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Otto Reuter worked on the "Swiss Review" layout for 30 years.

Memories of the early days

Typesetter Otto Reuter is among the handful of people who witnessed the birth of "Swiss Review".

WHEN HE STARTED at Buri Druck AG in Berne-Wabern, he was in charge of Mondo books, following which he took over responsibility for the layout of "Echo", the newspaper for Swiss Abroad. Finally he was the man behind the layout of every issue of "Swiss Review" from the very first to No. 06/2002, following which he took up a well-earned retirement after forty years with the printing company.

"Swiss Review" was an important part of his life. German-born Reuter has countless anecdotes about the magazine. He particularly enjoys recounting the time when, before his very eyes, the editor-in-chief argued with two representatives of the Confederation on a question of punctuation. "One insisted that a comma was needed in a particular place, while the other claimed it should be a full stop," says Otto Reuter. "Finally they asked me to set a "smudged" full stop, to satisfy both parties." As one of the most ad-

vanced printing works in Switzerland at that time, Buri Druck was already using photo-composition. Almost all the other printing works in the region were still typesetting in lead.

Who is the OSA?

The Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA) acts as an interface between Swiss Abroad and the Confederation. It represents the interests of the 612,000 or so Swiss registered abroad and functions as a type of union. Its staff of 20 performs a wide range of tasks, advising Swiss Abroad on legal questions, ensuring the flow of information between the Fifth Switzerland and the home country, organising holiday and sports camps, language courses and student exchanges, advising young Swiss Abroad on studying opportunities and grants in Switzerland, and advocating the interests of the 17 Swiss schools abroad. Finally, they organise an annual Congress of the Swiss Abroad and, twice a year, a meeting of the Council for the Swiss Abroad, the highest Swiss Abroad organ which is also called the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland".

The OSA is a non-profit organisation and is self-financed in almost equal parts through the sale of services, sponsorships and public subsidies. To perform its variety of tasks effectively, it works closely with the Confederation.

Translated from German.

Nowadays the layout is e-mailed to the editorial team as a PDF file for proofreading, but in former years layout meetings were held. "Sometimes up to four people scrutinised my work, and sometimes cold shivers would run down my spine," recalls Otto Reuter. It goes without saying that such work needs a steady nerve: the typesetter would receive lots of texts in telex format i.e. all in lower-case lettering. The editor-in-chief would bring bulging files of manuscripts and photographs to the printing works, and it was up to Otto Reuter to make the best of them. Nowadays every text, no matter how small, is forwarded electronically to the pre-printing stage, and photographs or images are re-dimensioned on screen.

Otto Reuter has seen seven editors-in-chief come and go, and helped to update the visual identity of "Swiss Review" several times. His favourite memory is of the time when he was on holiday in Norway and heard some people in Lillehammer speaking Swiss-German. They turned out to be Swiss living in Norway. Otto Reuter could not help but ask whether they knew the "Swiss Review". They answered in the affirmative and gave it top marks. "I told them I worked for the magazine, and they were both surprised and delighted at the coincidence." The experience impressed Otto Reuter: "That's how it is when you have a worldwide readership."

Translated from German.