

Is the bitter end approaching?

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Is the bitter End approaching?

It is more than doubtful whether «The Circle» will be able to continue publication of our trilingual monthly after the end of 1967.

For the first time in 35 years of publishing we are facing financial difficulties to such an extent that it seems next to impossible to go on publishing for 1968. As far as our financial status is concerned we see no way of going on after December of this year. For this reason we appeal for the first time in 35 years to our subscribers and friends all over the world for financial aid and assistance.

The reason for the present decline is easily explained. Production costs for publishing the monthly and general expenses of running the office have increased to such an extent that the subscriptions do not meet or cover expenses any more. In 1967 we had also to face the cancellation of a considerable number of subscriptions, partly no doubt due to the raised subscription rates. The abyss between paying subscribers and factual production costs is at present unbridgeable.

Occasionally criticism has been aimed at our monthly, it may have been in part justified. But missing in all critical opinions was a general understanding of the specific function of «The Circle» and its fulfilment. We do not believe that the editorial policy of The Circle has been mainly the reason for the loss of such a large number of subscribers lately. The reason for this greatly diminished number lies in our own opinion somewhere else. Especially amongst younger homosexuals the «problem» of homosexuality has lost much of its burden by the less restricted way of living today. To make personal contacts is today far easier than it used to be. The countless gay bars everywhere catering to our minority of well paying customers have also favored these contacts. Shallowness, created by the high prosperity in many countries of the Western hemisphere may also have caused a great loss of interest in the aims of our and all similar monthlies.

Be it far from us to over-exaggerate the importance of our monthly. During our 35 years literary contributions (and the photographs) have had to be, naturally, on very different levels. But there cannot be any doubt as to the fact that «The Circle» has had to fulfil a *mission*. Our monthly was the first platform for announcing and defending the human rights of our minority. During the dark years of the «Third Reich» when all other voices had been silenced by force, our own voice continued its mission as the only one in the wilderness. And editing the monthly was only part of our job. There was the extensive exchange of letters with scientists, clergymen, judges and officials of all kind inside and outside of Switzerland. And last but not least: it is well to remember the countless numbers of homophiles turning to «The Circle» within 35 years for help, advise, aid, and assistance when urgent need arose, and readily given in every single case.

«The Circle» as a publication and an organisation for homophiles has been doubtlessly and mainly the life-work of *Rolf*. Only few of us realize the good name he has made for himself by his work on our behalf, far beyond the borders of Switzerland. To quote but two examples. — On the occasion of *Rolf*'s 70th birthday Professor Dr. Giese, Head of the Institute for Sex Research at the University of Hamburg expressed himself as follows:

«May I send you my sincere congratulations and add the wish that you may be able for a long time to come to go on serving the cause in the excellent way you have done in all those past years.»

The well-known 'Blüher-Archives' in Berlin wrote at the same time: «We are happy to offer our congratulations. May we repeat at this occasion that your never tiring and devoted activity in serving this good cause deserves highest recognition and gratitude from all concerned.»

This brings us finally to a human problem. Many years ago *Rolf* gave up a remunerative job which would have promised him security in his old age. He gave up this job voluntarily for the sake of publishing «The Circle». If and when our monthly will cease to appear *Rolf* will be hit doubly . . . spiritually and financially.

We are facing the first serious crisis of our long existence. Before we decide finally to close down after 35 years we would like to address an appeal for financial assistance to all our subscribers and friends all over the world. Anyone even slightly acquainted with the long history of publishing «The Circle» will realize that this is, as mentioned at the beginning, our very first appeal for financial help in 35 years. We would like to build up a foundation which will enable us financially to go on publishing our monthly at least until the end of 1968 by which time we sincerely hope to have overcome our present difficulties.

Will those of our subscribers and friends interested in the continuance of our trilingual monthly kindly let us know to what extent we might expect financial aid and assistance from them. There is no need to send donations right away, but those willing to donate are kindly asked to let us know to what amount we can expect them to stand by. The final decision as to the future of «The Circle» will be made when we have learned to what amount these donations of our friends and subscribers will come. In case of a positive, favorable and sufficient reaction to this appeal we will then—and only then—inform our friends once more, asking them to mail us their intended donations. In the meantime we will naturally do our best to enlarge the number of subscribers again within the remaining months of 1967. In this context we repeat once more our old request that our old subscribers may support us in getting new subscribers.

We shall be most grateful if this appeal of ours would be received favorably and successfully. Anyone willing and able to make a donation can rest assured of our gratitude—the donation as such indicating that the work we have done in 35 years for the homophile minority met with the approval of our friends and was not done in vain.

For «The Circle»:
Charles Welti