

Message to the Swiss abroad

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enough? Let us pause for a minute and examine our obligations. Many more are the tangible proofs of patriotism we could give right here within the Colony. I need only mention our Churches and Welfare Organisations. Soon we shall be called upon to play our part in the creation of a cultural and social Swiss Centre in London. Through supporting the work in the Swiss communities in Great Britain we can prove that we know the meaning of collaboration.

And what better medium have we to demonstrate our good will than the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad? Only a very small percentage of our compatriots living in Great Britain have joined it. Those who have so far stood aloof feel there is no need to join as one is hardly likely to suffer loss of livelihood through political upheaval

in this country. Where is the sense of solidarity towards our compatriots in other countries less fortunate than ourselves? How is this attitude compatible with the Swiss motto, "One for all — all for one"?

But none of us, whether a member or not, has reason to be complacent. For every one of us there is scope for further effort. Humbly we must realize on this our National Day that God has not only given us the beautiful homeland which we love but also the responsibility as human beings and patriots. May God guide us that our deeds and behaviour will be governed by the sense of unselfish devotion and loyalty without which no man (or people) can fulfil his obligations in the place where God has put him.

MESSAGE TO THE SWISS ABROAD

By the President of the Swiss Confederation

Botschaft des Bundespräsidenten

an die Schweizer im Ausland zum 1. August 1963

Liebe Landsleute,

Der 1. August gibt uns dieses Jahr ganz besonders Anlass, uns auf die Grundlagen unseres Staatswesens zu besinnen und über seine Stellung in der Welt nachzudenken, die oft unzeitgemäss erscheinen mag. Wir müssen uns noch mehr als in der Vergangenheit anstrengen, das von den Vorfahren Ererbte zu bewahren und gleichzeitig mit den Veränderungen der heutigen Zeit Schritt zu halten. Die Bewahrung und Weitergabe all dessen, was unsere Eigenart ausmacht und uns erst die Schweiz zu unserer Heimat werden lässt, ist unsere wichtigste Aufgabe. Sie darf uns indessen nicht hindern, mit der Umwelt solidarisch zu sein und mit ihr zusammenzuwirken.

Die Schweiz ist ein Kleinstaat, der seine Existenz nur durch die unerschütterliche Hochhaltung und Verteidigung von Recht und Freiheit rechtfertigen und behaupten kann. Unsere Heimat muss dabei nicht nur auf die Inlandschweizer, sondern in ganz besonderem Ausmass auch auf die Auslandschweizer zählen können. Ihr, liebe Landsleute im Ausland, seid aufgerufen, durch Eure Einstellung und Eure Arbeit dort, wo Ihr Euch aufhaltet, die Schweiz und ihre Ideale zu vertreten. Die Schwierigkeiten, denen Ihr tagtäglich begegnet, sind zahlreich. Dadurch, dass Ihr sie mit Mut und Tatkraft überwindet, beweist Ihr Euer Schweizertum. Die Heimat ist stolz auf Euch und dankt Euch für Eure Treue.

An diesem Gedenktag übermittle ich Euch im Namen des Bundesrates und des ganzen Schweizervolkes den Gruss der fernen Heimat und wünsche Euch und Euren Familien Glück und Erfolg.

WILLY SPÜHLER,
Bundespräsident.

Federal Councillor Willy Spuehler refers to the principles of Switzerland's structure and of her place in the world. The Swiss have to make even greater efforts than in the past to preserve what they have inherited, and at the same time adapt themselves to modern changes. To uphold all that is good in the make-up of the homeland is a most important task. But it must not hinder the Swiss from showing solidarity and co-operation with the world around them.

Switzerland is a small country which can only exist by relentlessly defending right and freedom. In this she

Message du Président de la Confédération

aux Suisses à l'étranger à l'occasion du 1er août 1963

Mes chers compatriotes,

Le 1er août nous offre tout spécialement cette année l'occasion de méditer sur les bases de la raison d'être de notre pays et de réfléchir à sa position dans le monde, bien que cette dernière puisse très souvent paraître inactuelle. Nous devons nous efforcer encore plus que par le passé de sauvegarder l'héritage de nos ancêtres et en même temps de maintenir le pas avec les modifications de l'heure présente. Notre tâche la plus importante est la préservation et transmission de tout ce qui constitue notre particularité et fait de la Suisse notre patrie. Elle ne doit toutefois pas nous empêcher d'être solidaire avec notre entourage et de collaborer avec lui.

La Suisse est un petit Etat qui peut justifier et soutenir son existence seulement par le maintien et la défense des principes inébranlables de justice et de liberté. Notre patrie doit donc compter non seulement sur les Suisses de l'intérieur mais aussi dans une mesure toute particulière sur ceux de l'étranger. Vous, chers compatriotes de l'étranger, êtes appelés à représenter la Suisse et son idéal là où vous vous trouvez par votre attitude et votre travail. Les difficultés que vous affrontez journellement sont nombreuses. Que vous soyez à même de les surmonter avec courage et persévérance prouve votre appartenance à ce qui est suisse. La patrie est fière de vous et vous remercie de votre fidélité.

En ce jour de commémoration, je vous apporte, au nom du Conseil fédéral et du peuple suisse tout entier, le salut de la patrie lointaine et vous adresse mes vœux de bonheur et de succès pour vous et les vôtres.

Le Président de la Confédération:
WILLY SPÜHLER.

must be able to rely not only on the Swiss at home but in particular also on the Swiss abroad. President Spuehler appeals to us to represent Switzerland and her ideals by our attitude and our work wherever we may be. He says that it is by overcoming our many difficulties with courage and determination that we prove our Swiss hallmark. Our homeland, he continues, is proud of us and thanks us for our loyalty.

