of firms starting abroad especially for the production of raw materials at cheaper prices for the Swiss Mother Company, we are generally in the presence of a Society that already has ramifications in different other countries. We have a typical case with the Conserve factory of Lenzbourg who purchased in 1920 an existing near Murcie, Spain, with the idea of supplying its factories in Switzerland, Germany and Holland with peaches and apricots — a speciality of the above-mentioned Spanish district.

Another example in the same direction is furnished by Gardy of Geneva who acquired a factory with mining right in Spain with the idea of manufacturing technical porcelain. The new factory adjoins the mine of Kaolin and will supply all the different factories of Gardy.

The high cost of raw materials as motive for the development of production in foreign countries is not always the consequence of the natural conditions of Switzerland. The manufacturers of Chocolate and Condensed Milk have asked for many years that the system of drawback on imported sugar and cocoa be introduced in Switzerland. Up to the moment they have had no success, and this fact has undoubtedly favoured to a certain measure the expatriation of the industries in question.

As late as 1922, the Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co. declared officially in their Report:—

"It is regrettable that the Swiss Government has not been able to settle favourably the question of drawbacks on certain raw materials, which would have allowed us to intensify our manufacture in Switzerland."
(To be continued.)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Friday, January 21st, at 8 o'clock — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Annual General Meeting — (supper at 3/- to be served at 6.30 p.m. sharp), at the "Foyer Suisse," 15, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION,

(A Company limited by Shares incorporated in Switzerland)

99, GRESHAM STREET, E.C.2.

and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W. 1.

Capital Paid up £6,400,000

Reserves - - £1,560,000

Deposits - - £39,000,000

All Descriptions of Banking and Foreign Exchange Business Transacted

: : Correspondents in all : :

: : parts of the World. : :

Telephone :
MUSEUM 2982

Telegrams :
Foysuisse London

FOYER SUISSE

12 UPPER BEDFORD PLACE
RUSSELL SQUARE,
LONDON, W.C.1

Quiet position in centre of London.
Central heating and hot & cold water
throughout.

Continental cooking.

Management :
SCHWEIZER VERBAND VOLKSDIENST.

MAGGI'S SOUPS

FLOURISH BECAUSE THEY NOURISH

14 DELICIOUS VARIETIES 2d PER TABLET

If not stocked by your Grocer, apply to
MARBER & Co., Sole Agents of THE MAGGI COMPANY,
1 STANHOPE STREET, LONDON, N.W.1

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"
at every meal - for Health!

Divine Services.

EGLISE SUISSE (1762).

(Langue française).

79, Endell Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.
(Near New Oxford Street).

Dimanche 16 janvier :

11h. — Mr. Philippe Blocher, cand. théol.

11h. — Ecole du Dimanche.

6h.30. — M. le Pasteur Emery.

Le Pasteur Emery reçoit le Mercredi de 11 heures à midi 30, à l'église, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2. S'adresser à lui pour tous les actes pastoraux. (téléphone : Museum 3100, domicile : Foyer Suisse, 12, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1.)

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.
(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 16. Januar 1938.

11 Uhr morgens. Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends. Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

Anfragen wegen Religions-bezw. Confirmandenstunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten an den Pfarrer der Gemeinde: C. Th. Hahn, 43, Priory Road, Bedford Park, W. 4 (Telephon: Chiswick 4156). Sprechstunden: Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.

Printed for the Proprietors, by THE FREDERICK PRINTING CO., LTD., at 23, Leonard Street, London, E.C.2.