

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1981)

Heft: 1776

Rubrik: Letter from Switzerland : It's much too late for many an Auntie Sophie

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 15.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

"AUNT Sophie's little food-shop" is in danger of being pressurised out of existence by more and more giant shopping centres.

In 1960 some 20,733 retail food shops were registered in Switzerland, but in 1979 only 9,908 were left. This is quite an alarming trend towards gigantism in catering - alarming enough for several political parties as well as individual parliamentarians now trying to stop this development.

The reduction by 47 per cent in the number of small retail food shops is all the more alarming as the Swiss population has considerably increased during the two decades in question, and as the available sales space has also increased by one third.

It is now felt that such an enormous concentration is quite undesirable. For one thing small shops, particularly in villages where everyone knows everyone, have quite an important social function. They are a kind of centre of communication in a closely-knit village society.

On the negative side some of the shopping centres in which one has to cover considerable distances and stand in long queues in front of cash desks are of distinct disadvantage to the elderly, the disabled and to all non-motorised customers.

One of the many shopping centres around Zürich proudly boasts parking space for 4,000 cars, and its very location is such that it cannot even be reached by public transport. This means that its existence induces the potential buyer to use petrol - at a time when one is constantly asked to use fuel economically.

For the still existing small retailer who is trying hard to

keep his family firm going, the boast about the 4,000 car spaces must be particularly galling, because he has a yearly battle with the police about space for two or three cars on the pavement in front of his shop.

To be alarmed about the appearance of more and more usually ugly shopping centres is one thing, but to be able to do something about it and arrest the present trend is quite another. As things are it seems to be easier to act on a cantonal rather than on a federal basis.

Thus a motion in the cantonal parliament of Zürich, brought in in spring 1980, has been

adopted against the resistance of the cantonal government. According to it the canton's law concerning planning and building has been modified in a sense which gives the authorities power to refuse planning and building permission for more shopping centres unless an urgent need for them can be proved.

But things have already progressed so far that during the eight years I have now been back in Switzerland I have - with great regret - seen quite a number of useful little local shops being squeezed out of existence.

Gottfried Keller

We have removal vehicles
travelling to and from
Switzerland weekly, providing
door to door service.

They are equipped to carry
un-packed furniture and effects.

No shipment too small.

Facilities for: Storage & Packing.

**FOR EFFICIENT AND ECONOMIC SERVICE,
PLEASE TELEPHONE**

CLOWHURST LTD.

24/25 BINNEY STREET, LONDON W.1.

TEL: 01-629 5634 - 629 1850

ASK FOR GARRY WAKEFIELD

IF IN SWITZERLAND, OUR AGENTS ARE:

WITTWER LTD.

NEUCHATEL. TEL: 038 25 82 82.

ZURICH. TEL: 01 844 20 44.

ALL ESTIMATES ARE FREE AND WITHOUT OBLIGATION