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Basle or Basel (SR 6/95)

Thank you for your article about Basel-Stadt and Baselland. I found it a pity that you spell Basel as Basle. It would be much better if you left at least certain names in their original form and Basel is most certainly one of them. It looks ugly and doesn't make any sense to change it for the English-speaking population of this world. Or do they really pronounce it Basle and not Basel?

Sabine Meyer, Australia

It is for historical reasons that some European cities, but not all, have their names translated into other European languages. These are the places which had trading importance in the Middle Ages and therefore have a long history of international contact. In most cases the English simply took over the French spelling because of the proximity of their two countries and the fact that the French coined the word first. With Basle, it is interesting to note that the modern English spelling is the same as the original medieval version of today's Bâle in French. The "s" is silent in English too.

Ian Tickle, Translator

Voting rights (SR 5/95)

I find it quite hard to make an educated or wise decision on the affairs regarding Switzerland or vote on a particular party nominee. It would help to have a monthly report from Swiss Review and I would be only too happy to pay some of the costs.

Bernhard Schadt, New Zealand

I have been a Swiss Abroad for nearly 50 years. In all those years I have never received an education as thorough and comprehensive in Swiss parliamentary affairs as I have gained from the recent issues of the Swiss Review and particularly the current edition 5/95.

Max B. Zimmer, USA

What use is my right to vote by correspondence if I do not receive the documents until after the referendum? It is clearly the fault of the Spanish post, since last time the documents took 36 days to get here. I hope that something will be done about this so that by the time the referendum on EU entry comes I shall be able to vote No as a convinced opponent of it.

Franz Ineichen, Spain

You were so determined to inform us about the first opportunity for the Swiss Abroad to vote in the National Council elections that I actually thought a high voter participation was desired. But then came the disappointment. I was able to get on the voting register in time, but – in spite of a reminder by telephone – the voting documents arrived too late for me to participate. Somehow I have the impression that one is trying to give us the feeling of a stronger link without really wanting to have us. What a pity!

Christine Schaperjahn, Germany

What use to me was your special edition when I only received it on October 19 and had already had to send my voting paper back to Switzerland at the beginning of October?

Martin Haller, Singapore

Thanks to Swiss Review

Many thanks to Swiss Review which I have been receiving for years. It contains intelligent and entertaining information.

E.A. de Sobré, Argentina

A big thank you to the whole Swiss Review team for the news from Switzerland which I read with pleasure.

Eveline de Graaff, Greece

Switzerland during the war (SR 6/95)

I disagree with ninety percent of your articles as my personal experiences are just the opposite. I grew up in Bienne and in my fifth-grade class of about 25 we had up to 8 Jewish refugees. What about all the soldiers interned? We had it pretty rough during the war and I don't know why you have to paint such a negative picture.

C. Roger Niggli, USA

Thank you for your wonderful editorial. We liked the honesty, courage and hopeful and confident approach to the future. The whole issue itself was quite remarkable.

R. and O. Frost, USA

Switzerland was not the hated little country. It is easy to criticise the conditions at Wauwilermoos. I was a soldier during the 5 war years and can state here, in good heart, the Swiss administration did handle the refugee situation as best they could; decisions were made on the matter prevailing at that time.

H. Schaub, South Africa

You consider the fact that the government knew about the extent of the German persecution of the Jews much earlier than previously supposed as something negative. Why do this and other facts have to be looked at from a moral perspective? Explaining things just as they were would be sufficient. The same thing can also be looked at positively. Mobilisation is a very costly matter. The absence of men from their workplaces also creates problems. Since it was known in Berne what the Germans were planning and doing the active service contingent could have been kept small. The fact that the Federal Council knew about the concentration camps shows that the intelligence service worked.

Enrique Hanhart, Argentina

What an unfortunate editorial! "... Concentrating more on the wound itself than the healing process". If Switzerland had learnt something from the past, such concentration indeed would not be necessary. But the country is still, for example, a model throughout Europe for restrictive asylum policy. The old wounds fester and stink. Only very lengthy and painful operations can promote "the healing process". This also includes permanently opening up old wounds anew.

Andrea Dahli, Germany

If a certain proportion of Swiss people have been awaiting an apology from the government for a long time, that means that they have absolutely no idea about the facts of the time. It was like this: one little spark and the fuse would have blown.

Carl Kauz, Germany

One federal councillor does not have the authority to open or close Switzerland's frontiers. This concerns home, foreign, defence, economic and financial policy. Eduard von Steiger was simply head of the department which had to carry out the policy.

Alex v. Steiger, Egypt

Paul Grüninger (SR 6/95, 1/96)

We will always hold Paul Grüninger and what he did for the Jewish people in good memory. My parents and my uncle did everything possible to make life less difficult for him. "Up above", where the true values of human beings are acknowledged, Paul Grüninger has received a place of honour, and he will not regret the energy he spent on behalf of humanity.

Esther Gutermann, Israel