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The Swiss Observer

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

A recent article about the Swiss abroad in the *Swiss Observer* struck a note of sadness for me.

My parents, both from Zürich, came to England in 1912, my Father, Frederick M. Gamper, returning to Switzerland for a brief spell to join-up at the outbreak of World War I.

They retained their Swiss nationality and close ties with the Swiss Colony. For many years my Father played a prominent part in the activities of the Swiss Benevolent Society, being Hon. Treasurer for six years and later Vice-President. He was also President of the "Swiss Home" and founder-member of the Helvetica Lodge.

When World War II seemed imminent my Father unselfishly became a naturalised British subject to enable his sons to become officers in the British forces. As there was no dual nationality in those days this meant relinquishing Swiss nationality.

It was only after serving five years as a pilot in the RAF — during which time I became of age — that I realised the full implications. Sadly my national ties with Switzerland, which have been traced back to Wolfgang Gamper from Leon, Canton Aargau 1527, had been severed.

I married a Swiss lady, so our children, from a blood point of view, are 100 per cent solid Swiss stock! I find it sad that because dual nationality did not exist prior to the war, I and my sons' claim to Swiss nationality has been irrevocably lost.
Yours faithfully,
H. R. Gamper.

This letter from Mr. Gamper will doubtless strike a chord of sadness in many of us. Unfortunately, the Swiss Embassy in London has confirmed that, under existing legislation, Mr. Gamper and his offspring are not entitled to Swiss nationality. He is, however, advised not to give up hope completely. Changes to our nationality laws are constantly under review, so he would be well-advised to keep a watchful eye on the Swiss Press and, of course, this paper. We thank him for taking the trouble to write to us and extend him our most fraternal greetings.

Editor

IN MEMORIAM

Robert Lehner, F.H.C.I., F.C.F.A.,
St. Gall, 12th August, 1892, Goring-by-Sea, 22nd April, 1967.

ON THE FRONT PAGE

September heralds in the autumn, the season when the people of the Justis valley in the Bernese Oberland assemble for the traditional distribution of the cheese. Story and more pictures on pages 16 and 17. Photo by courtesy of SNTO.

Copy Dates

Will readers and contributors please note that items intended for inclusion in the next edition of the *Swiss Observer* should reach the Editor no later than 1st September.
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