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Eating and drinking (SR 1/97)

The editorial is super. The author managed to stir-up a good appetite for Swiss food specialities. After almost 50 years of US living, one almost forgets the fact that the old country offers a great variety of very attractive, simple food.

Mr. and Mrs. Kempf, USA

Your article "The kitchen door has always been open" was a gastronomic delight. Indeed it is difficult to identify a single unique dish from a country. Travelling is so easy and special ingredients are so readily supplied around the globe that many dishes are replicated. In Switzerland, in my opinion, fondue would probably take the top place, but with endless regional specialities on it's heels.

Nick Zehnder, South Africa

I would like to congratulate you on the February edition of Swiss Review. For once it makes cheerful reading, the kind of articles that Swiss Abroad enjoy reading rather than the usual fayre of left-wing political propaganda which the Swiss Abroad do not appreciate.

W.A. de Vigier, United Kingdom

When I emigrated 25 years ago Poschiavo was still the capital of an Italian-speaking valley in Grisons. Since then it has apparently metamorphosed into the gastronomic centre of Romansh Switzerland!

Martina Crowther, United Kingdom

I was disagreeably surprised by the contents of the article on Swiss wine. The fact is I find it difficult to understand how you could write that the first book devoted to Swiss wines appeared in 1996 with the title, 'The Surprising Wines of Switzerland'. Unfortunately such a statement shows a serious lack of knowledge of the subject. Nor is it acceptable to call the bunches of grapes "Pinot Noir – a typical Swiss grape". The Pinot Noir is a not a grape but a type of vine, and even if it covers some 27% of all Swiss vineyards it still originated in France.

Robert A. Haas, France

I don't know the book, 'The Surprising Wines of Switzerland'. But it can hardly be described as the first extensive publication on Swiss wines. In 1993 a coffee-table book came out entitled 'All about Swiss Wines'. It is very informative.

R. Bosshart, Japan ■

The future of the welfare state (SR 6/96)

I welcome the courage of the opinions expressed in your editorial and in the article by Michel Schweri. But I would like to make a minor technical complaint: the layout of the texts and the way they are divided up is not very coherent.

Roger Wattenhofer, France

I was very impressed with your editorial, so strong and frank and true. I also read the articles for and against social security, classical defences which forget the global scene and forget that all human beings must have an equal opportunity for fulfilment, otherwise there can be no social peace. I have thought of an economic system based on the interaction of both the protective and competitive elements in society, both of which are equally important and should be formally recognised in a system which combines the necessities of both.

I would have every citizen given a form of personal credit card with which they could obtain basic food, shelter, education, music, theatre, sport, holidays, information, books, bicycles, etc., without payment. They would live, as it were, of the production of a given area or region. The portion of the population that would live on salaries would be paid not an immutable fixed salary but a proportion of the profit the country makes in commerce, international as well as national. The actual salary would depend on whether the country was having a good year or a poor year. Their salary would therefore be geared to the national well-being. As those people on a salary would be guaranteed the basic dignities of life, their salaries under extreme conditions could fall well below their expected and assured amounts, without actually suffering.

Lord Menuhin, United Kingdom ■

Bilateral negotiations with the EU (SR 1/97)

You seem to think that it is a great achievement of our government to have 40-ton lorries go through Switzerland. With this deal our politicians no doubt gained a financially gainful position for our exporters, but what about the poor people living in the Urner Valley and others? What about our forests, our trees? To carry pork from Holland to Italy to be smoked, and then back to Holland to be sold. To carry potatoes

from Holland to Greece to be washed, and then back again. Indeed a wonderful prospect for a wonderful future for our children to grow up in.

E. Tober-Duss, United Kingdom ■

Switzerland under fire (SR 6/96)

Our federal councillors at that time had to do a lot of things under Nazi pressure, or else we would have been overrun. Many of today's beneficiaries forget that, as also the fact that we must thank those responsible for running the country then for our rapid recovery after the war.

Ernst Rudmann, USA

I remain very much affected by the conduct, not to say the hypocrisy, of our rulers during the Second World War. At that time I was proud to be Swiss. In spite of our difficulties we continued to give, to try to help and rescue those who gathered on our frontiers in their thousands in order to flee from the Nazis. But Jews, Gypsies, men, women and children, condemned to the camps or to death – most were refused entry by our guards on the orders of a government unworthy of our institutions. And then there is this stolen gold, exchanged for cut-price neutrality – unworthy of our soldiers who would have done their duty fighting with enthusiasm to make sure it was respected.

Serge Hoch, France ■

Thanks to Swiss Review

Many thanks for sending Swiss Review. I value this magazine very much and read it from A to Z with interest. Swiss-American Review no longer exists, and so I am doubly grateful for your paper.

Vera Wickesser, USA

For some time I have been resident in Switzerland again, and therefore I have once more had the opportunity of following events in the newspapers and the other media. So I do not need Swiss Review any more. But I would like to thank you most warmly for the fact that I always received the magazine. When one is abroad it does one good to be regularly informed about what is going on in Switzerland.

Sister Ruth Burger, Switzerland

I wish to thank you for Swiss Review, a great magazine which allows us to keep in touch with developments back home. Keep up the good work!

Frank and Helen Blättler, Australia ■