

# Swiss colonies in all parts of the world

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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED IN 1919 BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

## The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

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## SWISS COLONIES IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD

A short while ago the Annual Report of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad was sent out. Forty-five years ago the New Helvetic Society in Switzerland created the Secretariat, and ever since our interests have been in excellent hands. Dr. iur. H. J. Halbheer, M.A., is the Director, and Monsieur René Bovey, lic.phil. the Secretary-General. The staff consists of nearly twenty, including those responsible for the "Echo" (periodical for the Swiss abroad), the Solidarity Fund, and the Service for the Young, etc.

At the moment when this issue appears, the Secretariat will have finished the preparations for the Annual Assembly of the Swiss Abroad, and compatriots from all over the world will be gathering in Lausanne. At the same time, there will be the Delegates' Meeting of the Solidarity Fund, and a full day will be devoted by the Commission of the Swiss Abroad (ASK) to business concerning the Swiss Communities abroad. As most readers are aware, the ASK is a kind of Parliament to which Colonies send their delegates. This body consists of some seventy men (and one woman), responsible members living in Switzerland, official colony representatives and their deputies, who meet twice a year under the chairmanship of Dr. G. Schürch.

It is estimated that about 250,000 Swiss citizens live abroad, including dual nationals, but not taking into account the large temporary numbers of students, trainees and domestic workers who are not registered with the Swiss Embassies and Consulates (though they ought to be).

The Swiss Communities in Europe are the biggest. Of the nearly thirty countries where there are Swiss Colonies on European territory, France has the largest, well over 90,000, dual nationals included. There are some 30,000 in Western Germany, 17,000 in Italy and 13,000 in Great Britain. This makes about 180,000 for the whole of Europe.

The whole total for Asia is no more than 5,000, Israel and India accounting for the largest Swiss Communities in that part of the world. The picture for Africa is about the same as for Great Britain, the largest Swiss Colony being in South Africa (over 3,000). U.S.A. (20,000), Canada (12,000) and Argentina (10,000) are the strongest groups in the Americas, whilst nearly 6,000 Swiss live in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania.

There are a number of Swiss schools abroad, mainly in Italy and South America. They are subsidised by the Swiss Confederation.

Most Communities have some kind of news sheet or bulletin. There are only a few Colony newspapers, two in Buenos Aires, one in San Francisco, two in New York and our "Swiss Observer" in Great Britain. It has been customary to exchange papers, and this allows a fair insight into the life of the Colonies in other parts of the world.

The bulletin of the Swiss in Belgium and Luxembourg is called "Le Courrier Suisse", and from it I have gathered that the Swiss Gymnastic Society of Brussels was successful at the Federal Gymnastic Contest in Lucerne last year, that there is a "Union Suisse et l'Union Sportive Suisse" in Brussels, that the Swiss Society of Antwerp held a golf championship in which some thirty people took part, that the Swiss Ambassador gave a reception to the Swiss Community on 1st August, and that the Swiss mobilised in 1914 met to commemorate their departure from Belgium fifty years ago.

The "Messager Suisse de France" is a monthly publication of forty-eight pages. It carries an almost full-page photo on the front page—I remember the impressive picture of the swearing in of Monsieur Roger Bonvin as Federal Councillor. From its pages I learned that the Colony has a special Christmas Celebration, and that this year's First of August was celebrated on 28th June already by way of a "Fête Champêtre et Patriotique" in the Park of the Ecole du Montcel at Jouy-en-Josas. The celebration included a Protestant and a Catholic service, and it lasted from 10 a.m. until 7.30 p.m.

The Swiss in France have founded a special group for the study of Swiss problems. The "Messager" reports on their findings. Their manifesto appeared in the last issue of the "Swiss Observer". The last "Messager" gave a detailed report on the Congress of the Swiss in France on 23rd and 24th May, which was attended by Federal Councillor Bonvin, Monsieur T. Chopard, President of the New Helvetic Society in Switzerland, and a number of personalities of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad in Berne.

The "Messager des Suisses de France" gives news of the activities of the many societies dispersed throughout France. There is a Swiss Chamber of Commerce in France, and last May, a Swiss Fortnight was held in Paris.

No Colony paper reaches me from Italy—there are two bulletins in Genoa and Turin—but it is well known that the Swiss Colony in Italy is most efficiently organised.

The Swiss Colonies in Germany have no newspaper or news bulletins as far as can be seen from the annual report of the ASS, on the other hand, two are published in Austria.

The "Helvetia y Le Courrier Suisse" is sent to me from Buenos Aires. It is mainly in Spanish, but carries news and articles in French and German. One of these was about the visit to a Swiss school "Colegio Suizo" in Linea Cuchilla, Misiones. The parish was started during the war and the school was founded in 1961. The house and the church are built in Swiss style, blending strangely with the sub-tropical palm trees of Misiones. It is a secondary school of an agricultural nature, and most of

the pupils are Argentinian. It is a Swiss contribution to the development of Argentina.

"The Swiss American" is the monthly "official organ of the North American Swiss Alliance", a strong fraternal benefit organisation with men and women members.

