

Towards co-operation

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1931)**

Heft 497

PDF erstellt am: **20.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691131>

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TOWARDS CO-OPERATION.

The letters which were published in the last two issues of the "Swiss Observer," under the heading "The Editor's Postbag," have dealt in a cautious manner, with a subject which is of no mean interest to the Swiss Colony.

One of our correspondents deals with the "Surfeit" of festivities, and if one passes in review the numerous functions, which have taken place during the last six months, one can not help but find some justification in his remarks; one might have reasonably assumed, that the hard times, through which we are passing, would to a certain degree affect the social activities of the Colony, but by comparing the number of functions of the previous season, I find, that the recent season has exceeded them by over half a dozen. Our friend's suggestion "to amalgamate the whole of the festivities into one big affair," looks on the surface quite feasible, and might be an easy way out, but I do not consider it a happy solution, nor do I think it would be a practicable one.

I should like to suggest a less drastic curtailment, one which I consider might have a better chance of succeeding, it is that some of the Societies, whose aims and activities lie approximately in the same sphere, should, by mutual consent, combine at least some of their functions, and thus lighten the financial burden both to their exchequers as well as to their respective members. The strain to some of the Societies during the last social season, has been acutely felt, and the funds of more than one Society have reached an alarmingly low level.

We may even go one step further, and ask ourselves the searching question, whether there are not too many Societies in existence (there are nearly twenty Societies, clubs and institutions), and whether it would not be advisable to follow the example of some of the large Societies at home, which embrace in their fold various sections, covering a multitude of activities, but which, although almost independent, come under the same general administration. It seems to me that in accepting such a solution an enormous amount of energy and money could be saved, which, under present conditions is often wasted.

Our second correspondent has no doubt hit the nail on the head, when saying that "all our Societies and clubs suffer from the same ailment—the impossibility of replacing the inevitable "dechets" by fresh blood," there is the crux of the whole matter. I do not think I am giving any secret away by mentioning, that more than one Society has, and has had considerable difficulties in filling the more important offices in their administration, largely due to the fact, that for the last few years, the various institutions had repeatedly to fall back on some of their old members, who have with short intervals, continually served in one or another capacity. Year in and year out one finds more or less the same faces at the head of Societies, this is hardly fair either to the Society or to the individual; younger people, and foremost new ideas are required; in drawing incessantly from the old stock, there is a great danger, that the régime becomes autocratic, which in return, creates, as we have so often witnessed lately, an opposition purely for opposition's sake, thus becoming instead of a help a hindrance to the Society. Unfortunately there is but little hope that the restrictions with regard to immigration will be made any easier, and we have to look in other directions for solving our problems.

The example of the wellknown "Swiss centre," which our correspondent mentions and which is threatened with oblivion is a striking, although sad example that "all is not well."

I have no ambition to assume the rôle of saviour of the Swiss Colony; being fully aware of my limitations, but I have a sincere and genuine wish to give my aid in helping to solve at least some of the problems which confront us. The question therefore arises:

What is there to be done? We are not solving difficulties by expressing our sympathy to those who have been hit by adverse conditions. The Colony has faced knotty and difficult problems during and immediately after the war, and these have been solved in a most creditable manner; and I feel certain, that we shall also be able to tackle the present problems. Many of the speakers at the various recent dinners have in most eloquent words conveyed the message of their readiness to collaborate with one another for the welfare of the whole community, these words, I am absolutely convinced, were uttered in all sincerity, and with a genuine wish to help whenever the occasion should arise. The time has now come, when deeds should follow words.

In order that these various subjects could be usefully and advantageously discussed I should suggest that a "round table conference" should be called in, where all the Societies, Clubs and Institutions should be represented by one or two delegates, to meet in a friendly conclave. I have on purpose not used the word "commission" which seems to me to be too formal and official. I have in mind a sort of family gathering, (are we not really one big family?), where each member can give vent to his feelings and opinions.

These delegates should not receive any formal instructions from their respective Societies, but should attend this gathering with an open and unbiassed mind, guided solely by the wish to be of some help to their countrymen.

I again purposely desist in putting forward any suggestions at this stage, so as not to jeopardize future possible deliberations or to create the belief that I have been commissioned by this or that Society; as a matter of fact this article is inspired solely by my personal conviction, and I put it before our readers for what it is worth. I feel sure that the Editor is in full accord with me, when I state that the columns of the Swiss Observer are at the disposal of all those who think that they can make any useful suggestions towards solving the difficulties which require a speedy settlement.

One final word I should like to address to all those who are interested in the future welfare of our Colony, which is one of the most important ones amongst all the colonies.

Let us try and find a way out in perfect harmony, without bias, selfishness and petty jealousies, let some of those lofty ideals to which we have so often given vent, be our guiding star, and I feel sure that our deliberations will be beneficial to the whole community. Let us, for once, drop that continuous grumbling, leg-pulling and bickering, and follow the example of our beloved country which has become great through promoting the spirit of good will towards mankind in general and to our co-patriots in particular. Let us find the man who has the courage, fact and ability to call in a gathering and direct its deliberation in the spirit of a deep patriotic conviction. A kind providence has given us such men, let them come forward to lead us to happier and more prosperous times, and then our future will look brighter and our motto: "One for all, all for one" will find a glorious justification and will not remain merely an empty slogan.

ST.

MADAME PARAVICINI'S "AT HOME."

