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Switzerland extends beyond the German-speaking part

What are we to make of a "Swiss Review," which is supposedly a publication for Swiss people abroad, when it is only a pale reflection of Switzerland and its diversity? Issue No. 5 for October 2007 is a particularly good example of there being little of interest for French-speaking or Italian-speaking Swiss in the "Swiss Review". You would think that Switzerland stops at the German-speaking boundaries! Apart from the fact that the editorial and all of the background articles, with the exception of one, were written in German and published as approximate translations, the topics too often overlook our country's minority-language areas in spite of the intentions indicated by the front-page claim. A good example in this issue is the article by Rolf Ribi entitled "Swiss newspaper market in flux" which aims to carry out a "review of Switzerland's newspaper landscape." In the three pages that make up the article, only three lines address the situation of the press in French-speaking Switzerland, while Italian-speaking Switzerland is overlooked completely. Worse still, the drawing by a French-speaking caricaturist (Chappatte), which is about a French-Swiss subject of national interest – the victory of the Alinghi catamaran in the America's Cup – is published in German. It must be recognised that articles written by journalists of Swiss-German mother tongue determine how our country is looked at, limiting Switzerland to the German-speaking part. For a publication that is supposed to be for the Swiss abroad community as a whole, it un-

fortunately does not reflect the rich diversity of all the country's parts.

DAVID J. L. BONGARD

Campaign advertising

I already expressed my views against advertising by political parties in the "Swiss Review" in the run-up to the parliamentary elections. I was pleased to read the letter by Georg Ehret from the USA who was spot-on when he referred to "manipulation of voting." Your editorial comment, "All parties were free to place ads" has to be considered in the light of the election report on page 14 where RR says: "It (the Swiss People's Party - SVP) clearly has unlimited financial resources, which it does not have to disclose."

The right-wing political propaganda received as much "understanding" abroad as UBS's loss of billions of francs or the infamous "grounding". Both damage the image of "Idee Suisse". Your publication should steer away from politics and focus on providing factual reports. Otherwise, the "Swiss Review" is OK. The report on Einsiedeln Abbey was very interesting.

BRUNO NEIDHART, CONSTANCE, GERMANY

Thank you

As a Swiss person from abroad, I look forward to receiving each copy of the magazine, which keeps me up to date and in touch with my beloved Switzerland. I am privileged to know Switzerland and the first time I went, I discovered for myself what people say in Argentina: Switzerland is a tidy, clean, meticulous and friendly country – please keep it that way! Thank you!

HUGO KLINKE, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

In the course of the 20th century, war and tyranny cost more than 160 million people their lives. Conflict and mass destruction seem to be the fate of mankind. A small Swiss with a flowing white beard spent 60 years trying to stem the seemingly relentless tide of senseless killing: Max Daetwyler travelled half the world with his white flag, waging a non-violent campaign for peace.

It all began on 5 August 1914 with a thoroughly un-Swiss incident on the parade ground of Frauenfeld barracks, when fusilier Max Daetwyler, the second youngest of twelve children born to a respected family from Arbon in Eastern Switzerland, refused to take the oath of allegiance just as the First World War was breaking out. Responding to his commanding officer, this fusilier with six military refresher courses behind him said, "I am against the war. I will not swear the oath." He was the first Swiss man to refuse to take the oath, for which he was temporarily sent to a lunatic asylum and subsequently declared unfit for service. But this was to be the start of Daetwyler's lifelong mission for world peace. With his legendary white flag, he travelled half the globe, preaching his grand idea of friendship and brotherhood in Moscow, Washington, New York, Geneva, Berlin and Cairo. His image went around the world. Time and again, Daetwyler would seek an audience with those in power, but neither in Moscow nor in Washington was he ever able to meet the great and powerful in person.

While Max Daetwyler was dismissed by some as a deviationist fool, others marvelled at his selfless dedication and the depth of his conviction. His only moral authority was the voice of his conscience, which he followed throughout his life. And nothing could break his will and determination to campaign for an end to senseless wars throughout the world. He even served countless prison terms and submitted himself to six psychiatric assessments. It was not until after his death in 1976 that he was recognised as a Swiss icon of the 20th century.

Journalist Stephan Bosch has examined the extensive collection of Max Daetwyler's personal effects in the Federal Archive in Berne and has written an extremely accurate, objective and entertaining biography entitled "Max Daetwyler: Der Friedensapostel" (Max Daetwyler: Apostle of Peace). He portrays a long life shaped by numerous dramatic events, family crises and an unceasing campaign for peace. Daetwyler's biography has also become an important historical record, reflecting the thinking and world view of Swiss officialdom in the period from the First World War until the death of the Apostle of Peace. Attempts were repeatedly made to have Daetwyler committed for psychiatric treatment, but his local

community in Zumikon defended their fellow citizen, pointing out, quite legitimately, that he was a man who did no-one any harm.

Stephan Bosch's book is as engrossing as a good novel.

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STEPHAN BOSCH: Max Daetwyler: Der Friedensapostel. Mit der weißen Fahne um die Welt. Rüffer & Rub, Zurich, 2007. Available in German only.