

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: - (1941)

Heft: 994

Rubrik: International Red Cross Committee

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: 04.04.2026

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

TOWARDS THE CREATION OF AN INSTITUTE FOR SWISS ABROAD.

The President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, an organisation for Swiss living abroad, called a conference of all representatives of societies and bodies interested in this matter at the beginning of this month in Lausanne. Up to the moment of going to press we have had no report on its proceedings. However, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* published an article on October 31st, dealing with the problem which Professor Lätt, the President of the *Auslandschweizer* Committee, proposed to discuss, and we gather that quite a number of educational institutions amongst others the High School for Commercial Studies in St. Gall and the Swiss Mercantile Society, have given attention to the question of preparing Swiss people for careers abroad. They have accorded it some place in their syllabus and although their attempt seems to concentrate mostly on preparing representatives in the trade and banking line, the necessity for special and moral equipment of others wishing to go abroad, has lately been given some attention.

Professor I. Egli (Meilen), who has lived in Turkey for many years, recently published a Survey of the openings for Swiss in that country, pointing out that Turkey was one of the more promising countries in that respect. It is known that Swiss University people have contributed largely and in various fields towards making the University of Istanbul what it is to-day and, it is fair to assume, have thus established a link between those Swiss wishing to take up a position there and the Turkish people.

Dr. Werner Imhof of the Secretariat de la Nouvelle Société Helvétique has recently expressed himself on the same subject. He emphasised that in whatever sphere of activity Swiss citizens might find themselves abroad, they should always be aware that their country has made and is still making a valuable contribution in the field of political thought. Its very existence is proof that our political institutions have attained a degree of maturity which in itself should provide the Swiss who knows enough about it and is conscious thereof, with a background that may serve to strengthen existing bonds between Switzerland and his adopted country.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COMMITTEE.

Instructive details about the present constitution and powers of this Committee are given in the "Manchester Guardian" (October 28th):

This remarkable body was formed in 1863 as a self-constituted group of Swiss citizens. All its members since then have been Swiss and serve for three years each. New members are co-opted to fill vacancies; they are not delegates or representatives of any other nation or body. It is because the neutrality and independence of the committee are thus safeguarded that it has such unique authority.

Its delegates in other countries have remarkable powers. They have complete freedom of movement; they can report without censorship; they can interview prisoners without witnesses. The committee itself acts as the trusted mutual agent of warring Governments, receiving their official lists of prisoners, inspecting their camps, and asking for improvements.

The work of the committee is far bigger in this war than it ever was before. Its Prisoners of War Central Agency, for instance, employs 3,500 people, almost all of them Swiss and four-fifths of them unpaid. Its chief work is to collect and pass on information about prisoners of war, and its card index of prisoners has eight million cards. It sends 6,000 replies a day to inquiries from prisoners' families. It notifies deaths of prisoners and forwards personal effects. It sends enormous quantities of food and comforts to prison camps and has been the channel through which a quarter of a million books have reached them.

The committee has never in previous wars had so big a task as now in circulating news about civilian refugees, of whom, as of prisoners of war, it keeps a card index.

In short, this organisation of Swiss private citizens, working without hope of fame or reward, is responsible for most of what kindness and mercy still remain in the countries conquered by Germany.

A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR WINS HIS APPEAL.

Among the cases before the Northern Appellate Tribunal figured a compatriot who appealed against "non-combatant Military Service; the Tribunal ordered that he should be discharged from the Army and be conditionally registered as conscientious objector to all forms of military service. The following report is taken from the Manchester "Guardian," November 7th, 1941.

P.H.W. said he was entitled to claim Swiss nationality, but when the Ministry of Labour asked him whether he wished to do so he replied that he did not. He preferred to rest his objection to military service entirely on religious grounds. He was a confirmed member of the Swiss Protestant Church in London.

At the time of his appearance before the London tribunal he was working as an invoice clerk to a firm of timber merchants, and it was stated that the London tribunal regarded that as inconsistent with an objection to non-combatant service. He was dismissed from that work when he told his employers that he could not obey the order of the tribunal, and he joined a "non-profit-making" market-gardening community. He had put his private savings into it, it was said, and had lived on about fourteen shillings a week so as to develop the holding.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

In an article entitled "The Beleaguered Country" which was reprinted from "The Sphere" in our issue of the 26th September, 1941, a statement was made that the Sulzer Works in Winterthur, the Brown Boveri Works in Baden and the Oerlikon Corporation in Zurich are working *exclusively* for Germany.

The London representatives of above three Swiss firms have protested to us to the effect that this statement is contrary to the facts. From the initial editorial remarks to the article published in our issue of the 26th September, readers will have understood that we questioned the correctness of some of the statements contained therein, and the one referred to above is a case in point.