He concludes by transmitting in the name of the Federal Council and the whole country greetings and best wishes for happiness and success to us and our families.

Messaggio del Presidente della Confederazione agli Svizzeri all'estero in occasione del 1° agosto 1963

Cari compatrioti,

Il primo agosto, in quest'anno particolarmente, ci dà occasione di richiamare alla memoria i principi e le basi dello stato svizzero e di considerarne la posizione nel mondo, che spesso sembra esser fuor del tempo. Ancor più che nel passato dobbiamo sforzarci di difendere il patrimonio che i nostri padri ci hanno tramandato e nel contempo di andare di pari passo con i mutamenti dell'epoca moderna. Il nostro compito più importante oggi è di conservare e trasmettere alle generazioni future tutto ciò che costituisce la nostra particolarità e che in primo luogo fa della Svizzera la nostra patria. Questo compito non dovrà comunque impedire di sentirci solidari con il mondo intorno a noi e di cooperare con esso.

La Svizzera è un piccolo paese, e può giustificare e affermare la sua esistenza solamente con il mantenimento e con la difesa irremovibili dei principi del diritto e della

libertà. La nostra patria deve dunque contare non solamente sugli Svizzeri che stanno nel paese, ma anche e in special modo su quelli che sono all'estero. Voi, cari compatrioti all'estero, siete chiamati a rappresentare la Svizzera ed i suoi ideali dove vivete, con la vostra attitudine e con il vostro lavoro. Numerose sono le difficoltà nelle quali vi imbattete ogni giorno. Superandole coraggiosamente e con energia, voi date la prova di attaccamento ai principi elveticici. La patria è fiera di voi e vi ringrazia della vostra fedeltà.

In questo giorno commemorativo vi trasmetto, nel nome del Consiglio Federale e di tutto il popolo svizzero il saluto della patria lontana, augurando felicità e prosperità a voi e alle vostre famiglie.

Il Presidente della Confederazione:
WILLY SPÜHLER.

THE DAY SWITZERLAND WAS BORN

By LEE EUGSTER

In 1291, King Albert I of Austria refused to recognise the letters of freedom granted to Uri and Schwyz. This suppression of their rights caused great dissatisfaction amongst the people of the Waldstätte, who finally sent delegates to the isolated meadow called Rütli, between the steep, wooded slopes of the mountains falling down to the shores of Lake Uri.

In this secret place, the men of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwald deliberated how to get rid of the hated Austrians, their oppressors, and swore an "everlasting alliance" to assist one another in all circumstances and to tolerate no foreign lords in their valleys and accept no laws made by judges who were not men of their peoples.

The Pact, written in Latin, beginning with the words: "In the name of the Lord, amen", was signed on 1st August 1291. Switzerland was born. The original is still kept in the Federal Record Office in the town of Schwyz.

Since paths were scarce in this mountainous region and it was difficult to communicate between the valleys, its inhabitants were in the habit of lighting bonfires on top of the mountains to signal danger, call for help or indicate the favourable moment to strike at an unwary enemy.

When commemorating the birth of our country, on 1st August, we light bonfires in every town, village and hamlet to honour the courage of our forefathers.

Foreign visitors often wonder why we Swiss have not made it an official holiday but start celebrating the event of our freedom only after nightfall. Well, one reason is that we want to keep up the tradition of gathering around the bonfires and celebrate in a quiet and dignified fashion. Since the end of the last World War, most shops and offices of the big cities close in the afternoon. What happens? In this age of motors, the city folk profit by this free afternoon and give little thought to the real meaning of the day.

When all over the country every single churchbell starts swinging its melodious message of joy and thanksgiving at 8 p.m., these restless people are either too far from home or too tired or excited to attend the quiet ceremonies.

During my childhood we were at grandmother's farm at this time of the year. All day we worked hard to gather the golden sheaves of ripe wheat. But, to be ready for the

celebration, work stopped early that day and, when the cows were milked and tended, everybody dressed in his best garb, the women in the Bernese costumes. After a festive supper, all the folk of the farms walked down to where an obelisk standing on a knoll above the village of Neuenegg and the valley of Singine commemorates the victorious battle which a handful of soldiers from the Simmental waged against the armies of Napoleon in 1798. Many of them are buried in a common grave in a nearby grove of tall trees. But on the base of the obelisk one can read the sad words: "They won the battle, but lost their fatherland". This alludes to the fact that whilst they were beating the enemy, the aristocratic city of Berne surrendered.

On this sacred spot the school-children built the bonfire with dead wood they had gathered and, when the churchbells stopped ringing, the Minister said a prayer, the Mayor gave a patriotic speech, the village band played and we all sang whilst the flames of the bonfire leapt high into the air. Across the valley of the Singine we saw the fires of the villages of Canton Fribourg and those which the herdsmen on the pastures on top of the Alps of Fribourg had lit to celebrate in communion with those who remained below. It was a solemn and impressive celebration. Afterwards, the younger generation went to the village to dance and the old folk took small children home to bed.

Years later, when, accidentally, we remained in town during the summer vacation, we went on the first of August to the Minster place where the ceremony was to be held. But what a disappointment! We, who were used to the quiet celebration in the country, were disturbed by the milling, noisy crowd around the bonfire which we could hardly see. We could not hear the speeches and there was not much singing.

I could never get used to celebrating 1st August amongst city crowds and therefore I go to some nearby village or, in Geneva, take the boat which cruises along the shores to the Petit Lac.

In almost every village they light their fires near the boat-landing, and from the boat one can see also all the fires on the surrounding mountains.

(From the "Weekly Tribune", Geneva.)
(By courtesy, Swiss National Tourist Office.)