

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF SWITZERLAND
INCORPORATED

MEMORANDUM

Objects and Purposes.

During this war there has been considerable interest in Switzerland, principally because of its unique position as a neutral completely surrounded for several years by Axis countries. It has occasionally, quite recently especially, been the object of unfavorable and unfair criticism in newspaper, periodical and radio publicity, and in public addresses, resulting in much resentment in Switzerland and embarrassment to her American friends and business associates. The Swiss conception of strict neutrality imposes on it discreet silence and abstention from publicity lest thereby it prejudice its position and open itself to charges of bias or an unneutral attitude. This means that there is no way for the facts about Switzerland to be presented unless its friends voluntarily speak. There is today no organized or effective way for this to be done, and it is one of the purposes of this proposed Society to meet that need.

Although the relationship between the United States and Switzerland has now been completely eased, much misinformation about the Swiss has been disseminated; the traditional friendship between their and our democracies has been severely strained, and is too valuable to both nations to be neglected. It is believed that had an organization such as this proposed Society been operating for some years before the war, the peoples of both countries would have had a better knowledge of each other, and a better mutual understanding of their relative positions, and this recent crisis with Switzerland might never have arisen, or if it had, there would have been less severity and less danger to future friendly relations.

The direct purposes therefore of the American Friends of Switzerland Incorporated are:

- (a) To promote friendship and mutual good will between the United States of America and the Confederation of Switzerland and their peoples.

(b) To disseminate information about Switzerland and particularly its history, government, traditions, culture and customs; its social, scientific, humanitarian, cultural and industrial institutions; its economic, financial and geographical status; the grandeur and charm of its landscapes and cities; the achievement of true freedom and democracy in its heroic struggles in the past against tyranny and intolerance; and to disseminate in Switzerland corresponding information about the United States of America.

Operations.

The Society will not operate for profit.

The actual conduct of operations will be in the hands of a salaried Executive Secretary who will be thoroughly familiar with Switzerland and the Swiss, the German and French languages, and with press relations and publicity.

The Society will cooperate with existing Swiss and American societies which are especially interested in the promotion of cultural relations between Switzerland and the United States, including the establishment of exchange professorships and scholarships for students.

Public addresses and lectures will be arranged, especially to take advantage of visiting Swiss of distinction in various phases of Swiss activity and life. Publicity in American and Swiss newspapers, magazines and publications will be sought, also radio programs and moving picture releases. Social activities, as such, will be left to other agencies; local societies throughout the United States may in due course be organized or stimulated; a periodical publication may later develop when finances permit. *There will be no commercial or political or legislative activities, or participation in controversial matters.*

It is understood that the aims of the Society can be attained only gradually and over a period of years, but with proper management and operation, the effectiveness of the organization should be cumulative and successful.

Relationship to the Swiss Government.

The Society will have no connection, direct or indirect, with the Swiss Government, nor will any contribution, direct or indirect, be either solicited or accepted from the Swiss Government.

There are several good reasons for this. Since the Swiss Government does not engage in propaganda, it could not subsidize this Society, and must be kept free of any responsibility for what the Society may say or do. The Society must, to be effective, likewise be free of any control or direction by the Swiss Government, especially as one of the Society's purposes is to obtain publicity in Switzerland about the United States and its peoples.

Membership.

In furtherance of the maintenance of the Society's complete independence of the Swiss Government, and to avoid embarrassment in both directions, membership in the Society will be restricted to United States citizens, native born and naturalized. There will, however, be in addition to the Board of Directors composed of United States citizens, an Advisory Council which may include Swiss citizens who, although having no vote, may nevertheless be interested in the purposes of the Society, and whose advice and counsel will be especially valuable to the attainment of its aims.

Finances, Contributions, Taxes.

Contributions will be accepted from any source except that of the Swiss Government. It is estimated that initial funds of at least One Hundred Thousand Dollars will be necessary to assure maintenance of the Society for the first three years, and formal organization will not proceed, and no general appeal for funds will be made until this amount has been assured by preliminary and conditional subscriptions, to be payable in three equal yearly instalments. In the opinion of counsel contributions will be deductible for income tax purposes.

Organization.

The Society will be incorporated under the New York State Membership Corporations Law.

New York, May 1, 1945.

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