The private residence of the Swiss Minister at Bryanston Square, W.1., was the scene of a most successful gathering last Wednesday, the 29th inst., when Madame Paravicini entertained a number of Swiss "de passage" to a dance. The Presidents of the different Swiss Societies in our Colony were also invited and the Company was joined by the personnel of the Legation.

Dancing continued from 9 p.m. till 2 a.m. with short intervals. Madame Paravicini who an hour previously had arrived from Paris with her son and two daughters excelled in her desire to renew acquaintance with everybody present after her prolonged absence. Much amusement was caused by the "baloon" dance, the final of which, curiously enough had to be fought between the Swiss Minister partnered by Mme. Golay and his chancellor M. P. Hilfiker partnered by Mlle. Hagen, the latter carrying off the honours of the bout. Vincent Paravicini and his two sisters who were evidently responsible for the successful arrangements evoked general admiration.

There were present:

M. and Mme. Golay, M. and Mme. Boehringer, M. and Mme. Conrad, M. and Mme. Campart, M. and Mme. Paschoud, M. and Mme. Dupraz, M. and Mme. de Wolff, M. and Mme. Christen, M. and Mme. de Bourg, Pasteur and Mme. Hahn, M. and Mme. Vogel-Sarasin.

Mesdemoiselles: Meyrat (2), Hagen, Zaeher, T. Laroche, Palliser, Schiffmann, Kleinert, R. M. Burckardt, Morien, Helen Staehelin, Bonnet, Gunther, von Bergen, Wasem, Spring, Wisard, Krické, Barbezat.

Messieurs: G. A. Ronus, Rolf Gmür, Max Stutz, A. Koch, Franz Walter, H. Senn A. Hilfiker, Ch. Staehelin, Ch. Haller, S. Schwelzer, Schmidt, J. Zimmermann, Karl Fueter, A. Wildberger, Grand d'Hauteville, H. Weidmann, Marchand, R. Schmid, Pierre Lansel, Fritz Wanner, de Sonnenberg, Micheli, Rezzonico, Hilfiker, Schneider, Magnin, Jenny, Kilcheimann, Gertsch and Sermier.

The following were unavoidably prevented from being present:

M. and Mme. Suter, M. and Mme. Chapuis, M. and Mme. E. Speiser, M. and Mme. R. Perrot, M. and Mme. Staehelin, M. and Mme. Vogel-Sarasin, M. and Mme. Egli, M. and Mme. Barbezat.

Mesdemoiselles: Hoffmann, J. Sarasin, Suter, A. L. Hedinger, Th. de Dardel, E. Ferrer, Notari.

Messieurs: Pierre Savoie, Charnaux, Ch. Ramus, Haccius, Notari.

OBITUARY.



CONRAD ERHARD
SCHNEIDER-HALL
IN BASLE,
10th APRIL 1931.



A week after Good Friday, one of the oldest and most sympathetic amongst the prominent Swiss business men of London passed away under tragic circumstances. He was staying in Basle over Easter making the necessary preparations for taking up residence in his beloved Arlesheim, as he had intended to retire there at the end of the year. He was full of almost youthful enthusiasm and in joyful anticipation of the realisation of his plans which, owing to a seizure, came to so sudden and sad an end. Although his death was so unexpected, Providence was kind to him in more ways than one. For he was spared just long enough to enjoy to the full the pleasure of anticipation, he was with his family and near relatives and his many friends and moreover the call came to him in his native city which he so dearly loved. Such a homegoing must surely have taken much of the sting out of it.

Erhard Schneider was born in Basle on the 13th of October, 1876, attended school in Basle (Real-Schule) and served his apprenticeship in the old wholesale Drug Stores Bernoulli, and while comparatively young went to Liverpool where he was employed in the Cotton Trade. It was here that he formed a lasting friendship with three young Swiss, likewise employed in the cotton business. It was, indeed, touching to hear him, in later years, constantly talk of these friends to whom he had become so attached. One of them pre-deceased him a few years ago, but the surviving two friends mourned his loss at the graveside.

During his stay in England he made the acquaintance of his wife-to-be, who comes from Bradford. Shortly afterwards they were married and their exceedingly happy married life lasted for thirty years. There were three children, two sons and one daughter, who are all grown up and the sons already occupy good and independent positions. Erhard Schneider loved his children; no father could have loved his children more than he did. He entered fully into their lives and rejoiced in their later successful development.

His father owned an old established Forwarding Agency in Basle, and on his equally sudden death, Erhard, who was "Hardy" to his relatives and near friends, was compelled to leave England and return to Basle to take over his father's business. He stayed there until in 1912, in response to my urgent request, he came to London as Co-Partner and subsequently Co-Director in the European General Express Company Ltd.

For fully fourteen years, that is until the latter part of 1926, we worked in the same room at desks facing each other. During this long period we had many experiences together, both pleasant and unpleasant but never could it be said of us, what would have been the most unpleasant of all, that we did not agree. Nobody could boast that he had ever been able to create serious misunderstanding between us; and the memory of this association and the ideal working together will remain with me ever fragrant.

Was it not Goethe who said "Edel sei der Mensch, hilfreich und gut"? This saying ran like a "Leitmotif" throughout the life of my dear departed friend who, undoubtedly had the most ideal conception of friendship a man possibly could have.

In conclusion I would say to all my old London friends: "Honour his memory because he was one of the best among us; if ever any man deserved it, it is he."

H. Siegmund, Basle.