The "Swiss Journal" is the weekly paper for the Swiss on the Pacific Coast and is published in San Francisco. On the back it carries a "Vereinskalender" which tells readers addresses and names of officers as well as other interesting data. There is a Bowling Club in San Francisco, an "Aelpler Gruppe Inc." in Newark, California, also a "Feldschützen Verein". The "San Joaquin Valley Swiss Echoes Singing Society" is at Ripon in California. There is a Swiss Ladies' Society in Los Angeles, a "Schweizer Schützenverein Wilhelm Tell" at Holtville in California, a Ladies' Society at Tacoma, a Swiss Ladies' Chorus "Alpenglühén" in Portland, Oregon. At Seattle in Washington a Male Chorus "Alpenroesli" has its home, and there is the Portland (Oregon) Swiss "Turnverein". There are many more, and the Swiss Athletic Society of Los Angeles won the coveted General Guisan Trophy for marksmen of the Swiss Abroad (1964). The American Swiss still enjoy our native wrestling, and "Schwingfeste" are nothing unusual. They arrange "William Tell Festivals" and other patriotic gatherings, and the Christmas celebrations and festivities are manyfold. There was a photo in one of last year's issues of the "Swiss Journal", which showed the participants of the "Pacific Coast Swiss Singing and Yodeling Festival" in Seattle—I counted about two hundred of them, many in national costumes, and there were three thousand visitors!

The "Amerikanische Schweizer Zeitung" is the weekly gazette of the American Swiss. It was founded in 1868 and is published in New York by the Swiss Publishing Co. Inc. It is larger than the "Swiss Journal", but like the latter looks very much a newspaper. It, too, is in English, with some contributions in our national languages. It carries a woman's page including recipes.

There are many Swiss societies in that part of U.S.A., benefit and benevolent societies (with a women's division). There are bands and choirs, the Swiss Mercantile Society of New York, the "Bäre Club" of the Bernese, an "Appenzeller Verein", gymnasts, ski fans, oarsmen—all have a chance of meeting regularly amongst fellow countrymen and women. There is even a Swiss Country Club, Canton 6, Ohio, 2401 Swiss Avenue, S.W.—"Eigentum der drei

Schweizer Vereine". There is a "Schweizer Halle" in Cleveland, Ohio, where the Male Choir, the Gymnasts and the Swiss Dramatic Club meet. ("Schweizer und Schweizerinnen, schliesst Euch den Vereinen an!" is printed at the foot of the advert.).

And all these Swiss organisations, and a good many more not mentioned, organise their outings ("Record Attendance at Swiss Colony Outing—2000"), festivals ("Saengertag at Swiss Home, Mt. Kisco", "Wilhelm Tell Festival at New Glarus"), competitions ("25th National Turnfest in Milwaukee"). But here are also Presidents' Assemblies—Dr. Halbeer, Director of the ASS visited several groups during his tour of U.S.A. And there is a Committee for the Young.

News which I have read in the "Amerikanische Schweizer Zeitung" ranged from happenings at home to reports on events like the "American Swiss Friendship Dinner" and the "Dedication of the New Development Research Center of CIBA Pharmaceutical Company in Summit, New Jersey". Prominent Swiss are mentioned, i.e. Dr. Henry Mohaupt in Fort Worth, who discovered a new explosive supposed to be ten times stronger than dynamite, Dr. O. H. Ammann, designer of the George Washington Bridge in New York.

And now New York is to have a Swiss Center by 1966. The "Amerikanische Schweizer Zeitung" said (with photo):—

**NEW SWISS CENTER**—This striking 11-story building at 608 Fifth Avenue on the southwest corner at 49th Street will be the location of the newly-formed Swiss Center. According to Dr. Victor H. Umbricht, president of Swiss Center, Inc., the Center is meant to become a landmark at one of the best locations in New York City from which to project and foster Swiss commercial, cultural, travel, financial, and industrial interests. The Swiss Center was formed by 14 Swiss companies. The building is being leased from Robert Goelet, owner of the structure, for an original term of 17 years.

And with this piece of splendid news we return to London where a Swiss Centre is being built at the moment. Swiss Communities in many parts of the world which have their own homes and centres are hoping with the Swiss Colony in Great Britain that our Centre, too, will become a true social and cultural meeting place for our fellow countrymen in the British Isles.

*Mariann*

## IT HAPPENED IN THE CANTON OF ZURICH

The fourteenth volume on the census in 1960 issued by the Federal Statistical Office comprises 293 pages on the Canton of Zurich. Between 1950 and 1960, the population of the eleven districts of the Canton increased by 22.6% from 777,002 to 952,304. We know that since then the million mark has been reached, and on 1st January last, the figure stood at 1,019,102. Figures show that the rate of growth has slowed down. The town of Zurich showed 801 inhabitants fewer than on 1st January 1963, the new total was 439,983, but the figure for June shows a new increase to 445,680. The town of Winterthur had an increase for the same period of 704 and counted 86,658 inhabitants at the beginning of this year. The Commune of Dietikon whose population was only 7,132 in 1950, registered the twenty-thousandth inhabitant on 23rd April. The biggest increase, however, took place at Oberengstringen: 229.1% in ten years.

The Canton of Zurich also showed a decline in the number of newly erected flats for the first time in 1963; 8,571 is 14% less than last year. Nevertheless, the average of the 'fifties has still been surpassed by 1,577 flats. Many of the country communes, however, show a considerable increase in the building of houses.

There is a great shortage of rooms for students — the Canton has made grants for students' homes. Credits for scholarships have been increased considerably, and new school buildings have gone up or are being planned in many parts of the Canton: 73 million francs for a new cantonal school in Zurich, nearly ten million francs for a school at Seebach, 15.4 million francs for a high school at Zurich-Stettbach, a trade college at Rueti and a school at Meilen. This Commune has also made a grant towards the creation of a "Technikum" at Rapperswil. The new EMPA buildings were opened in the autumn; these new