

DOBERER, K. K.

Literature promotes literature

[Literatur fördert literatur]

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Translation produced by Brian J. Birch,
33 Boar's Head Avenue, Standish, Wigan, WN6 OBH, UK
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LITERATURE PROMOTES LITERATURE

It is a fact, possibly a regrettable one, that a large part of the readership of our specialist magazines lays most emphasis on studying the adverts, which over recent years have certainly given the pleasure of seeing their "favourites". For a certain proportion of collectors, this quite primitive satisfaction is enough to justify their paying for the magazine. Reading the articles is an incidental and they have no objection to their being cut down.

This state of affairs is equally well known to the editors of journals and to organisations. They only have limited scope for arousing interest in technical articles and technical literature, since their main task is to maintain the number of their readers.

The philatelic organisations are in a much better position to create the interest, though it must be admitted that so far they have not taken advantage of all the opportunities available. However, activity in this direction would be equally welcome to the magazines, as it would then be easier to raise the quality of their articles.

All this means in practice that the magazines would welcome the friendly co-operation of the philatelic organisations in putting out reports that would aid the magazines in their struggle to create high-grade philately.

It is extremely gratifying that the Bund Deutscher Philatelisten (Society of German Philatelists) is now promoting a development which can really be called a breakthrough in this direction.

It relates above all to the Bundesnachrichten (Society Reports). The editorship of Werner Münzberg has brought about radical changes here. They are no longer restricted to arid reports on the Society, but deal with a wide range of problems in an interesting way. The Society has been encouraged to create a paper for all its members. Does this mean competition for the technical press? Not in the slightest. It has been found that a really lively demand has been created and that the increased interest has been a good thing for all the magazines and for philatelic literature generally.

Happily, this development is not restricted to the Society level alone. As an example of a modern provincial society organ, I might mention the Landesvorsitzen-Nachrichten of the Bavarian State Society, under the editorship of its chairman Rudolf Niedermayer. The two-coloured cover immediately reveals the technical level of the publication, which is printed by rotogravure. As well as Society news, it contains a wealth of philatelic information which can often be given more directly in an internal publication than in a public magazine. This also means that the magazines are relieved of certain tasks, since there is often a tendency to expect more of them than commercial magazines can really be expected to supply. Co-operation between the magazines and the organisations is thus made easier.

There is however another way of lightening the burden on the magazines. These must regret it when specialists try to air problems of no interest to the general collector in the commercial publications, down to the last dot over an i. However, societies should be ready to step in here. The best example in this field is that of all the circulars of the German society of Old Letter collectors (Deutsche Altbriefsammler-Verein), under the scientific leadership of Hermann Deninger and the editorship of Werner Münzberg. The accuracy of their information and the discussions of problems can only be appreciated by those who have had the chance to see one of these circulars. The societies can also provide a transition to the philatelic literature. A shining example of this is the paper that has just appeared on *Plate defects on the Stamps of Baden*, written by Robert Fluhrer of the Baden Society and published by Hans A. Weidlich. Twenty seven large format pages gave a hundred and thirty three enlarged photos of plate defects on Baden stamps, covering all the fundamental defects in exact and sharp pictures.

This saves the specialist the trouble of having two comparison publications. The text refers to certain types of similar defects that have also turned up on Bavarian stamps. Good specialist literature thus makes connections between the work being done in different countries and reveals the need to take a wider view. The work was published by Professor Dr. Weidlich, and is available at the price of 6DM plus postage and packing from Karl Bald, 8781 Wernfeld/Main.

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