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This and That Corner

Anonymous Banking Business

Zurich has the third-largest stock exchange in the world after Tokyo and New York; above all, gold and silver are traded and stockpiled here and this is also the city where their international prices are fixed. Yet just which potentates from the east and the west are either laundering or accumulating money here is shrouded in secrecy - Swiss banking secrecy. Revelations about the secret Swiss possession of Nazi accounts and assets has heaped even more controversy than perhaps even the stoic Swiss are willing to endure. The "Gnomes of Zurich" is an expression coined in the 1970s by a British Foreign Secretary who needed a quick explanation, and preferably also a scapegoat, for chaos in international money markets. The insinuation was of sinister manipulations behind a screen of state-sanctioned secrecy, and it reinforced the idea of the numbered Swiss bank account as the haven of drug dealers, terrorists, tyrants and shady tycoons generally. The origin of Switzerland's wealth was plainly and simply booty: the haul of centuries of European wars, in which the legendary position of Swiss neutrality was in reality aimed more towards profit than pacifism.

Local Issues

Conflicts tend to surface more frequently and violently in Zurich than elsewhere in Switzerland. The housing shortage, noise levels, car exhaust emissions - whatever is currently bothering the population - is expressed here in its own special way. The "Globus riot" of 1968, when Zurich's students attempted their own version of the May riots in Paris, and the "movement" of 1980, when young people hurt by the recession in the 1970s showed a new creativity - these have not been the only major disturbances in the city. Still unsolved, and more urgently in need of solution than ever before, is the drug problem, which has been around since the 1960s. Gone are the days when the police had only to hunt down ordinary pot-smokers: today the problem is a tough heroin and crack cocaine scene. Many feel that the police are not up to dealing with the problems, and level the same criticism at the government, whose response until recently has apparently been

to turn a blind eye.

The city's main drug area used to be Platzspitz, which - following official intervention - became a public park, clear of undesirable elements. The dealers and addicts are now to be found in other parts of town. Middle-class society seems to be better at managing money than dealing with the drugs problem.

There is more to see in the outskirts of the city and anyone who has not tired of touring, or shopped till they have dropped, will find what they are looking for in the amazingly varied shopping centres in Spreitenbach. It is both a residential and a working area: a typical agglomeration stretching to the west to Baden, Brugg and Aarau and - in the opposite direction - as far as Winterthur and beyond. This is where the lower middle classes live out their T-shirted Gemutlichkeit with their families. They are the kind of people that one often meets on holiday, or finds oneself sitting next to on the S-Bahn, and thinks of as the typical Swiss. These concrete housing estates, which were built in the 1960s and 1970s, contain more yodellers, accordion players and wearers of traditional local costume than all of the mountain cantons put together.

Source : Insight Guides Switzerland

Zuricher Zwiebelkartoffeln (potatoes and onions from Zurich)

Boil 600gr potatoes in their jackets the previous day.

Butter an oven dish. Peel the potatoes and slice finely, then arrange in the dish. Cut two onions and fry for 10 minutes in two tbsp of butter. Add 1 tspn of flour and leave for 2 -3 minutes. Add 25mls milk and 10mls of white wine. Let boil to reach a creamy sauce consistency, and add salt, pepper and nutmeg. Spread sauce over potatoes. Add 10mls cream, 4 tbsp of grated cheese and a few knobs of butter.

Bake in oven for 1/2 hour at 200C

Zurcher Schoggi-Leckerli

Warm together in a pot 250gr icing sugar, 250gr grated almonds and 2 - 3 tbsp of water or Kirsch. Stir continuously until a thick paste. Put aside. Mix 100gr grated cooking chocolate, lemon rind, 1 tbsp cinnamon, 1/2 tspn vanilla essence. Put all ingredients together and mix

well. When the mixture is cold roll pastry to 10mls thick on flour. Place leckerli on a floured oven tray. Leave overnight to dry. Bake for 7 - 8 minutes at 180C. When leckerli are cold, ice with 3 tbsp icing sugar and 1 tbsp water and vanilla essence.

*Bon Appetit
Lisette*

The Meuli Family

Some months ago, one of the most prominent pioneer Swiss-settler Families of New Zealand, the Meuli Family descendants, held a Reunion in Taranaki to mark 130 years since the arrival of the first two Meulis in New Zealand, cousins Jakob and Nikolaus Meuli, who landed in New Plymouth on 8 September 1875. Between then and 1913, thirteen Meuli settlers arrived from Nufenen (Grisons) and its' surrounding area.

Jakob and Nikolaus' voyage on the sailing ship 'Halcione' began on 27 May 1875 in London along with 325 other passengers and a crew of 32. Of the passengers 24 were Swiss, the rest all being from the southern counties of England. The Swiss group had been organised and accompanied by Felix Hunger who had first settled in Taranaki in 1867. Like Jakob and Nikolaus, Felix Hunger was originally from Nufenen, a small alpine village near the city of Chur in Graubunden canton.

Jakob was 21 on his arrival in New Plymouth while Nikolaus was 20. Jakob's occupation is shown in the ship's records as saddler. Nikolaus is described as being a carpenter.

Jakob established a saddlery business initially in Waverley and later at Hawera. In 1884 he returned to Switzerland and married his cousin Nina. They returned together to Taranaki and went to live at the newly established town of Manaia, where Jakob once again set up business as a saddler. In 1898 Jakob bought a bush farm at Te Ngutu near Okaiawa and became one of the pioneer dairy farmers of the South Taranaki region. He also distinguished himself, among other things, as a leader in local county council politics. Jakob and Nina had three sons : George H, Emil and Lorenz Wilfred.

During those early years, Jakob and Nina sponsored many of their nephews from Switzerland out to New Zealand. Once here, they were offered jobs and opportunities for work.

I hope to bring you some more articles about Swiss settlers in early times.

Paul.

YOUR SWISS CHEF, BERTA

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