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About the death of Alice Briod, former Director of the SSA

A Lifetime of Untiring Dedication



On December 12, 1989, at Ecublens near Morges, the death occurred of Miss Alice Briod, at the age of 95. She had in the past been for many years the Director of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad. She had spent the last years of her life in a home for the blind, together with her sister. The sister had lost her sight, but Alice Briod could fortunately see, and right up to her demise, she devoted herself to welfare activities on behalf of persons in need of help – reading to them, talking with them and generally taking care of them. This was in accordance with her character, her origins and her upbringing. She came from an old Vaudois family from Lucens in the Broye Valley, and studied law in Lausanne – a very unusual activity for a woman in those days. She ended her studies in 1926 with a doctorate thesis which is still highly esteemed in specialised academic circles, on the theme of welfare support for the poor in the Vaud region in the Middle Ages. Another rather unusual aspect of her career was that very soon after being recruited in 1927 by Gonzague de Reynold to the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad she made rapid progress until she was put in charge of the entire management of the organisation. Thanks to her extra-

ordinary capability, as well as her confidence in the Swiss abroad and her firm conviction of their importance, she soon became the life and soul of the organisation and was aptly termed by a French-speaking Swiss as being a “marraine patriotique” (“a patriotic godmother”). Her magnificent work, unflagging and undaunted, was all the more outstanding as it coincided with the very difficult years of economic crisis and of the second World War, when the Secretariat had to cope with demanding tasks which had to

be carried out with very meagre financial support. But how outstandingly did Alice Briod succeed in fulfilling her highly responsible duties! When she retired in 1959, at the time of the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Berne, Member of the Federal Council Wahlen, then head of the Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, paid tribute to Alice Briod’s meritorious service in the following words: “Through your belief in the rightness and propriety of the tasks allotted to you, and through the plenitude of your knowledge, your understanding of human problems as well as your tireless capacity for hard work, you have not only done outstanding service to the interests of the Swiss Abroad and

those of our native country, but you have been moreover the living proof of what great achievements a woman can effect in our country. For all this, I thank you very warmly.”

To these very fitting words from the former holder of high office, who himself lived and worked abroad for many years, we should like in this article to add our own sincere thanks to Alice Briod. We shall not forget her and her heart-warming activities. *M.N.*

The CSA becomes an “association”

The Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad (the “CSA”) has changed its legal form. Until the end of last year, the CSA had merely been a rather informal working group supported by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad. But since January 1 1990, it has taken the legal form of an independent registered association. Its objectives and its functions have not been modi-

fied as a result of the change in legal form. As hitherto, its activities will be concentrated on the world-wide care of such Swiss Schools Abroad as have been recognised by the Federal authorities.

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The 1990 Congress of the Swiss Abroad, in Fribourg

The Accent will be on Questions of Training

The training of young Swiss normally resident abroad will be one of the main themes of this year’s Congress of the Swiss Abroad, to be held from August 17 to 19 in Fribourg.

The meeting will provide a good opportunity for:

- getting information about the existing range of training facilities on offer, both in Switzerland and abroad;
- dealing, in conversations between participants in the Congress and experts, with

current problems in the field of training, problems that are rapidly changing character nowadays;

- making clear to Swiss authorities, and to the public in Switzerland, the wishes and hopes of the “Fifth Switzerland” in this key sector.

We look forward to your participation – please let us know, before July 15, by means of the registration form published in the latest issue of this review.

SSA

Support for SRI

At the Spring conference of the Council for the Swiss Abroad (CSA), held in Berne on March 24, one of the main themes discussed was the problem of the broadcasting transmitters of Swiss Radio International (SRI). This “Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland” had with deep regret ascertained that because of the opposition against the construction of new transmitters inside Switzerland, SRI was being obliged to enlist the help of foreign relay stations to compensate – at all events as a temporary “bridging” measure – for the lack of an up-to-date and powerful short-wave centre of its own.

In a resolution adopted at the meeting, the CSA petitioned the Federal Council, the PTT and the regional authorities concerned to ensure that as an act of solidarity with the “Fifth Switzerland” permission should as quickly as possible be granted for the construction of powerful short wave transmitters in Switzerland.

Furthermore, the CSA elected Roberto Engeler who is the new President of the parent organisation of the Italian-Swiss community, to succeed Ugo Guidi in the nine-member Board. *RW*