

Letter to the editor

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

The Echo (no 5, Mai 1977, page 7-9) published an open letter of the Swiss Club in Salisbury, Rhodesia. Since it is very well known that I lived and worked in Rhodesia for nearly 10 years as a member of the Missionary Society of Bethlehem, I am bound to make a few remarks to some statements which I can only accept with considerable qualifications.

There is no doubt that the white population in Rhodesia and the small Swiss Community have made a great contribution towards the development of this country, like parents who have raised a big family. It is extremely tragic that this country has become a symbol of international politics where the white parent community and minority has to defend itself against the whole world. Everything said and done is at once taken up by the mass media and ground down to suit its political outlook.

But in all fairness, I must ask my compatriots in Rhodesia whether the freedom of speech, the freedom to criticise and the freedom of opposing certain measures of government is such a bad thing? Is it not the task of the Church to show the correct path — even to a Government — especially if six million people are involved? About 150 Swiss

Missionaries, that would be about 20% of the Swiss in Rhodesia have been living and working there for the last 45 years among the Africans and many of them are experts in African languages and African ways of life.

And they know how the African feels. Is it surprising that they come to other conclusions about the real situation in Rhodesia than their other compatriots who are not allowed to live in the African Reserves? By telling, what they know and feel is the truth, do they damage the country they love and live in? I know myself they are certainly not popular with the white community nor with the government nor with the terrorists either, and they know it, and they know too, that a terrorist takeover would be a death sentence for many of them.

Therefore I must reject the statement that they are a damage to the Country, to Switzerland and to Christianity. That they do not care so much whether they damage themselves shows that they are real Swiss.

*Fr. Paul Bossard,
Chaplain,
Swiss Catholic Mission,
48 Great Peter Street,
London SW1 2HA.*

ON YOUR FRONT PAGE

Yverdon commemorates the 150th anniversary of Henrich Pestalozzi's death

Yverdon, chief town of the northern part of Canton Vaud, is staging two exhibitions until 15th July, 1977, to mark the 150th anniversary of the death of Heinrich Pestalozzi, who ran his world-famous school in Yverdon Castle from 1805 to 1825. One exhibition will be housed in the Town Hall under the title of "Pestalozzi and His Times — The Child at the Beginning of the 19th Century".

One section is devoted to Pestalozzi, his helpers and his pupils who spread the new educational method in all directions, to Ireland, England, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Russia, France, America and even Japan. The visitor can also gain an idea of the role and importance of the illustrated textbook, from Comenius in the 17th century to Fröbel, Pestalozzi's successor. The other exhibition, in Yverdon Museum which is housed in the Castle itself, provides a survey of the history and period of Yverdon's schools in the 19th century. Both are open daily from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on Wednesdays and Saturdays also from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Photo by courtesy of SNT0.

APOLOGY

You editor wishes to apologize for the late publication of this edition of your paper and for the omission of several important reports. This is due to a prolonged domestic problem which terminated recently in a bereavement (see page 3).

Among omissions are the reports on the Swiss Benevolent Society's AGM, The Swiss Evening on BBC radio and the visit to London by Federal Councillor Ernst Brugger.

These omissions will, of course, be rectified as far as possible in our next edition.

May I also express my warmest thanks for the messages of condolence I have received. They are far too numerous for me to attempt to reply individually. They were, nevertheless, most gratefully received.

W.G.S.