

The career of the first tailor of "Fith Switzerland" Joseph Guggenheim

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This doesn't mean that the small shops have all been doing well. Thousands of small shops have had to close in the recent past and there are very few independent grocers left. All the retail business of Switzerland is now handled by vast organisations such as the Co-operatives, the Migros, Denner Discount and USEGO. Less than a third of the 20,000 shops for daily consumer goods still offer personal attention. 1,000 shops passed from individual to self service last year. The "Co-op" has made an effort in retaining individual service and 50 per cent of its shops are still not "self-services". This switch in salesmanship has been made necessary by the difficulties of finding labour, by keen competition between the large retail organisations. One can find many concrete examples of this competition in seeing the number of times a Migros store has been built right opposite to a Co-op store.

The work and livelihood of the small shop have disappeared for the benefit of Migros and others. The growth of Migros, the first self-service shops in Switzerland (Gottlieb Duttweiler picked up the idea in America and introduced in Switzerland after the war) is exemplified by the fact that, in 1950, Migros stores had an average surface of 76 square metres and were grossing one million francs, whereas these same shops were extended to 383 square metres and selling 5.5 million francs worth of goods annually by 1968.

Migros has been thriving but USEGO has had serious difficulties lately and has been forced to become a limited company, an no longer a co-operative. USEGO housewives need no longer paste their green and blue stamps in their booklets. One to two thousand USEGO shops may have to disappear in the near future.

Streamlining the distributive traders has meant fewer shops and less personnel, but it had also implied a smaller variety of goods. USEGO have 4,000 different articles on their shelves, but

this figure will have to be whittled down to 1,500. Shopkeepers will no longer be in a position to offer two identical products in different packages. But this necessary limitation in the variety of supply applies as well to the big department stores, which usually have hundreds of thousands of articles. The difficulties of getting to the heart of cities and finding parking spaces have had negative effects on the business of the big shops. The smaller department stores like Au Bon Marché, usually located in medium towns, have progressed faster than the average in the retail field. Jelmoli has decided to concentrate its future investments in medium sized stores.

The latest development in shopping facilities has been the shopping centre of Spreitenbach. The idea was to build a completely functional shopping area, well outside Zurich, with abundant parking facilities, but near enough to the suburbs and the neighbouring towns for easy accessibility. It is the alternative to shopping in town and offers a sufficient concentration of shops and variety of goods to compete favourably to retain a competitive appeal. Spreitenbach was at one time just a small village half way between Zurich and Baden. A 12 mile journey to Zurich was necessary to find anything more sophisticated than what a locality of such small size or a small town like Baden could offer. Now the growing population of Spreitenbach, Dietikon and Wettingen needs no longer to rely on Zurich but can go to this new centre created from scratch.

The shopping centre will possibly be a way out for the small shop in that it is a collection of competing shops and not just one large department store with a single management. The shopping centre is a way of offering a wide variety of goods in a limited space economically. The new and unique shopping centre of Spreitenbach has certainly changed the life of the indwellers of the Limmat Valley.

THE CAREER OF THE FIRST TAILOR OF "FIFTH SWITZERLAND", JOSEPH GUGGENHEIM

Josef Guggenheim—known to his friends and clients as Mr. Guggy or just Guggy—died on 6th April in his London home, 2/71 Hamilton Terrace, N.W.8, in his 91st year.

He was born in Baden (Aargau) from a family of 9 children and was buried there according to his wishes. Guggy served a tailor's apprenticeship in Zurich and came to London at the turn of the century to perfect himself in his trade. He did better than this and founded his own tailoring business. He eventually had two shops, one of which was bombed during the war.

Guggy never married because he had promised his mother, whom he adored, only to marry a Jewess. He fell in love with a non-Jew and never married.

During the last war he heard of 3 Jewish children who had lost their parents in Germany. He didn't exactly adopt them but gave them a home and an education. They were two boys and a girl. One of the boys emigrated to Australia. He committed suicide two years ago. He had never recovered from his traumatic experiences in Germany. The other boy has become a doctor in medicine and now teaches at an American University. The girl married and now lives in Guatemala. They—"his" children and his housekeeper—constituted his real family.

As he came from Baden, Guggy became friends with the Brown family of Brown-Boveri and tailored for the three sons (Mrs. Brown died last year and her son Sidney, aged 72, at the beginning of this year).

Guggy was unique in that he continued tailoring for Swiss diplomats and the Swiss hotel trade throughout his life and had special customs arrangements. He took the measures in Switzerland, had the cloth cut here in London, brought the suits to Switzerland and had them fitted, took them back for finishing in London and sent the finished product through the customs in Switzerland, where duty had to be paid. He then went to Switzerland on four regular business trips a year.

About two years ago his eyesight began to fail him. He went to see his Swiss doctor in Switzerland, the one who had performed a successful cataract operation 20 years ago, and was told that nothing could be done. His failing sight was the result of old age.

Guggy sold his business to Sullivan and Woolly of Conduit Street where he continued to work for two or three hours a day as an adviser. But, as he said himself, he had lost his hobbies: letter-writing and portraying himself with his pipe in his mouth.

However much he loved his "Wahlheimat" and dressed like a Victorian gentleman, he remained fundamentally a Swiss to the last day.

(EW)

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