

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 30 (2003)
Heft: 6

Artikel: Support for swissinfo/SRI
Autor: Keller, Gabrielle
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-907406>

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A question of survival

Swiss Review 5/03, Editorial

Do you really want to live in the shadow of mosques? The freedom to defend direct democracy is Switzerland's strength and pride and must be upheld at all costs. And that is exactly what Europe is lacking. Its absence has, for instance, allowed veritable bastions of Islam to spring up in France. The line you take in your editorial would open the door to Islam: a way of life that is diametrically opposed to our Jewish-Christian tradition. While the latter is admittedly not without its faults, it at least respects human beings rather than enslaving them. I invite you to come to those "hotspots" in France and verify my statements with your own eyes. Nowadays it is no longer a question of discrimination but of Europe's survival – and that includes Switzerland's.

Jacques Brugière
Jouet sur l'Aubois, France

Populist propaganda

Swiss Review 5/03, "Schweizerzeit" advertisement

I always read the "Swiss Review" with great interest. Imagine my astonishment, then, to read an advertisement that is hard to beat in terms of bias. Admittedly, everyone is entitled to read publications of any political slant, but I find it extremely shocking that you agree to place an advertisement which contains the statement "... damit die Tatsachen zum tausendfachen Asylmissbrauch nicht verborgen bleiben" ("... so that the facts about thousands of cases of asylum abuse are brought to light.") Nowadays people are exposed to populism on a daily basis, both in Switzerland and abroad. I find it extremely

regrettable that you associate yourselves with it.

Malik Berkati
Berlin, Germany

Correction: ICRC and the Star of David

Swiss Review 5/03, reader's letter.

Dr Alexandar Avidan's claim that the ICRC refuses to recognize the Star of David as an emblem is incorrect. The Red Cross and the Red Crescent are recognized symbols of humanitarian rights. Only the 191 signatory states to the Geneva Convention can decide on introduction of an additional emblem. The ICRC is doing everything possible to ensure that the community of states finds a solution to this problem as rapidly as possible. More than three years ago the ICRC submitted a draft to the community of states and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movements, which provides an acceptable compromise for those states who wish to use neither the Red Crescent nor the Red Cross as an emblem. It should, moreover, be pointed out that the ICRC maintains excellent relations with the Israeli Red Star of David organisation. The aim of the ICRC's humanitarian activities is to ensure strict adherence to the principles of humanity, neutrality, autonomy and impartiality. Accordingly, the ICRC rejects the claim of anti-Semitism of which it is accused in your reader's letter. Any discrimination whatsoever on religious, political, philosophical or other grounds runs counter to the mandate and mission of the ICRC.

Florian Westphal
ICRC Press Office

Support for swissinfo/SRI

In the August issue of "Swiss Review", the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA) called on individuals and Swiss clubs to show their support for the continuation of swissinfo/SRI services. To date, well over 100 Swiss Abroad have expressed their solidarity with the information platform.

Unless there is an about-turn in the reform of the radio and television law, our worst fears will come true: the government will gradually cut its subsidies to swissinfo/SRI and compensate for this by introducing higher charges. Such measures would result in job losses and a drastic trimming of the services provided by the international service of SRG SSR idée suisse.

After the 02/2003 issue of "Swiss Review" reported on this move and called on readers to show their solidarity by e-mailing swissinfo@aso.ch, well over one hundred readers responded. For example, 45 members of the Swiss Club of Mallorca signed a letter from their president, Ruedi Häu-

sermann, urging the Federal Council to think again before cutting subsidies.

To better identify the information needs of Swiss Abroad, swissinfo/SRI has launched a survey on its website www.swissinfo.org (see enclosure). The aim of this survey is to obtain information and opinions on the type and quality of the information on offer and the services provided by the information platform, as well as the level of usage and awareness among listeners. Swissinfo/SRI is planning to publish the results in March 2004. gk

Translated from German.

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